



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 against a dark background with a stylized sun or light effect behind the letters.

NIFA

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Supplemental and Alternative Crops

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2023
NOTICE OF INTENT DEADLINE: April 6, 2023
APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 27, 2023
ANTICIPATED FUNDING: \$938,000
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-OP-009767
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.200
PROGRAM CODE: HW

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

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Supplemental and Alternative Crops (SAC) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.200.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application Deadline:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, April 27, 2023 [Ref to Part I § C of this RFA]
Notice of Intent:	April 6, 2023
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 (DEIA). National Institute of Food and Agriculture (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. NIFA seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments to the extent possible when developing RFAs, and uses comments to help meet the requirements of [Section 103\(c\)\(2\) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 \(7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)\)](#). Applicants may submit written comments to Policy@usda.gov (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Supplemental and Alternative Crops (SAC) RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This notice identifies the objectives for SAC projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

The SAC supports projects that lead to expanded adaptation and increased acreage in the United States of canola grown for oil and industrial hemp grown for value-added products. This is an integrated research and extension program that will produce results to increase the cost effectiveness and competitiveness of these two crops grown as components of production systems across the country. The SAC supports the breeding, testing, and development of superior performing canola and industrial hemp varieties and production practices that result in improved cost efficiencies, reduced grower risks, and wider use in production systems. Research results and technology developed are expected to be rapidly transferred to producers and other users through effective extension outreach and other engagement efforts. The total funding amount available is approximately \$938,000.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3

TABLE OF CONTENTS 4

TABLE OF TABLES..... 5

PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION 6

A. Legislative Authority6

B. Purpose and Priorities6

C. Program Area Description7

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION 9

A. Available Funding9

B. Application Restrictions9

C. Project and Grant Types9

D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects10

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION..... 11

A. Eligibility Requirements.....11

B. Cost Sharing or Matching11

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION 12

A. Notice of Intent to Submit an Application.....12

B. Method of Application12

C. Content and Form of the Application13

D. Funding Restrictions.....16

PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS 18

A. NIFA’s Evaluation Process18

B. Evaluation Criteria.....19

C. Organizational Management Information.....19

D. Application Disposition.....20

PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION 21

A. General21

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....21

PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION 22

A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget.....22

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards22

C. Regulatory Information22

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT 23

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS..... 24

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS 25

TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines.....	2
Table 2: Program Key Information.....	7
Table 3. Steps to Obtain Application Materials.....	12
Table 4: Help and Resources	13
Table 5: Key Application Instructions.....	13

PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

In accordance with [7 U.S.C. 3319d\(c\)](#), the Secretary of Agriculture, (acting through the NIFA Director), is authorized to make competitive grants to colleges and universities, other Federal agencies, and private sector entities to conduct fundamental and applied research related to the development of new commercial products derived from natural plant material for industrial, medical, and agricultural applications.

The program under this statutory authority may include, but shall not be limited to: conducting comprehensive resource and infrastructure assessments; developing and introducing supplemental and alternative income-producing crops; developing and expanding domestic and export markets for such crops; providing technical assistance to farm owners and operators, marketing cooperatives, and others; and conducting fundamental and applied research related to the development of new commercial products derived from natural plant material [including hemp (as defined in [7 U.S.C. 1639o](#))] for industrial, medical, and agricultural applications.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The SAC Grant Program, Assistance Listing Number 10.200, supports projects that lead to expanded adaptation and increased acreage in the United States of canola grown for oil and industrial hemp grown for value added products. Such crops are important to U.S. agriculture in that these can provide new and profitable cropping options in response to low commodity prices and changes in consumer demand for new agricultural-based products. The U.S. does not produce enough canola oil to meet its annual domestic consumption needs. Modern canola has major uses in healthy human foods and animal feeds, as a natural pest control when used as a cover crop, and as a feedstock in industrial chemical manufacture and biofuel production. Hemp has been grown historically for its essential oil, seed, and fiber. Revival of industrial hemp cultivation requires intensification of crop improvement and marketing research to address the basic and unique challenges facing the emerging U.S. hemp industry.

