



National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

BIOENERGY, CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT
FOOD PRODUCTION AND SUSTAINABILITY
YOUTH, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
FOOD SAFETY AND NUTRITION
INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

NIFA

OREI: Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative FY2023

RFA Announcement and Technical Assistance Webinar

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Meeting Logistics

- This webinar will be recorded. Please be sure your microphone is muted.
- **Zoom Tech Support** = 1-888-799-0125, Option 2
- Throughout the presentation, you may type questions in the chat box.
- Slides and the recording from this webinar will be posted to <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/organic-agriculture-research-extension-initiative-rfa-technical-assistance-webinar>



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Introductions

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Topics We Will Cover

- NIFA Overview
- Program Overview
- Request for Applications (RFA) Details
- Proposal Evaluation Process
- Additional Information/Resources



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NIFA Overview

NIFA Overview

- **National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)** is the extramural science-funding agency within USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area.
- NIFA **invests in and supports** initiatives that ensure the long-term viability of agriculture.
- NIFA provides **funding and strategic leadership** for programs that ensure groundbreaking discoveries in agriculture-related sciences and technologies reach the people who can put them into practice.

Topics Covered by NIFA Programs



Advanced Technologies

Bioenergy; Biotechnology;
Nanotechnology



Animals

Animal Breeding; Animal Health;
Animal Production; Aquaculture



Business and Economy

Markets and Trade; Natural Resource
Economics; Small Business



Natural Resources

Forests; Grassland and Rangeland; Soil,
Water, and Air



Education

Minority Serving Institutions; Teaching
and Learning; Workforce Development



Environment

Climate Change; Ecosystems; Invasive
Pests and Diseases



Farming and Ranching

Agriculture Safety & Technology; Farmer
Education; Organic & Family Farms



Human Sciences

Community Vitality; Family Well-Being;
Youth



Food Science

Food Quality; Food Safety



Food and Nutrition Security

Nutrition; Obesity; Wellness



International

Global Engagement; Global
Food Security



Plants

Crop Production; Pest
Management; Plant
Breeding; Plant Health



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Program Overview

Purpose

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- The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI), seeks to solve critical organic agricultural issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research, education, and extension activities.
- The purpose of this program is to fund high priority integrated projects that will enhance the competitiveness of producers and processors **who have already adopted organic standards.**



2023 Priorities

RFA Page 7-8

- **Priority 1:** Conduct **advanced on-farm** crop, livestock, or integrated livestock-crop research and development that emphasize observation of, experimentation with, and innovation for organic farms, including production, marketing, socioeconomic, and environmental considerations.
- **Priority 2:** Develop and demonstrate educational **tools for Cooperative Extension personnel and other professionals who advise producers** on organic practices.
- **Priority 3:** Evaluate, develop, and improve allowable **post-harvest handling, processing, and food safety practices** to reduce toxins and microbial contamination, while increasing shelf-life, quality, and other economically important characteristics.
- **Priority 4:** Strengthen **organic crop propagation systems**, including seed and transplant production and protection, and plant breeding for organic production conditions, with an emphasis on **publicly available releases**.

2023 Priorities (Continued)

RFA Page 7-8

- **Priority 5:** Explore technologies that meet the requirements of the National Organic Program (NOP) and protect **soil, water, and other natural resources**. This includes systems-based integrated management programs to address **diseases, nematodes, weeds, and insect pests-related problems**.
- **Priority 6:** Develop or improve **systems-based animal production, animal health, and pest management practices** to improve animal productivity, health, and welfare while retaining or enhancing economic viability, and mitigating the impacts of climate change.
- **Priority 7:** **Breed, evaluate, and select animal breeds and genotypes** adapted to organic systems.



2023 Priorities (Continued 2)

RFA Page 7-8

- **Priority 8:** Develop **undergraduate and/or graduate curriculum** for organic agriculture.
- **Priority 9:** **Identify marketing, policy, and other socioeconomic barriers** to the expansion of organic agriculture in the United States and develop strategies to address them. Lobbying and advocacy activities are not appropriate under this priority.



Other Program Requirements

RFA Page 9

- Organic systems fieldwork **must be done on certified organic land and/or facilities**. In special cases, studies can be conducted on land/facilities in transition to organic certification as is appropriate to project goals and objectives.
- It is expected that land/facilities in transition to organic certification will be **certified by the end of the project**.
- For this program, a land/facility is not considered certified organic unless it has received **USDA certification**.
- Trials investigating **animal health** issues should be conducted in a certified **organic setting** if animal management could play a pivotal role in the response of the animal to the proposed intervention.
- Proposals with significant overlap in objectives and scope cannot be submitted **simultaneously** to both OREI and ORG (Organic Transitions) programs or any other NIFA program.

