



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

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The NIFA logo, with the letters "NIFA" in a large, white, sans-serif font. The letters are set against a background of stylized orange and yellow hills under a dark sky.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024
Fiscal Year (FY) 2025

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Fiscal Year 2024: December 7, 2023
Fiscal Year 2025: December 5, 2024

ANTICIPATED FUNDING: Fiscal Year 2024: \$1,920,000
Fiscal Year 2025: \$1,920,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-FASLP-010247

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.522

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

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program (FASLP) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.522.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	Fiscal Year 2024: 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, December 7, 2023 Fiscal Year 2025: 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, December 5, 2024 [Ref to Part I, C of this RFA]
Letter of Intent:	Not Required
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). The 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), Public Law 105-185, the [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 Food and Agriculture Service Learning RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NIFA requests applications for the Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program (FASLP) for fiscal year (FY) 2024 and FY 2025 to increase knowledge of agriculture and improve the nutritional health of children. The anticipated amount available to fund grants under this authority is approximately \$1,920,000 in FY 2024 and approximately \$1,920,000 in FY 2025. In FY 2024 the FASLP requests proposals for two types of grants: 1) FASLP Projects (FASLP-P); and 2) FASLP Technical Assistance (FASLP-TA). The FASLP encourages applicants to consider the full food system, including food loss and waste reduction for their FASLP projects.

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2024 and FY 2025. Enactment of a continuing resolution, appropriations act, or other authorizing legislation may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

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

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

The Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program (FASLP) legislative authority is located in Section 413 of the Agricultural Research, Extension and Education Reform Act (AREERA) and codified at [7 U.S.C. 7633](#).

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of FASLP (Assistance Listing 10.522) is to increase knowledge of agriculture and improve the nutritional health of children. The primary goals of FASLP are to:

1. Increase capacity for food, garden, and nutrition education within host organizations or entities and school cafeterias and in the classroom;
2. Complement and build on the efforts of the farm to school programs implemented under section 18(g) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act [[\(42 U.S.C. 1769\(g\)\)](#)]
3. Complement efforts by the Department and school food authorities to implement the school lunch programs established under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act ([42 U.S.C. 1751](#) et seq.) and the school breakfast program established by section 4 of the [Child Nutrition Act of 1966](#) ([42 U.S.C. 1773](#));
4. Carry out activities that advance the nutritional health of children and nutrition education in elementary schools and secondary schools (as those terms are defined in section 9101 of the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965](#) ([20 U.S.C 7801](#)); and
5. Foster higher levels of community engagement and support the expansion of national service and volunteer opportunities.

FASLP supports projects that bring together stakeholders from the distinct parts of the food system to increase the capacity for food, garden, and nutrition education within host organizations or entities, such as school cafeterias and classrooms, while fostering higher levels of community engagement between farms and school systems. The goal of these efforts is to not only increase access to school meals for underserved children, but also to dramatically improve their quality and to decrease food loss and waste through student, school, and community engagement.

FASLP is also focused on the development of leadership skills, knowledge, and qualities necessary to prepare students for food and agricultural and related careers in the private sector, government, and academia. Specific activities may include:

1. Developing practical applications to increase understanding of leadership roles, including critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills; ethics and professionalism; and working in teams;
2. Connecting the academic classroom experiences with daily leadership roles and organizational activities;
3. Providing opportunities for mentoring and shadowing; and
4. Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc.

Handling of baseline data and data collection will be addressed per approved project evaluation or performance measures/outcomes.

FASLP is aligned with the following [USDA Strategic Goals FY 2022-2026](#):

1. USDA Strategic Goal 4: Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food.

FASLP is aligned with the following [USDA Science and Research Strategy, 2023–2026](#) priorities:

1. Priority 3: Bolstering Nutrition Security & Health
2. Priority 5: Translating Research into Action

Additional requirements on expected performance goals, indicators and targets are required as a condition of award.