The purpose of this integrated research and extension program is to adapt these multiple-purpose crops to diverse growing regions in the United States, so that domestic canola oil and industrial hemp production can be significantly increased and be profitable nationwide. Such efforts require strategically designed, region-based research approaches and effective communication of useful information and transfer of technologies to users as rapidly as possible. SAC supports research and Extension in conventional and organic production systems.

Handling of baseline data and data collection will be addressed in the Data Management Plan (DMP) in accordance with the [Part IV\(B\)](#) of this RFA.

The SAC program is aligned with the following strategic goals outlined in the USDA's FY2022-2026 strategic plan [USDA Strategic Plan](#):

Strategic Goal 2: Ensure America's Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous

Strategic Goal 3: Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers

Strategic Goal 4: Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food

Strategic Goal 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities

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 U.S.

Table 2: Program Key Information

	Title	Description
Program Code:	HW	
Program Code Name:		Supplemental and Alternative Crops
ALN:	10.200	
Project Type:		Research and Extension
Grant Type:		Standard
Application Deadline		April 27, 2022
Grant Duration:		24-48 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:		5
Maximum Award Amount:		\$250,000 per year

C. Program Area Description

SAC is an integrated research and extension program to improve the productivity and profitability of canola grown for oil and industrial hemp grown for value-added products through their expanded use as components in sustainable production systems across the United States.

The SAC program encourages applicants to establish and work through region-based, multi-state research networks to address priority national or regional science needs of the canola and industrial hemp industries. The SAC program seeks to accelerate the development and use of superior varieties and practices adapted to regional conditions that produce benefits to growers and allied industries. By bringing together expertise across multiple university, federal agency, and industry organizations and states, the SAC program seeks to enhance the effectiveness of limited state, federal, and industry resources to produce greater impacts. Research results, information, and technology developed are expected to be rapidly transferred to producers and other users through effective extension outreach and other engagement efforts. Virtual methods of outreach are encouraged to expand potential audience reach.

NIFA is soliciting applications for the FY 2023 SAC under the following two areas:

- a. Canola:
 - i. Testing germplasm and breeding to develop superior performing canola varieties that increase productivity, profitability, and adaptation to an expanded range of U.S. growing environments;
 - ii. Conducting fundamental and applied research and extension activities to develop innovative planting, cultivating, harvesting methods for use in production systems

- that include superior performing canola varieties to improve input cost efficiencies and reduce producer and other supply chain participant risks;
- iii. Conducting fundamental and applied research and extension activities to develop canola production practices that enhance the use of canola as a pollinator friendly crop.

b. Industrial Hemp:

- i. Fundamental and applied research to develop production systems for hemp grown for grain or fiber with a THC content of 0.3% or less, including cultivar evaluation and development, plant spacing and harvesting techniques.
- ii. Economic research and extension that lead to expanded development of markets for industrial hemp grown for grain or fiber, including the current size of the markets, the potential for market increases, prices that can be expected by growers, and potential bottlenecks in the supply chain.

Proposals must include stakeholder input in priority setting, project development, and implementation, and pursue regional coordination of canola-or industrial hemp-related research and extension activities. Applicants are required to provide evidence as appropriate of interdisciplinary, multi-regional cooperation, and use the expertise and resources of land grant and other colleges and universities, Federal agencies, and private industry. Traditional ecological knowledge is an acceptable topic to pursue the objectives of this RFA.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for SAC in FY2023 is approximately \$938,000. 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. Application for FY2023 is limited to the following application types:

1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).
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:

1. Project Types

Only projects that integrate research and extension will be considered. Project periods may be extended but may not exceed five years total. Applicants are required to provide evidence of multi-regional cooperation and, where appropriate, use other relevant and complementary expertise and resources of land grant and other colleges and universities, other Federal agencies, and private industry.

For Canola, NIFA will recognize two types of projects:

a. **Regional Integrated Research and Extension Projects (RIREP):**

Established canola industry associations are found in the following three geographic regions, and therefore projects applying for these regions should lead to results that can increase acres planted and improve profitability for canola oil growers. Program preference is to fund at least one canola project per region (regions detailed below) to maximize impacts for canola growers in those regions when application(s) are deemed meritorious, and funding allows. Meritorious applications are determined by a peer-review panel of experts.