Other Program Requirements: Previous funding

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- If you have previously received funding from OREI or ORG **as PD** and you are submitting a proposal **as PD**, provide the following:
 - Award number(s)
 - Significant outcome from each award (maximum of 300 words per award)
- Both OREI and ORG projects are relevant. This section does not count against the 21-page limit of the project narrative and will not penalize those who have not received prior awards.



Eligibility

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1. State agricultural experiment stations;
2. Colleges and universities;
3. University research foundations;
4. Other research institutions and organizations;
5. Federal agencies;
6. National laboratories;
7. Private organizations, foundations, or corporations;
8. Individuals who are United States citizens or nationals; or
9. A group consisting of two or more of the entities described in subparagraphs (1) through (8).

Application Submission & Award Limitations

- There is **no limit** to the number of applications that eligible institutions may submit to this program as a lead institution.
- There is **no limit** to the number of applications that eligible applicants may submit to this program as PDs or Co-PDs
- There is **no limit** to the number of awards per institution per fiscal year.
- However, submission of **duplicate** or predominantly overlapping applications within the same fiscal year is **not allowed**. NIFA will disqualify both applications.



Project and Grant Types

RFA Page 11

Project Types

Integrated
Curriculum

Grant Types

Standard
Conferences
Planning



Project and Grant Type Description Table

RFA Page 11-14

Project Types		Project Periods	Grant Types	Max. Funding Requests
Integrated Project Proposals	Tier 1	3 to 4 years	Standard	\$3,500,000
	Tier 2	3 to 4 years	Standard	\$2,000,000
	Tier 3	3 to 4 years	Standard	\$1,000,000
Curriculum Development Proposal		3 to 4 years	Standard	\$750,000
Conference Proposal		1 year	Conference	\$50,000
Planning Proposal		1 year	Planning	\$50,000

Project and Grant Type Description

RFA Page 12

- **Integrated Project Proposals:** Must include research and at least one additional element (education and/or extension). To accommodate projects differing in scope, three types of integrated project proposals are offered.
 - **Tier 1 Proposals.** These are large, coordinated projects addressing critical issues that cut across multiple regions. An advisory panel is required for Tier 1 proposals.
 - **Tier 2 Proposals.** These are multidisciplinary projects addressing issues that may be either national or regional.
 - **Tier 3 Proposals.** These are projects addressing specific critical constraints, possibly with narrower scope or locality-specific nature.

Project and Grant Type Description (Con.)

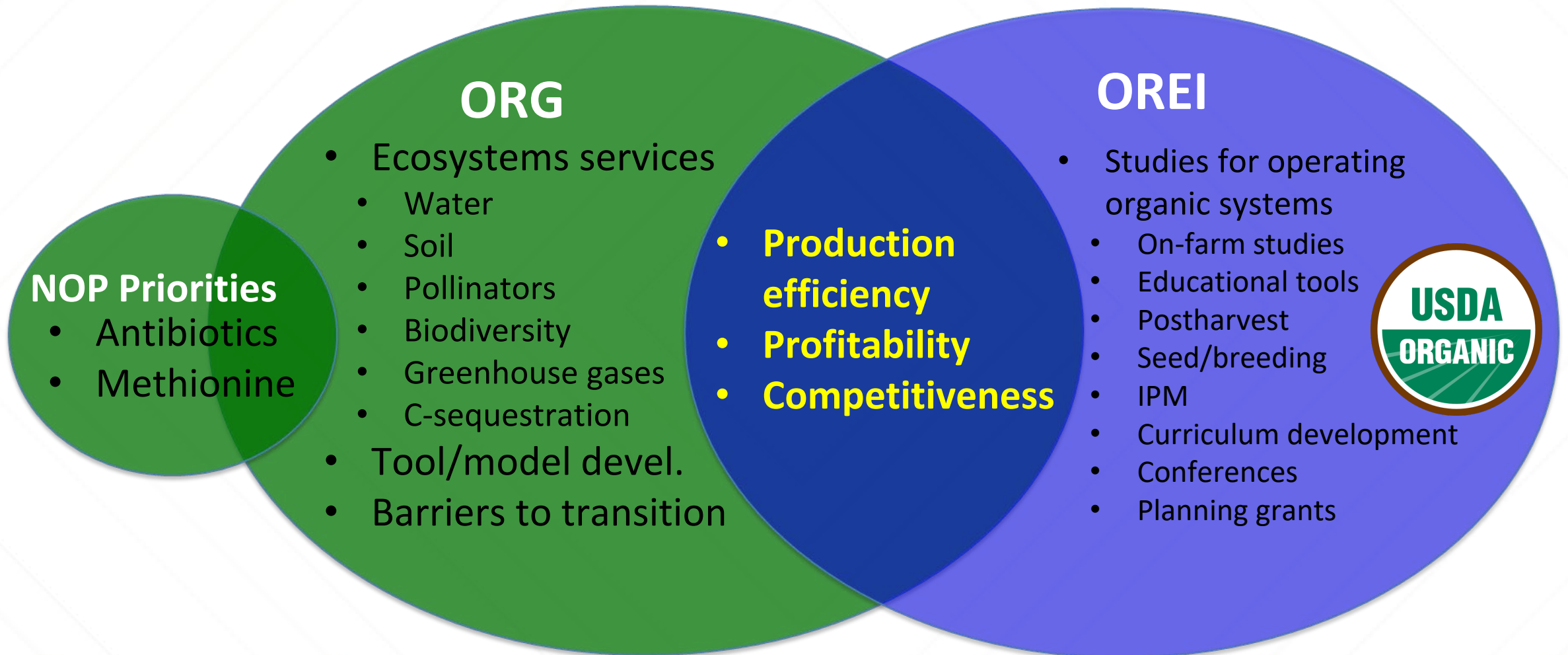
- **Curriculum Development Proposals:** Curriculum development proposals provide assistance in the development of undergraduate and/or graduate curriculum in organic agriculture.
 - Education activities under this priority may include instructional delivery programs and experiential learning including student-farmer engagement for students enrolled in degree programs.
 - Routine use of students as personnel on research projects is not considered education for the purposes of this priority.
 - Programs designed to educate growers are considered extension rather than educational activities for the purpose of this RFA.