Updates for FY 2024

1. FASLP is competing one Technical Assistance (FASLP-TA) grant award.
2. FASLP-P grantees will cooperate with the FASLP-TA provider for activities offered, such as: identification and/or development of common FASLP metrics; participation in annual face-to-face project director meetings; sharing of best practices; networking across FASLP projects; and development of stakeholder project reports.
3. This RFA includes revised program descriptions, including a food loss and waste reduction component.

For a program informational webinar please visit the [NIFA calendar](#) for dates, event registration, and link. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any of the informational webinars listed, please contact the event host listed no later than 10 days prior to the event.

C. Program Area Description

In FY 2024, NIFA's FASLP intends to solicit applications and fund two types of grants. The grant types are entitled FASLP Projects (FASLP-P); and FASLP Technical Assistance (FASLP-TA).

Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program Projects (FASLP-P)

Table 2: FASLP-P Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	FASLP
Program Code Name:	Food and Agriculture Service Learning Project
Assistance Listing Number	10.522
Project Type:	Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program Project (FASLP-P)
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	FY 2024: December 7, 2023 FY 2025: December 5, 2024
Grant Duration:	Up to 2 years (24 months)
Anticipated # of Awards:	7 for FY 2024 8 for FY 2025
Maximum Award Amount:	\$240,000

FASLP projects are intended for eligible applicants to expand existing farm-to-school initiatives and other food and agriculture experiential learning initiatives, such as training and technical assistance, evaluation activities, curriculum development, or incorporate farm to school strategies in trainings and professional opportunities along with working closely with agricultural producers in the local and regional areas with primary and secondary schools.

Preference will be given to applicants who submit FASLP proposals meeting priorities of [7 U.S.C. 7633\(c\)\(2\)](#) that:

1. Hold a proven track record in carrying out the purposes described in [Part I, B](#) of this RFA;
2. Work in underserved rural and urban communities;
3. Engage children in experiential learning about agriculture, gardening, nutrition, cooking, where food comes from, and how to reduce food loss and food waste; and
4. Facilitate a connection between elementary schools and secondary schools and agricultural producers in the local and regional area.

Proposals may include the following activities, but are not limited to:

1. Expanding farm-to-school programs beyond lunch to bring local or regional food products into the School Breakfast program;
2. Operating service projects (e.g., AmeriCorps, VISTA, Food Corps, local service corps programs, etc.) that support farm to school initiatives in schools;
3. Ready producers to participate in school food service by providing training on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and other food safety-related topics;
4. Providing technical support in the form of face-to-face and/or virtual trainings, consultations, webinars, etc.;
5. Developing promotional campaigns in support of farm-to-school initiatives;
6. Expanding strategic planning efforts to expand or coordinate efforts across multiple school districts;
7. Conducting farm-to-school evaluation efforts;
8. Establishing new or strengthening existing community partnerships (e.g., working with personnel to identify appropriate suppliers, etc.);
9. Encouraging increased consumption of fruits and vegetables through promotional activities, taste tests, and other activities;
10. Expanding experiential or agriculture-based learning opportunities, such as the creation of school gardens, support to ag/food clubs, or increased exposure to on-farm activities; and
11. Developing and evaluating integrated curriculum to reinforce food and nutrition-based learning throughout the school environment.

All projects must involve underserved rural and/or urban communities and facilitate a connection between elementary schools and secondary schools with agricultural producers in the local and regional area.

All applicants are also encouraged to incorporate food loss and waste efforts into their FASLP projects. Examples might include how projects will engage in and scale up food loss and waste reduction efforts by 1) increasing students' capacity for learning how to prevent food waste; 2) changing the school environment; and/or 3) using cafeterias, other parts of school grounds, and/or other FASLP projects areas to reduce food loss and waste.

Applicants are also encouraged to seek and create partnerships with public or private, nonprofit or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority-serving colleges and universities), and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, school districts, and local and state government entities. When planning collaborations, see [Part III](#). Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the successful completion of the project. See [Part IV, C](#), Funding Restrictions.