North Central: Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Eastern Montana

Great Plains: Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Wyoming

Pacific Northwest: Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Western Montana

Other information:

1. Each regional project should have at least two states participating from within the same region and,
2. Up to 25% of the funding can go to states outside of a designated region.

We encourage applicants to form partnerships throughout your region since resources are limited and only one project per region might be funded. Applicants are encouraged to engage local, state, and national canola grower organizations. These organizations can assist potential applicants in connecting with other scientists and industry representatives with similar interests.

b. Projects in Other States (POS):

There is strong potential for canola production to expand into states other than those where canola has traditionally been grown. Projects in these states should lead to results that will help expand the range of profitable canola production.

For Industrial Hemp, NIFA will recognize one type of project: Integrated Research and Extension (IREP)

The geographic region information specified for canola projects does not apply. Hemp proposals with collaborations across multiple states are encouraged but does not have to be specific to any given region as described for canola. Proposals are expected to be integrated research and extension projects.

2. **Grant Types:** All projects for both canola and industrial hemp will be standard grants. Standard Grants support targeted scientific Research, Education, Extension, or Integrated 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

Colleges and universities (as defined in section 1404 of NARETPA, [7 U.S.C. 3103](#)), other Federal agencies, and private sector entities are eligible to submit applications. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. Applicants for SAC must meet one of the requirements listed above. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from review or, if reviewed, 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 – Submission of duplicate or predominantly overlapping applications is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits multiple applications that are duplicative or substantially overlapping to NIFA programs within the same fiscal year. In the case of multiple submissions of the same application, the application with the most recent time stamp will be considered for acceptance. If the application is recommended for funding, NIFA will require all other submissions for funding of the proposed project be withdrawn as Federal funding may be provided for each objective only once. 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 - SAC has ***NO*** matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Notice of Intent to Submit an Application

Prospective applicants are asked to email a Notice of Intent to Submit an Application by April 6, 2023, to “sm.nifa.scri@usda.gov”. This notification is not required and does not enter into the review of a subsequent application. The information it contains will be used by program staff to plan the review process. It will not be used for screening for project appropriateness or applicant eligibility, nor will feedback be offered.

This email should include the following information. **Notification of intent message should be succinct. Please do not include abstract, bios, or information other than what is requested. Use a simple numbered format as listed here:**

1. Descriptive (draft) title of proposed research
2. Crop to be considered: canola or hemp
3. Name of the Project Director and Applicant Institution name
4. Names of other potential co-Project Directors and their affiliations, if applicable
5. Priority area(s) addressed

Subject line of email should read: SAC – Intent to Submit

E-mail should be sent to sm.nifa.scri@usda.gov

B. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 3** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.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 3. Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements).
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-OP-009767 , search for application here: Opportunity Package .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization’s readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 4: Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
Grants.gov Online Support Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: support@grants.gov Self-service customer-based support: Grants.gov iPortal grantapplicationquestions@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

C. 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 5** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 5: 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 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 received correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 10 business days of the application deadline.	N/A

SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for the required certifications and assurances.

SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s). See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

R&R Other Project Information Form. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. **Field 7.** Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of SAC. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. **Field 8.** Project Narrative (PN). The PN must not exceed **22 1.5 spaced** pages of written text, figures, and tables (the font size for written text and for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman). The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. Only the first 22 pages of written text, including tables and figures, that count towards the page limit will be reviewed if the application is found to exceed the page limit. The PN must include all the following:
 - a. **Introduction.** Identify the program area to which you are applying. Define the states working on the project. Clearly state the high priority need of the canola or industrial hemp industry, who will benefit and how they will benefit, and the specific goals of the proposed research. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities related to your proposed research, citing the work of key project personnel or others that is relevant to the project. Preliminary data or information pertinent to the proposed research should be included in this section. Describe the qualifications of key personnel, adequacy of facilities, and the project management capability of the applicant institution.
 - b. **Rational and significance.** Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed research as it relates to the goals of this RFA as well as the specific research area to be addressed. This section should:
 - i. Address the priority-setting process and the method of engaging stakeholder involvement in problem identification, planning, implementation of research, evaluation, and utilization of results.
 - ii. Describe any coordination of the research in national or regional efforts and describe how this research complements other work conducted by land grant and other universities, Federal agencies, and industry.
 - iii. Discuss novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers.
 - c. **Objectives.** State the project objectives to meet the RFA goals.
 - d. **Approach.** Describe how each stated objective will be addressed. Include:
 - i. Methods to be used in carrying out the research and extension components.
 - ii. Means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, and interpreted.
 - iii. A detailed description of how you will communicate your findings and transfer technologies to intended users (Information Dissemination Plan).
 - iv. A clear description of each team members' role and responsibility to the project.

