

**FY 2023 Food Safety Outreach Competitive Grant Program (FSOP)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

1. Are Project Directors (PDs) on previously awarded FSOP and Regional Center projects eligible to apply for this program?

Regional Center PDs and previously awarded FSOP (Community Outreach and Collaborative Education and Training) PDs are eligible to submit in FY 2023.

2. Can applicants include another collaborating institution that is not in the same region?
Yes.

3. Are all members of the project team required to attend a Project Director's meeting?

All Project Directors must attend an annual meeting. Other project personnel may attend as funds allow.

4. How does USDA-NIFA define "niche" audiences?

Niche audiences are identified and justified by the applicant. Examples of niche audiences may include, but are not limited to, Amish, Hmong, Vietnamese, Somali, Burmese farmers, migrant workers and/or non-English speakers or other groups where there may be cultural or language barriers.

5. Can multiple PDs from the same institution apply to the FSOP? Are PDs eligible to submit multiple applications?

Yes, multiple PDs from the same institution can apply to the FSOP. No, multiple applications by the same PD will not be reviewed by the panel.

6. Are small farmers that sell their produce to markets such as Whole Foods, eligible to apply for this program?

Non-government organizations and/or community-based organizations representing owners and operators of farms or small fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers that has a commitment to public health and expertise in administering programs that contribute to food safety are eligible to apply to the FSOP.

7. Can you explain the matching requirement?

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 removed the matching requirements on NIFA competitive grants imposed under the Agricultural Act of 2014. Therefore, there are changes to the matching requirements awarded in 2019. For FY 2023, NIFA does not require matching support for the Food Safety Outreach Program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

8. Does an existing food safety program include a master food safety advisor program or a master gardener program?

Yes, those may be considered existing food safety education programs.

9. Is it possible to apply as both a Community Outreach project and a Collaborative Education and Training project (in a single state) with a similar topic?

Applicants may only submit one application to the program as the PD.

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10. What are the main goals of the NIFA/FSOP program?

The purpose of the program is to provide customized food safety education to specific audiences impacted by the guidelines established under FSMA, specifically small and mid-sized farms, beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged farmers, small processors, veteran farmers or ranchers and small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers.

11. Many small farms will not be covered by or will be exempt from the FSMA regulation. Will there be any grant funding available to large farms that must comply with FSMA?

The purpose of the program is to provide customized food safety education to specific audiences affected by the current guidelines established under FSMA, specifically small and mid-sized farms, beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged farmers, small processors, and small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers.

12. Are producers and growers that contribute to a mobile farmer's market eligible for this grant?

Yes

13. If most of the farmers we work with are exempt from FSMA, should training materials still primarily address compliance with FSMA, or can it be more general such as GAPs training?

Training materials should address compliance with FSMA.

14. Is the program limited to produce farmers and processors?

No. For example, projects can include fisheries and cheese processors.

15. Will there be any preference given in the selection of awards to applicants from Minority Serving Universities?

NIFA supports and encourages submissions from Minority Serving Institutions, but there are no provisions written into the legislation to provide preference.

16. Are mobile cold storage units and vehicles allowable expenses?

Yes, mobile cold storage units are eligible. Vehicles are allowable; however, applicants must justify the utility.