Applicants for FASLP-P projects must:

1. Have experience in the area of (i) community food work, including the provision of food to people in underserved communities, including farm to school programs, and the development of new markets in underserved communities working closely with agricultural producers; (ii) job training and business development activities, curriculum and development for food-related school activities in low-income communities; or (iii) efforts to reduce food insecurity in the community, including food distribution, improving access to services, or coordinating school services and programs; (iv) applicants must show evidence of existing community support and engagement with school districts and agricultural producers via no less than three letters of support;
2. Demonstrate competency to implement a project, conduct an evaluation, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation;
3. Demonstrate competency in the implementation of a food and agriculture and/or school experiential service learning program;
4. Demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, including a plan for dissemination of results;
5. Commit to collaborating with the FASLP-TA grantee, where indicated, to ensure that all FASLP-TA deliverables are met;
6. Commit to collaborating with one or more local partner organizations to achieve at least one hunger-free community's goal. ([Steps for a Hunger-Free Community \(usda.gov\)](#));
7. Include a Logic Model; and
8. Include a Data Management Plan

FASLP-P awardees will be expected to participate in annual project director meetings and include project director meetings in their budgets. Awardees will also be expected to cooperate with the FASLP-TA awardee in developing and then reporting on common metrics, networking, and sharing of best practices and stakeholder reports.

Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program Technical Assistance Grant (FASLP-TA)

Table 3: FASLP-TA Key Information

Title Description	
Program Code:	FASLT
Program Code Name:	Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program Technical Assistance
Assistance Listing Number	10.522
Project Type:	Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program Technical Assistance Grant (FASLP-TA)
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	FY 2024: December 7, 2023
Grant Duration:	Not to exceed three (3) years (36 months)
Anticipated # of Awards:	1 for FY 2024 0 for FY 2025
Maximum Award Amount:	\$240,000

In FY 2024, NIFA will competitively award one technical assistance grant within FASLP. Applicants should request a budget commensurate with the proposed project and not exceed the \$240,000 limit for this three-year award. The FASLP-TA award will be made based on the merit of the proposed project and supporting documents. USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with applicants recommended for awards.

Expected deliverables for the FASLP-TA grant are:

1. **Common metrics.** Identify and/or develop common FASLP metrics and processes that can be used in year three to collect nationally aggregatable data, using annual FASLP reports, expertise of current FASLP awardees, and other informed resources, as appropriate.
2. **Report.** By the end of year three, produce an annual report of FASLP which:
 - a. Aggregates common metrics data across current FASLP projects which highlights impacts for FASLP goals and priorities;
 - b. Strengthens the evidence-base of effective FASLP approaches to meet program goals – i.e., identify and confirm what works;
 - c. Provides examples of projects and strategies that: are innovative; can be tailored to community specific characteristics and needs; and leverage and extend FASLP goals;
 - d. Identifies outreach gaps and opportunities to increase awareness and understanding of how FASLP can better engage underserved youth and communities.
3. **Project director meetings.** Collaborate with organizers of community nutrition project director meetings to ensure that FASLP needs and interests are met where program areas have been combined; attend annual project director meetings with other FASLP awardees and NIFA staff.
4. **Capacity.** Facilitate strengthened relationships among FASLP grantees, sharing of best practices, networking across FASLP projects, and development of stakeholder project

reports among current grantees; establish a model or process for continued sharing, networking, and reporting in future years.

5. **Food loss and waste.** Include food loss and waste reduction data aggregation and reporting as an integral component of FASLP.
6. **Technical assistance.** Provide technical assistance to FASLP project awardees, as needed.

Organizations that can demonstrate involvement in food and agriculture service learning issues and programs along with strong training and technical assistance experience, and competence in outcome evaluation are strongly encouraged to apply.

