



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

Postdoctoral Fellowships Fiscal Year 2023

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Education and Workforce Development Request for Applications Overview

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Postdoctoral Fellowships Program Contacts

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- Dr. Erika Kraus – Program Specialist
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Fiscal Year 2023 Postdoctoral Fellowship Application Deadline:

Thursday, September 7, 2023 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)



Essential documents

- [NIFA AFRI EWD RFA](#)
- [NIFA AFRI EWD RFA Part IV C additional information](#)
 - Content and Form of the Application
 - Detailed guidance for information requested, including:
 - Project Summary
 - Project Narrative
 - Additional attachments (Data Management Plan, Logic Model, CVs, etc.)
- [NIFA AFRI RFA Review Criteria](#)
- [NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide](#)
 - General guidance on using grants.gov
 - How-to on forms referenced in the RFA ('SF424,' 'R&R,' etc.)



Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Overview

- National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
- Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)
- Education and Workforce Development (EWD) Request for Applications (RFA)



NIFA

- Extramural science-funding agency within USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area
- **Invests in and supports** initiatives that ensure the long-term viability of agriculture
- 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



AFRI Priority Areas

1. Plant health and production and plant products;
2. Animal health and production and animal products;
3. Food safety, nutrition, and health;
4. Bioenergy, natural resources, and environment;
5. Agriculture systems and technology; and
6. Agriculture economics and rural communities.



AFRI Requests for Applications (RFAs)

1. Foundational and Applied Sciences
2. Sustainable Agricultural Systems
3. Education and Workforce Development

****All AFRI RFAs address the six priority areas****



EWD RFA

- Growing Agricultural Literacy and Workforce Development for the Future
- Training or Retraining of Agricultural Workers
- Developing Pathways
- Advancing Science – *Postdoctoral Fellowships*
- *All applications must address at least one of the six AFRI Priority Areas*



Postdoctoral Fellowship Purpose and Priorities

- Develop new scientists and professionals to enter research, education, and/or extension fields within the food and agricultural sciences.
- Cultivate future leaders capable of solving emerging agricultural challenges of the 21st century.



Postdoctoral Fellowship Applicant Eligibility

- All doctoral degree requirements must be satisfied by no earlier than January 1, 2020, and no later than June 7, 2024.
- Documentation from the graduate advisor, graduate committee, or the institution must be provided by the application deadline.
- Must be a citizen, national, or permanent resident of the United States.



Expectations

- Fellows are required to carry out their projects on a full-time basis (i.e. 100% effort).
- The postdoctoral scholar must be the sole Project Director.
- The selection of disciplines to address an issue is to be determined by the prospective applicant in consultation with appropriate mentor(s).
- Although a proposed project may fit in the context of the mentor's existing scientific area, the Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant should initiate an independent scientific program, rather than serve as an extension of ongoing projects in the mentor's laboratory.
- The project scope should be within the timeframe of the fellowship.



Postdoctoral Fellowship Project Types

- All applicants should select one project type
 - Research
 - Education
 - Extension
 - Integrated



Postdoctoral Fellowship Budget Categories, or the way funds can be used

- Total Fellowship Maximum amount: \$225,000
- May request up to 24 months
- Funds must be requested primarily for salary or stipend and be properly justified
- Other expenditures (e.g., fringe benefits, supplies, travel, workshops, and publications) may not exceed \$60,000 per year and must be itemized and properly justified
- Up to \$3,000 per year institutional allowance, in lieu of indirect costs



Content and Form of the Application Guidance

- Explicit instructions in Part IV C (separate document):
 - Information requested in the application's project summary, narrative, data management plan, and other components of the application.
 - Completion of standard form 424 (SF-424) found in the grants.gov application package
 - Completion of Research and Related (R&R) forms found in grants.gov application package
 - Postdoctoral proposals must indicate program code **A7201** in the SF-424 (application package). **Do not use a FAS program code** in the SF-424, or the application is at risk of not receiving a review.
- (See NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for additional support)



Content and Form of the Application, Project Narrative

- Project Narrative
 - Maximum of ten pages
 - 12-point font
 - single line spacing (i.e., no more than six lines per vertical inch), including all figures and tables. Do not use a condensed or narrow font (e.g., Arial Narrow).
- ALL components of the project narrative (e.g., Response to Previous Review, if applicable; the Training/Career Development Plan; the Mentoring Plan; the Project Plan; and the Evaluation Plan) will be considered in accordance with the evaluation criteria.



Project Summary Guidance

- Postdoctoral proposals will be reviewed within a respective AFRI Foundational and Applied Science (FAS) Program Area.
- The postdoctoral applicant should indicate the Priority Area name, Program Area name, and Program Area Priority Code from the [AFRI Foundational and Applied Science \(FAS\) request for applications](#) that most closely topically matches the proposed postdoctoral project plan.
- A table of the AFRI Foundational and Applied Science Priority and Program Areas, along with Priority Codes and other information is in Part IV C, and can be found at FY 2023 AFRI Foundational and Applied Science RFA.
- All postdoctoral proposals must follow the AFRI EWD guidance, including Part IV, C. instructions and due date.



Project Summary

- Must indicate:
 - Names and institutions of PD and primary mentor (more than one if Integrated project only)
 - Project type (research, education, extension, or integrated)
 - Indicate the primary AFRI Farm Bill priority area of focus
 - Relevance of the project to the goals of the postdoctoral program area
 - Relevance of project to goals of AFRI EWD



Training/Development Plan

- Personal statement
- Overall career goals and objectives
- Any other training objectives
- Any extension and educational activities (e.g., teaching in formal or informal settings) to enhance career development



Mentoring Plan

- Identify a Primary mentor for support in
 - Application
 - Projects
 - Professional development (more than one Primary Mentor is acceptable only for Integrated Projects)
- Commitment of the mentor(s) is included in the evaluation criteria as it pertains to project personnel.
- The applicant should describe, detail, explain, etc., the role of the mentor
- A Mentor Letter and Reference Letters must be included in the Documentation of Collaboration.



Project Plan

- Introduction
- Rationale and significance
- Approach
 - Methods
 - Expected outcomes and measures
 - Pitfalls and limitations
 - Timeline



Evaluation Plan

- A plan for evaluating progress towards **objectives related to the training/career development plan, mentoring plan, and project plan.**
- Milestones
- Indicators of success
- Dissemination plans
- Project type
 - Education
 - Extension
 - Research
 - Integrated



Review Criteria

- Merit of the Application for Science Research, Education, and/or Extension
- Qualifications of Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities, and Project Management
- Project Relevance

Estimated Timeline of Competitive Programs



Two months



USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

<https://www.usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement>

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