



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, sans-serif font. The letters are set against a background of stylized, overlapping waves in shades of orange and yellow, suggesting a landscape or agricultural theme.

# REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

## *New Beginning for Tribal Students Program*

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year 2023

APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 26, 2023

ANTICIPATED FUNDING: \$5,000,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-TGP-009902

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.527

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Required

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

**Assisted Listing.** The New Beginning for Tribal Students (NBTS) grant program is listed in the Assistance Listings under 10.527.

**Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines**

Task Description	Deadline
<b>Application:</b>	5:00 P.M. Eastern, May 26, 2023
<b>Letter of Intent:</b>	Not Required
<b>Applicant Comments:</b>	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.** The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when equity is grounded in the programs. 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](#) as amended ([7 U.S.C. 7613 \(c \)\(2\) Input regarding the prior year's request for proposals](#)). Applicants may submit written comments to [Policy@usda.gov](mailto:Policy@usda.gov) (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the New Beginning for Tribal Students RFA.

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

The amount available for grants in FY 2023 is approximately \$5,000,000.

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## PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### A. Legislative Authority

In accordance with [7 U.S.C. 3222e](#), the Secretary is authorized to make competitive grants to land-grant colleges and universities to provide identifiable support specifically targeted for tribal students through the New Beginning for Tribal Students (NBTS) grant program.

### B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the NBTS grant program, Assistance Listing 10.527, is to increase the retention and graduation rate of tribal students attending 1994, 1862, and 1890 land-grant universities. The primary goals and objectives of the program are for land-grant colleges or universities to use NBTS funding to support tribal students through all the following, but not limited to: recruiting; tuition and related fees; experiential learning; student services, including tutoring; counseling; academic advising; and other student services that would increase the retention and graduation rate of tribal students enrolled at land-grant colleges or universities.

The NBTS grant program may support tribal students by fostering a path from secondary to post-secondary education to allow for an inviting space for tribal students to attend land-grant colleges and universities. Only land-grant colleges and universities are eligible to apply for NBTS funding. Land-grant colleges and universities are encouraged to partner with Tribal Governments, community colleges, high schools, technical institutions, and other organizations that work with tribal students. Proposals that foster Indigenous language preservation and/or traditional ecological knowledge, as a part of the post-secondary curriculum and/or extracurricular activities, are welcome in response to this RFA.

The NBTS grant program is aligned with the following:

USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 found at

(<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-fy-2022-2026-strategic-plan.pdf>)

1. **Strategic Goal 3:** Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers,
2. **Strategic Goal 5:** Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities, and
3. **Strategic Goal 6:** Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA.

Strategic Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA. Additional requirements on expected performance goals, indicators and targets may be required as a condition of award. The NBTS grant program is a covered program of the Justice40 Initiative (Section 223 of Executive Order 14008 - [Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad](#)).

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

Any student in any discipline can be funded under this project as long as they are taking or have taken general education requirements in the STEM field that are required in any of the

agriculture sciences. The students funded under this program do not need to be enrolled in an agriculture-seeking degree program.

**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.

**Table 2:** Program Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	NBTS
Program Code Name:	New Beginning for Tribal Students (NBTS)
CFDA Number	10.527
Project Type:	<u>Education/Teaching Projects</u>
Grant Type:	Regular, Collaborative Grant Type 1
Application Deadline	May 26, 2023
Grant Duration:	Up to 4 Years
Anticipated # of Awards:	10
Maximum Award Amount:	\$500,000

## PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

### A. Available Funding

The amount available for the New Beginning for Tribal Students (NBTS) grant program in FY 2023 is approximately \$5,000,000.