Applicants for FASLP-TA projects must:

1. Have expertise that encompasses the broad array of food and agriculture service learning activities, including a strong comprehensive evaluation, using a scientific, evidence-based evaluation method which leads to an objective assessment of FASLP projects according to the purposes, priorities, and goals of FASLP (see [PART 1B](#)).
2. Have broad expertise and national relevance and scope reflecting ability to provide a one-stop service to FASLP applicants requesting technical assistance.
3. Demonstrate involvement in food and agriculture service learning issues and programs along with strong training and technical assistance experience, and competence in outcome evaluation.
4. Demonstrate competency to implement a project, conduct an evaluation, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation;
5. Demonstrate competency to engage others in successfully fulfilling deliverables in timely and effective manner.
6. Demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, including a plan for dissemination of results;
7. Commit to collaborating with FASLP-P grantees to secure their engagement in achieving all FASLP-TA deliverables.
8. Commit to collaborating with other T&A organizers where community nutrition programs may be combined to ensure that FASLP needs and interests are met;
9. Include a Logic Model; and
10. Include a Data Management Plan

Organizations that can demonstrate involvement in food and agriculture service learning issues and programs along with strong training and technical assistance experience, and competence in outcome evaluation are strongly encouraged to apply.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2024 and FY 2025. Enactment of a continuing resolution, appropriations act, or other authorizing legislation may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. The anticipated amounts available for the Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program (FASLP) in FY 2024 and FY 2025 is approximately \$1,920,000 for each fiscal year. 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. Applications for fiscal year 2024 are limited to the following application types:

1. *New applications*: 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 a one-page 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

Applicants must propose a FASLP project for a period of up to two years for a FASLP-P grant or a FASLP technical assistance plan for three years for a FASLP-TA grant. Applicants should request a budget commensurate with the proposed project. No single FASLP-P or FASLP-TA award request may exceed \$240,000 total (including indirect costs – see [Part IV](#) of this RFA).

Applications that exceed budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed. A project may be supported by only one grant under this program. All FASLP awards will be made based on the relevance and merit of the proposed project.

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 Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program (FASLP) – both FASLP-P and FASLP-TA – 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.

Eligibility for FASLP is limited to the following groups: state agricultural experiment stations; colleges and universities; university research foundations; other research institutions and organizations; Federal agencies; national laboratories; private organizations, non-profit organizations, foundations, or corporations; individuals; or any group consisting of two or more entities described herein.

The eligibility requirements are limited to the applicant. Project partners and collaborators need not meet the eligibility requirements. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline will result in exclusion from consideration. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help applicants understand the Federal awards process.

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – duplicate or multiple submissions are not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits duplicate or multiple submissions. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help applicants understand the Federal awards process.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No Match Required – The FASLP has **NO** matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

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](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 4** 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 4: Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Actions
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-FASLP-010247 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 5: 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 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

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 [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 6** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 6: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the NIFA Grants 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 receive 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).** The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the FASLP. 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 10 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text and up to 5 *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. **PNs that exceed the page limits will not be reviewed.** Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit.

For FASLP-P projects, The PN must include **all** the following:

- a. The Community and Schools to Be Involved in the Project and the Needs to Be Addressed; Identify and succinctly describe the critical elements and needs of the local or regional food economy or food system, school system/school district, including demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area or community to be served. Beyond a recitation of statistics, applications should describe local capabilities and assets, such as those identified in a community food assessment, school food environment assessment, and involvement of underserved communities and school districts in the context of project activities and operations.

Most relevant is an explanation of why the applicant and its partners selected the activities proposed in the application. Describe the main targets or beneficiaries of the project and the community and school system needs and opportunities being addressed. The needs addressed should directly relate to project goals and objectives described below. It is recommended that this section be no more than one and one-half pages.

- b. The Organizations, Schools, and Communities Involved in the Project; List the organizations and communities to be involved in carrying out the proposed project and the segments of the local and regional food economy or system they link. Include a description of the relevant experience of each community group or organization, including the applicant organization that will be involved, and any related project history. Proposals must demonstrate extensive community linkages, including schools or school corporations, and coalitions. Applicant organizations should demonstrate a history of commitment to and direct involvement in food security projects in underserved communities, as well as success in outreach to low-income participants. The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership must reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project activities or similar types of activities. The applicant organization demonstrates a history of, commitment to, and direct involvement in FASLP projects in addition to food security projects in low-income communities and school districts, as well as success in actively engaging low-income participants/students. Applications must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to equip students with technical and leadership abilities upon graduation.