Project and Grant Type Description (Con. 2)

RFA Page 13 - 14

- **Conference Proposals:** Support workshops or symposia bringing together scientists and others, including end-users, to identify research, education, or extension needs; update information; or advance understanding of organic issues and problems using a systems-based approach
- **Planning Proposals:** Provide assistance in the development of future OREI proposals requiring multi-regional or regional coordination

Activities Funded: OREI vs. ORG



Specific Priorities are listed in the RFAs

Activities Not Funded

- Land purchase
- Farm equipment purchase
- Construction or renovation of buildings/facilities
- International Activities (unless they address critical organic agriculture issues in the United States)
- Direct assistance to producers

Cost Share or Matching

RFA Page 15

- Matching requirement on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all Federal funds
- NIFA may waive matching requirement if:
 - The results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or
 - The project involves a minor commodity, the project deals with scientifically important research, and the grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.
- Matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.



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Application Details and Documents

Application Details

RFA Page 1 & 11

- RFA is available online at <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-opportunities/organic-agriculture-research-extension-initiative>
 - [OREI and ORG Program Synopsis](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions about OREI and ORG Programs](#)
- **Application Deadline:** 5 p.m. (Eastern Time) April 13, 2023
 - Submitted through Grants.gov
- Total funding available in FY 2023: ~ \$44,000,000 funding available to states
- Program Code: 113.A
- Maximum funding per award: \$3,500,000
- Proposals per Institution: N/A
- Awards per Institution: N/A

Key Documents

Key components of your Application:

- Project Summary/Abstract
- Executive summary and table of contents
- Outcome from previous awards
- Project Narrative
- Bibliography/Reference List
- Data Management Plan
- Project Timeline
- Logic Model (required for **Tier 1** and **Tier 2** project proposals)
- Budget and Budget Narrative
- Other Documents (See RFA and [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#))

Application Details (contd.)

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- Project Narrative has a **21-page limit (7 pages for Conference and Planning Proposals)** and will be strictly enforced.
 - **1 or 1.5 spacing**
 - 12-point Times New Roman font
 - Includes text, figures, and tables
 - Tables may be single spaced
- Applications exceeding the page limitation will be returned without review.

Data Management Plan

RFA Page 22

- Investigators must provide detailed (up to 2 pages) business and management plans including:
 - Expected data type
 - Data format
 - Data storage and preservation
 - Data sharing, protection, and public access
 - Roles and responsibilities
- Please also review: nifa.usda.gov/resource/data-management-plan-nifa-funded-research-projects

Application Submission

RFA Page 17 - 18

- NIFA only accepts **electronic** submission of applications.
- NIFA Grants Application Guide available:
nifa.usda.gov/resource/nifa-grantsgov-application-guide
- Application documents **must be in Portable Document Format (PDF)** to be accepted by NIFA, including your narrative and budget justifications.
 - Grants.gov may allow other formats, but NIFA does **NOT**
 - Do not use third-party PDF builders





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Proposal Evaluation Process

Evaluation Process

Proposals are assigned for review to at least 3 reviewers with expertise in the proposed topic.