USDA is not committed to fund any application or to make a specific number of awards. [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. Types of Application

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. Applications for FY 2023 is limited to the following application types:

**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](#) of this RFA for definition).

### C. Grant and Project Types

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

**1. Grant Types.** Applicants must propose one of two types of grant types: Regular or Collaborative Grant Type 1.

**a. Regular Grant Type**

- i. Applicants may request up to \$250,000 (including indirect costs) for a Regular Grant.
- ii. Project periods may not exceed 4 years.
- iii. Applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

**b. Collaborative Grant Type 1 (CG1)** (Applicant + Another Collaborator, for example, a 1994 land-grant institution or non-land-grant Tribal college, high school, Tribal Government, community college, another land-grant institution, a technical school, or an organization that works with tribal students)

- i. Applicants may request up to \$500,000 (total, including indirect costs) for a Collaborative Grant Type 1 (CG1) project.
- ii. Project periods may not exceed 4 years.
- iii. Applicant executes the project with assistance from one collaborator, for example, a 1994 land-grant institution or nonland-grant Tribal college, high school, Tribal Government, community college, technical school, or an organization that works with tribal students. The partners must share grant funds (see explanation of required fund distribution percentage among partners in the definition of a Collaborative Grant Type 1 in [Appendix III](#) of this RFA). There must be a letter of collaboration, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other documentation of collaboration included with this application.
- iv. CG1 projects must include both the Research & Related Federal and Non-Federal Budget and the Research & Related Fed and Non-Fed Subaward Budget Attachment Forms. The forms should clearly identify the total grant

funding anticipated for the applicant and each partner to demonstrate the required sharing percentage. All expenditures for the applicant and all partners expenditures should be further itemized in the Budget Justification. Funds do not have to be divided equally among project years.

**2. Project Type.** Applicants must propose the following:

**Education/Teaching:** Single-function Education Projects develop human capital relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. Projects should focus on developing skills necessary for entry- and mid-level technical employment or for entering graduate programs in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences.

**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**

Applicants for the NBTS 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. In accordance with [7 U.S.C. 3222e](#), the Secretary is authorized to make competitive grants to land-grant colleges or universities which includes 1994 Institutions (as defined in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-382; [7 U.S.C. 301](#) note)) to provide support targeted at tribal students. Land-grant colleges and universities include 1862, 1890 and 1994 land-grant institutions. For full listing, please see [Land-Grant Colleges and Universities](#).

Tribal student is defined in this legislation as a student at a land-grant college or university that is a member of an Indian tribe as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C 5304). The maximum amount allowable per state is \$500,000 per year.

Applicants for the NBTS grants program 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 Submissions*** – duplicate submissions of the same proposal by the same PD to different programs is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits duplicate submissions to multiple programs. 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**

***Match Required*** – Applicants MUST provide at minimum 100% matching contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all Federal funds awarded under the New Beginning for Tribal Students grant program. NIFA is not authorized to waive this matching requirement for any applicant or awardee.

## PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

### A. 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](http://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](http://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 <a href="http://Grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> must register early with <a href="http://Grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> prior to submitting an application ( <a href="#">Register Here</a> ).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install <a href="#">Adobe Reader</a> (see <a href="#">Adobe Software Compatibility</a> for basic system requirements)
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number <b>USDA-NIFA-TGP-009902</b> , search for application here: <a href="#">Opportunity Package</a> .
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
<a href="#">Grants.gov Online Support</a> Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035  Email support: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a> Self-service customer-based support: <a href="http://Grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> <a href="mailto:iPortalgrantapplicationquestions@usda.gov">iPortalgrantapplicationquestions@usda.gov</a>  Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except <a href="#">federal holidays</a>	Email: <a href="mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov">grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov</a>  Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except <a href="#">federal holidays</a>

### 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 application guide if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. NIFA will accept subsequent submissions to an application until the application deadline. However, 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 <a href="#">NIFA Grants Application Guide</a> )
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 <a href="#">Grants.gov</a> 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 30 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 the New Beginning for Tribal Students. 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 15 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text font size no smaller than 11 points Times New Roman, and up to 3 *1.5 spaced* additional pages for figures and tables (the font size 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. The PN must include all the following:
  - a. **Table of Contents.**
  - b. **What is the problem/challenge this proposal is addressing;** who is the target population; what is the anticipated impact of the proposed project.
  - c. **Project Justification:** Summarize the body of knowledge justifying the need

for the proposed project. Describe any current New Beginning for Tribal Students awards that you currently have if applicable or other programs in place that are similar in scope if applicable.