In particular, describe how the communities and/or school districts being served – particularly the targeted audience and organizations – were involved in planning the project and will be engaged in its implementation. Please reference planning activities, assessments, meetings, or other activities that demonstrate community input into key decision-making.

No less than three letters from the key organizations involved in the project, acknowledging their support and contributions, must be provided. Additional support letters – such as those from farmers or schools, where appropriate, are encouraged to provide evidence of broad community involvement in both planning and future decision-making. All support letters must be attached in Field 12, Other Attachments (See [Part IV § B](#) of this RFA).

- c. Project Goals and Intended Outcomes; List the goals and intended outcomes of the project. Outcomes must describe specific changes that will occur as a result of the project and that will constitute “success” for the initiative. These may include benefits caused by program activities such as changes in participants’ skills, behavior, or qualities of life, and positive changes in conditions in the school environment and/or community served, or reductions in negative conditions. Outcomes must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely, describe what will be accomplished, and who and how many people, e.g., students, participants, will benefit. It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages.

- d. Activities to Achieve the Goals; discuss *how* the goals and intended outcomes will be achieved. Discuss how the proposed project outcomes will be realized by providing a systematic description of how the most important steps or milestones will be accomplished. In addition to these descriptions, it is recommended that a table of up to three pages be provided with implementation details for these activities, including: (a) specific steps and achievements in planning and implementation; (b) timetables for milestones; and, as relevant, (c) expected number of participants involved in each step of the process.
- e. Relationship to Program Goals and Objectives; Discuss how the project and its proposed outcomes will address the goals and objectives of FASLP as described in [Part I § B](#) of this RFA. Discuss the specific changes that will result among participants, students, or in the communities served that address these FASLP priorities. It is recommended that this section be no more than one page.
- f. Evaluation; FASLP proposals should contain a strong evaluation component. Innovative evaluation strategies are especially encouraged. **Evaluations must focus on “logic models”** (The logic model should be attached to Field 12, see [Part IV § B](#) of this RFA) and the measurement of outcomes and impacts in meeting the legislative goals and objectives of the FASLP project. (See [Appendix III, Definitions](#).) Through FASLP project operations and an evaluation of them, USDA seeks to determine best practices, including valuable lessons learned; therefore, proposals are encouraged that include both process evaluations (developing and monitoring indicators of progress towards the objectives) and outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met). To allow for sufficient evaluation of projects as described, it is recommended that applicants set aside between five and ten percent of the total project budget for evaluation purposes. (Note that USDA reserves the option to provide further detail regarding specific metrics and evaluation expectations at the time grants are awarded, or any time thereafter.)
- g. FASLP-TA Cooperation; FASLP-P proposals should convey a clear commitment to work with the FASLP-TA grantee in developing and applying common metrics, networking with other grantees, sharing best practices, and strengthening stakeholder reports.
- h. Self-Sustainability; Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the project period. Discuss how a one-time infusion of Federal funds will be sufficient for the proposed FASLP to advance local capacity-building and achieve sustainability. Projects should identify actual or potential funding sources for continuation of the project after federal funding has ended.

Projects should provide evidence, e.g., a market analysis or the outline of a business plan, to demonstrate that it is likely to become self-sustaining. Business plan outlines or any other document of evidence for sustainability may not exceed five pages and must be included as an appendix. Such evidence must be included as an Other Attachment, Field 12 (see [Part IV § B](#) of this RFA).