(including questions about data privacy, etc.), please contact the NIFA program contacts listed at the end of this RFA.

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

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name "Supplemental and Alternative Crops" and the program code "HW". Accurate entry is critical.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

D. 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 \(NARETPA\)](#) 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 (see [7 CFR 3430.52\(b\)](#)). 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), 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 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, considering 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.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of NIFA will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel comments to the PD.

Conflicts of interest. NIFA takes extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may influence the review or evaluation (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

B. Evaluation Criteria

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate this RFA:

1. Design (60%). Each of the following components will be considered:
 - a. The application's methodologies and analytical approaches are appropriate to project objectives, have high scientific merit, and effectively integrate the research and extension activities. (25%)
 - b. The application demonstrates a "whole systems approach"; that is, a compelling understanding of the problem(s) it will address, the production system as a whole, and how the proposed solution(s) will contribute to both. (10%)
 - c. Project is well planned and potentially attainable within project time, scope, and budget. (10%)
 - d. Awareness of previous or alternative approaches are identified and explained when necessary. Even if a single component is the focus of the project, the proposal must provide a thorough analysis of the broader systems context for why that component is critical. (5%)
 - e. Project feasibility or likelihood it will help maintain and expand the use of canola and industrial hemp grown in the United States and advance the science. (10%)
2. Outreach plan (20%). Application includes a detailed extension engagement and outreach plan and schedule for how: 1) team interacts with interested communities (e.g., farmers) to understand need, and 2) new genetic materials, information, knowledge, or other technology will be delivered to those served by the project. A description of how extension outreach impacts will be measured and reported is also included.
3. An interdisciplinary and industry-engaged approach (5%). The application documents the necessary collective expertise in biological sciences, physical sciences, engineering, socio-economic sciences, extension, and program evaluation, as well as participation from principal stakeholders and partners. Qualifications of project personnel are clearly demonstrated. How these experts collaborate to reach project goals, increasing the sustainability, productivity, and profitability of the canola or industrial hemp industry, are well described.
4. RFA alignment (5%). Application clearly states which RFA research area(s) will be addressed, and the specified objectives are relevant to RFA purpose and priorities.
5. Appropriateness of budget (5%). Budget allocations reflect the personnel and tasks associated with the activities needed to accomplish the objectives. The budget plan describes how this program's funding complements other funding sources including Federal capacity and competitive funds, and state, industry, and other kinds of support.
6. Suitability and feasibility of Data Management Plan. (5%)

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 Federal Assistance 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, [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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Bisoondat.Macoon@usda.gov
601-331-6023

Thomas A. Bewick
TBewick@usda.gov
202-306-8670

Megan O'Reilly
Megan.Oreilly2@usda.gov
202-455-5410

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

Glossary of Terms

Authorized Representative – AR

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

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance – CFDA

Data Management Plan – DMP

Indirect Costs - IDC

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

NIFA’s Award Management Division – AMD

Project Narrative – PN

Request for Application – RFA

Research, Education, and Economics – REE

Supplemental and Alternative Crops - SAC

Total Federal Funds Awarded – TFFA

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.

Definitions

Industrial hemp (hemp):

The term “hemp” means the plant *Cannabis sativa* L. and any part of that plant, including the seeds thereof and all derivatives, extracts, cannabinoids, isomers, acids, salts, and salts of isomers, whether growing or not, with a delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol concentration of not more than 0.3 percent on a dry weight basis. This definition is taken from the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub.L. 115-334) ([7 U.S.C. 1639o](#)).

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. There will be no renewal awards in 2023.

Resubmitted Application:

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