- d. **Institutional Long-Range Goals:** Demonstrate how the institution/organization attributes a high priority to the project; how will this project increase the number of degrees that tribal students receive and how will this project measure that number.
- e. **Innovation and Inclusiveness:** How will the proposed project improve the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its recruitment and retention of tribal students? Describe the projected increase in the institutions graduation rates of tribal students through literature review and the institution's historical knowledge. If non-Native staff are working on this project, will cultural awareness training be provided?
- f. **Methodology:** Describe how the institution is going to accomplish the objectives of the project. How will resources and personnel be included? What cultural issues need to be addressed by the administrators of the grant to be successful? Will there need to be training for administrators for cultural awareness (please describe thoroughly)?
- g. **Timetable:** What are the milestones starting with the project initiation and ending with student graduation and workforce increases for tribal students?
- h. **Measurable Outcomes:** How will the institution measure the outcome of the project? What are the intended impacts of the project?
- i. **Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts:** Explain how the proposed project will maximize partnerships and collaborative efforts between 1862 and/or 1890 land-grant institutions and/or 1994 Institutions and other Tribal colleges, high schools, Tribal Governments, community colleges, other land-grant institutions and other organizations that work with tribal students. Explain how this collaboration will help all organizations, institutions and Nations elevate and enhance tribal students looking beyond just graduation rates of tribal students (i.e., experience of the tribal student, quality of culturally relevant material for the Tribal student, emotional support of the Tribal student, post-college readiness, and other activities to support tribal students). Have a detailed commitment letter from partners explaining their role in the project and future expected outcomes.
- j. **Institutional/Organizational Commitment and Capability:** Demonstrate that the program administration is committed to this project and has the capability to ensure its completion. **Key Personnel:** Discuss the adequacy and specific attributes and project responsibilities of each key person associated with the project. Also include the background and qualifications of those personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering the project evaluation and reporting process and why they will be successful working with tribal students, organizations, and Nations.

3. **Field 12, Add Other Attachments.** See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

- a. **For CG1 applications**, documentation of collaboration is required between each institution (must be attached as PDF). Signed letter(s) of support from the Tribal government or departments are required (must be attached as PDF). Detailed commitment letters are required from the partner institutions, Tribal communities, and others participating in the project. These letters should clearly state the level of commitment and specific actions each entity will undertake as part of these projects. These letters should reflect that the budget is being fairly allocated to participants.
- b. **Institutional Review Board approval** (if applicable) (must be attached as PDF).

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

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

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

1. **Match-** If an applicant concludes that the matching requirements described under [Part III, B](#) of this RFA is not applicable to them; the applicant must include an explanation of their conclusion in the *budget justification*. NIFA will consider this justification when determining final matching requirements or if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements. 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 [NIFA Grants 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 [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. **Field 2.** Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name New Beginning for Tribal Students and the program code (*NBTS*). Accurate entry is critical.
2. **Field 8.** Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

Mentoring Plan – PDF Attachment: Title the attachment as “Mentoring Plan” in the document header and save file as “Mentoring Plan Undergraduate Students or Mentoring Plan Graduate Students or Mentoring Plan Postdoc” as applicable. If the proposal anticipates requesting funding for student or postdoctoral support including scholarships or fellowships, it must include a maximum of a one- to two-page Mentoring Plan (MP) for all recipients. If various tiers of students or scholars are represented in the proposal, please provide separate mentoring plans for each educational or professional level targeted (e.g., high school students, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, etc.). The Mentoring Plan should incorporate:

- a. the roles and responsibilities of the Project Director and Co-Project Directors in managing the mentoring process;
- b. training for and/or credentials of individuals who will serve as mentors (i.e. mentor training). Mentors may be experienced mentors from academia, industry, or government, or student peers at various levels who are expected to provide guidance, cultural support, and sense of community with the activities and facilitate the amplification of program-specific perspectives and accomplishments of the mentees;
- c. a description of mentoring activities that may include, but are not limited to, peer mentoring or layered mentoring, whereby a set of mentees are progressively mentored by others at a higher level in their careers; please incorporate these activities into the overall project timeline;
- d. a description of processes to ensure reasonable accommodations for program participants with disabilities or challenges with accessing program activities. Scholarship programs should include plans to accommodate scholarship recipients who find it necessary to interrupt their program of study because of health, personal, or other reasonable non-academic and non-disciplinary cause(s).

### **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) 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](#).

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.

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](http://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.



## 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, and consumers) 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 minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and
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. **Potential for increasing tribal students' graduation rates with AA/BS/graduate degrees from land-grant institutions.** This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the number of tribal students that graduate at land-grant institutions by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs of tribal students. Elements considered include long-range institutional goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing educational equity, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, and potential for adoption by other institutions/organizations. The proposed project must also show its relevance to the goals of the NBTS program of increasing the number of tribal students graduating from land-grant institutions.
2. **Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages.** This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. The project evaluation plan must state the methodologies in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results, and measurable impacts from the project. The approach is based on sound outreach concepts that are effective in Tribal communities and educational principles and may be documented through background literature or actual institutional data. Emphasis is placed on the quality of support provided to the applicant institution/organization through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project. Any perceived pitfalls and alternative strategies or approaches need to be addressed.
3. **Institutional Capability.** This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its recruitment and retention of tribal students. Elements include all documented partners' commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, cultural support, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic enhancement of tribal students, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support. Include institutional data (i.e., financial, personnel and physical resources available to support the project could all be potential data provided by the applicant, depending upon the need area) to show all documented partners' ability to support the proposed project.
4. **Key Personnel.** This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number, qualifications and expertise of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts and the dissemination of these findings. Specific roles for each key personnel must be defined to ensure appropriate project leadership and to avoid any duplication of effort. CG1 proposals must take into consideration the qualifications and expertise of key persons representing all contributors should be included. Such expertise should address all critical activities of the CG1 project and letters of collaboration should be included.
5. **Budget and Cost Effectiveness.** This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project

personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority educational or research need areas.

**C. Organizational Management Information**

Applicants must submit specific management information relating to an applicant prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only have to update their information if they had previously provided the information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requested 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.

### **C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions (see NIFA's Terms and Conditions for information about NIFA award terms). Program specific reporting guidelines will be included in the [Award Terms and Conditions](#). If there are any award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the award.

## **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](#).

**D. Limited English Proficiency**

NIFA offers language access services, such as interpretation and translation of vital information, free of charge. If you need interpretation or translation services, please visit [NIFA Language Access Services](#) or contact Lois Tuttle, Equal Opportunity Specialist, at [Lois.Tuttle@usda.gov](mailto:Lois.Tuttle@usda.gov) or (443) 386-9488.

## APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

### **Program Contacts**

Erin Riley

[Erin.Riley@usda.gov](mailto:Erin.Riley@usda.gov)

202-505-0361

Prali Chitnis

[Prali.Chitnis@usda.gov](mailto:Prali.Chitnis@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](mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov)
3. Awards under this RFA, please email [awards@usda.gov](mailto: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**

### **Glossary of Terms**

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – AFRI

Assistance Listing Number – ALN

Authorized Representative – AR

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

Coordinated Agricultural Project – CAP

Centers of Excellence – COE

Data Management Plan – DMP

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.

Collaborative Grant Type 1 Projects: Applicant executes the project with assistance from a collaborator, for example a 1994 land-grant institution, a non-land-grant Tribal college, high school, Tribal Government, community college, technical school, or an organization that works with tribal students.

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.