For FASLP-TA projects, The PN must include **all** the following:

- a. Food and Agriculture Service Learning; The proposal should provide a succinct description of food and agriculture service learning issues, projects, and the scope of involvement of the TA applicant. Experience in identifying and developing

evaluation metrics in limited resourced communities should be noted as should pertinent information regarding demographic and geographic characteristics of the area(s) or type(s) of organizations previously served and/or to be served.

b. Project Goals and Objectives; List the goals and objectives of the project and a justification for the goals in terms of the types of services that will be provided.

c. Activities to Achieve the Expected Deliverables; Provide a systematic description of the approach by which each deliverable will be achieved, and collaborative actions planned to achieve required deliverables. A chart may be added to outline specific timeframes for activities leading to the accomplishment of each deliverable.

d. Timeline; Provide major milestones that will indicate progress toward achieving the project deliverables. Provide a standardized timeline or systematic description of the approach for accomplishing these major outcomes across the life of the grant. A chart may be added to outline specific timeframes for activities leading to the accomplishment of required deliverables.

e. Evaluation; FASLP-TA proposals should contain an internal evaluation component to identify best practices, gaps, and opportunities for developing, aggregating, and utilizing common metrics, and for improving technical assistance among potential applicants, especially in underserved rural and/or urban communities and in facilitating a connection between elementary schools and secondary schools with agricultural producers in local and regional areas.

f. Sustainability; The Project Narrative for FASLP-TA Proposals does not have to address self-sustainability. However, FASLP-TA applicants are encouraged to address how their technical assistance activities will help sustain FASLP-P projects in future years.

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

- a. *Key Organization Support*. For FASLP-P projects, attach signed letters from key organizations involved in the project acknowledging their support, contributions, and commitment; title the attachment 'Key Organization Support'. Provide evidence of broad community involvement in both planning and decision-making. This section is limited to two page letters of support for each key organization. (See subsection 1. or 2., as appropriate, of [Part IV § B](#) of this RFA).
- b. *Appendices to Project Narrative*. Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. **The addition of appendices must not exceed seven (7) pages** and should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.
- c. *Logic Model*. Title the attachment as 'Logic Model' in the document header and save file as 'LogicModel'. Applicants should seek the help of academic or other experts in evaluation design and implementation, as appropriate and available. A logic model or chart may also be used. It is recommended that this section be no more than one page. See [Logic Model Planning Process](#). **Applications that do not include a logic model will not be reviewed.**
- d. *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 Grants Application Guide](#) and [NIFA's Data Management Plan](#)).

- e. *Fiscal Agent Letter*. See [Part III § A](#) of this RFA. If it is necessary to include a fiscal agent letter, then title the attachment as 'Fiscal Agent' in the document header and save file as 'FiscalAgent'.

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.

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. Field D. Domestic Travel. During the tenure of a grant, PDs must attend a PD meeting each year. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss their projects, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in the application's budget under travel expenses.
2. Match – Not required.
3. 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.

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 Food and Agriculture Service Learning Project (FASLP) and the program code FASLP. Accurate entry is critical.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)

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 (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 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.

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 as set forth in this RFA. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that meet 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 race, ethnicity, and 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 proposals submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Merit. The appropriateness of the goals, purposes, activities, and outcomes of the FASLP-P project and how these goals will be achieved to invest in building the assets of the

community, school districts, and producers and the capacities of the applicant and its partners. The appropriateness of the FASLP-TA proposal and potential to effectively achieve the project deliverables in support of the program on a national scale for FASLP eligible stakeholders and communities, and youth and children impacted by FASLP. Timeline is realistic and reasonable.