Reviewers will produce individual reviews of each proposal, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses.

These written reviews are used to begin panel discussions with other reviewers serving on the peer-review panel.

Through these discussions, peer-review panelists come to consensus on the final rating and ranking of proposals.

Evaluation Criteria

RFA Page 25-26

- **Proposal Relevance**

- See RFA for details (Varies depending on type of proposal: Integrated, Conference, planning, etc.)

- **Proposal Quality**

- Conceptual adequacy. Application clearly states objectives and how they will be achieved within the timeframe, scope, and budget of the proposed project;
- Approach. The proposed method and approach are appropriate to project objectives;
- Involvement of appropriate and relevant expertise;
- Experience of key project personnel;
- Appropriateness of budget;
- Feasibility, probability of success; and
- Adherence to guidelines and appropriate Data Management Plan

Timeline of Competitive Programs

1-2 months

- Request for Applications (RFA) release
- Proposal writing and planning
- **Proposals due**

2-3 months

- Proposal under peer review
- Proposal funding notifications

1-2 months

- Awards are finalized and made

On average, a competitive program takes about 3-5 months from the proposal due date to an award being made to an institution.

We will keep you updated as much as possible. We appreciate your patience!



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Additional Information

Use CRIS to Find Funded Awards

The screenshot shows the home page of the Current Research Information System (CRIS) website. At the top left is the USDA logo and the text "United States Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture". A navigation bar contains links for "Home", "About CRIS", "Search Menu", "Reports", "Help", and "Contact Us". The main content area features a "You are here: Home" breadcrumb, a "Current Research Information System" heading with a "More" link, and a welcome message. The welcome message states: "Welcome to the Current Research Information System (CRIS) web site. The Current Research Information System (CRIS) provides documentation and reporting for ongoing agricultural, food science, human nutrition, and forestry research, education and extension activities for the United States Department of Agriculture; with a focus on the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) grant programs. Projects are conducted or sponsored by USDA research agencies, state agricultural experiment stations, land-grant universities, other cooperating state institutions, and participants in NIFA-administered grant programs, including Small Business Innovation Research and Agriculture and Food Research Initiative. The Planning, Accountability, & Reporting Staff office of NIFA is responsible for maintaining CRIS." Below this is a paragraph: "Use the top 'navbar' to navigate through the CRIS web site, or click on the links in the left and right columns to search the CRIS database, to view the Manual of Classification, or to enter our Forms Assistance web site." On the left side, there is a "Search CRIS" section with links for "Assisted Search", "Professional Search", and "Search Pending Projects", followed by an "Other Functions" section with links for "NIFA Admin Functions" and "Manual of Classification". On the right side, there is a "What's New in CRIS ?" section with a list of topics: "Avian Influenza", "Biofuels/Bioenergy", "Food Safety (Ala-Mic)", "Food Safety (Min-Wyo)", "Mad Cow/TSE/Rltd", "Nanotechnology", "Obesity/Weight Control", "Soybean Rust", and "Tribal Education".

- [https://cris.nifa.usda.gov/cgi-bin/starfinder/0?path=fastlink1.txt&id=anon&pass=&search=\(GC=113.A\)&format=WEBTITLESGIY](https://cris.nifa.usda.gov/cgi-bin/starfinder/0?path=fastlink1.txt&id=anon&pass=&search=(GC=113.A)&format=WEBTITLESGIY)

Upcoming Events

- NIFA Events Calendar for upcoming deadlines, meetings and webinars: nifa.usda.gov/events
- Upcoming Request for Applications (RFA) release calendar: nifa.usda.gov/upcoming-rfa-calendar



Grant Resources

- Funding Opportunities: nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-opportunities
- Competitive Grants Flowchart: nifa.usda.gov/competitive-grants
- NIFA Grant Resources: nifa.usda.gov/grant-training
- NIFA Policy Guide: nifa.usda.gov/policy-guide
- Indirect Costs: nifa.usda.gov/indirect-costs
- A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov:
apply07.grants.gov/apply/opportunities/instructions/PKG00249520-instructions.pdf
- Information on Awarded Grants: cris.nifa.usda.gov
- NIFA Organic Program: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/organic-agriculture-program>



Questions?

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