2. Relevance. How well the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in achieving at least one of the primary goals of FASLP, which are to:
 - a. Increase capacity for food, garden, and nutrition education within host organizations or entities and school cafeterias and in the classroom;
 - b. Complement and build on the efforts of the farm to school programs implemented under section 18(g) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act [[42 U.S.C. 1769\(g\)](#)]
 - c. Complement efforts by the Department and school food authorities to implement the school lunch programs established under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act ([42 U.S.C. 1751](#) et seq.) and the school breakfast program established by section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 ([42 U.S.C. 1773](#));
 - d. Carry out activities that advance the nutritional health of children and nutrition education in elementary schools and secondary schools (as those terms are defined in section 9101 of the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965](#) ([20 U.S.C 7801](#)); and
 - e. Foster higher levels of community engagement and support the expansion of national service and volunteer opportunities.
3. Expertise. The relevance of the experience of the organizations that are involved in the proposed project, including the applicant entity, and the type and extent of support that other organizations will be providing. *Applicants should demonstrate the knowledge of relevant best practices in the field and the use of them in their projects.* The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflects the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community and school system, in addition to experience in farming/gardening and connections to producers. **Applicants for FASLP-P projects should include community members in the development of the project proposal.** Experience in using innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers;
4. Viability. The viability of FASLP-P proposals for realistically achieving self-sufficiency with a one-time infusion of Federal funds. Evidence is provided to demonstrate that the project is likely to become self-sustaining, e.g., a market analysis or the outlines of a business plan. The viability of FASLP-TA proposals for realistically achieving program deliverables.
5. Evaluation. The strength of the proposed project's evaluation component and how it will contribute to the FASLP evaluations on a national basis, including sharing project results in an “exemplary practices” format and a common metrics format. A commitment to

collaborate on evaluation within and across FASLP-P projects and between FASLP-P and FASLP-TA grantees.

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 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 will 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 Award Administration Provisions, 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E](#). USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with successful applicants.

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](#).

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 or (443) 386-9488.

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

Program Contacts

Dr. Carinthia Cherry
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Dr. Ashley Mueller
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Mr. Ryan Kornegay
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*Please contact Dr. Carinthia Cherry, Carinthia.Cherry@usda.gov or Mr. Ryan Kornegay, Ryan.Kornegay@usda.gov for RFA questions.

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

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

Assistance Listing Number – ALN

Authorized Representative – AR

Data Management Plan – DMP

Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program – FASLP

Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program-Projects – FASLP-P

Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program-Technical Assistance- FASLP-TA

Good Agricultural Practices - GAP

National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 - NARETPA

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

Project Director - PD

Request for Application – RFA

Research, Education, and Economics – REE

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.

Community Food Assessment:

A collaborative and participatory process that systematically examines a broad range of community food issues and assets, so as to inform change actions to make the community more food secure.

Exemplary Practices:

High quality community food security work that emphasizes food security, nutritional quality, environmental stewardship, and economic and social equity.

Expert Reviewers:

Individuals selected from among those recognized as uniquely qualified by training and experience in their respective fields to give expert advice on the merit of grant applications in such fields who evaluate eligible proposals submitted to this program in their respective area(s) of expertise.

Food Planning Association:

A state, regional, or local entity that conducts long-term planning activities related to food, nutrition, or agriculture issues and addresses the needs of low-income people in a manner that is comprehensive and self-sustaining and mutually benefits agricultural producers and consumers.

Food Policy Council:

A representative, multi-stakeholder, inter-agency body at the state, regional, or local level that is sanctioned by a government entity to address a broad range of food, nutrition, or agriculture issues in a manner that is comprehensive and self-sustaining and mutually benefits agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

Food Security:

Access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times.

Hunger-Free Communities Goal:

Any of the 14 goals described in House Concurrent Resolution 302, 102nd Congress, agreed to October 5, 1992.

Logic Model:

A systematic and visual way to present and share an understanding of the relationships among resources available to operate a program and includes: planned activities and anticipated results; and the presentation of the resources, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

New Application:

An application not previously submitted to a program.

Resubmitted Application:

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

Private non-Profit Entity:

Any nongovernmental corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization which: (i) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (ii) is not organized primarily for profit; and (iii) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations.

Sustainably Produced Foods:

Foods that are produced in ways that limit “food miles,” and address social and economic justice issues as well as land stewardship. USDA’s definition of sustainable development is defined as, “Economic, environmental, and social sustainability of diverse food, fiber, agriculture, forest, and range systems.” USDA will balance goals of improved production and profitability, stewardship of the natural resource base and ecological systems, and enhancement of the vitality of rural communities. [Special Reference Briefs Series no. SRB 99-02, Updates SRB 94-05 September 1999, revised August 2007, Alternative Farming Systems Information Center, [National Agricultural Library](#), Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture.