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NIFA

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

FUNDING YEAR:	Fiscal Year 2024
LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE:	Not Applicable
APPLICATION DEADLINE:	April 4, 2024
ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING:	$24,000,000
AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD RANGE:	$49,999 - $750,000
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:	USDA-NIFA-BFR-010413
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER:	10.311

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

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.311.

Key Information 1. Key Dates and Deadlines
  a) Application Deadline: 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, April 4, 2024
  b) Letter of Intent: Not Applicable
  c) 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 (RFA) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments to the extent possible when developing RFAs, and uses comments to help meet the requirements of Section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Applicants may submit written comments to Policy@usda.gov. Please use the following subject line: Response to the BFRDP RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

This RFA is soliciting applications for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) for the fiscal year (FY) 2024 funding cycle to support the delivery of education, outreach, and technical assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States and its territories that are entering, establishing, building, and managing successful farm and ranch enterprises. The funding amount available for FY 2024 is approximately $24,000,000. No more than $250,000 per year for three years for a maximum total of approximately $750,000 will be available for each Standard and Education Team projects that will be funded in FY 2024. The Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse grant is competed once every three years. One Clearinghouse grant project was funded in FY 2022. This grant type will be due for solicitation in the FY 2025 funding cycle.

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

2024 BFRDP RFA Technical Assistance Webinar
The FY 2024 BFRDP RFA Technical Assistance webinar will take place on Wednesday, February 21, 2024, from 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Eastern Time.

Please register here.

For program informational webinars please visit the NIFA Upcoming Events 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

KEY INFORMATION

PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A.   Legislative Authority
The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) is authorized under
7 U.S.C. 2279(d), as amended, and requires the Secretary of Agriculture to make competitive
grants or enter into cooperative agreements to support new and established local and regional
training, education, outreach and technical assistance initiatives to increase opportunities for
beginning farmers or ranchers in the United States and its territories; establish beginning farmer
and rancher education teams; and establish a curriculum and training clearinghouse for beginning
farmers and ranchers.

B.   Purpose and Priorities
The primary goal of BFRDP, under assistance listing number 10.311, is to help beginning
farmers and ranchers in the United States and its territories enter and/or improve their successes
in farming, ranching, and management of nonindustrial private forest lands, through support for
projects that provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to give beginning farmers and
ranchers the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations
and enhance their sustainability.

The term "farmer" is used in the broadest sense and may be interpreted to include agricultural
farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers. The term "beginning
farmer or rancher" means a person that:
        (i) has not operated a farm or ranch; or
        (ii) has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years; and
        (B) meets such other criteria as the Secretary may establish.

Applications from partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental
organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and school-based
agricultural education organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in agricultural training and
outreach for beginning producers will be given priority in funding.

BFRDP grants may fund programs or services relating to these priorities:
1. Basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices;
2. Innovative farm, ranch, and private, nonindustrial forest land transfer and
   succession strategies;
3. Entrepreneurship and business training;
4. Technical assistance to help beginning farmers or ranchers acquire land from
   retiring farmers and ranchers;
5. Financial and risk management training, including the acquisition and
   management of agricultural credit;
6. Natural resource management and planning;
7. Diversification and marketing strategies;
8. Curriculum development;
9. Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
10. Resources and referral;
11. Farm financial benchmarking;
12. Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veteran farmers and ranchers;

13. Farm safety and awareness;
14. Food safety and recordkeeping; and
15. Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers such as: projects that address climate change with climate smart agriculture, food, and forestry solutions; improved nutritional security; and economic revitalization, particularly in socially disadvantaged communities. Applicants planning to address other similar subject areas not listed in priorities 1-14 are strongly encouraged to confer with the Program Contacts listed in Appendix I of this RFA to discuss the suitability of the topics prior to submitting an application.

NIFA supports research, education, and extension projects that address key problems of local, regional, national, and global importance. As such, NIFA encourages projects that enhance food and agricultural sciences and their role in human diversity, equity and inclusion, agricultural practices that provide for adaptation to ecological perturbation and mitigate climate change, rural economic development and post-pandemic economic revitalization, nutritional security, open and competitive markets, and other topics responsive to current and emerging needs impacting the U.S. agriculture.

NIFA encourages applications that include addressing climate change with climate smart agriculture, food and forestry solutions including, but not limited to conservation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and other environmental concerns; efficient and renewable energy practices; building resilience to climate change; coordination is encouraged in working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Cooperative Extension Services to include training on conservation practices, farming principles and practices that increase biodiversity, enrich soils, land, improve watersheds, and enhance ecosystem services. Projects that focus on increasing equitable participation in USDA's programs and services are also encouraged.

Target Audience. The target audience for BFRDP is farmers and ranchers who have not operated a farm or ranch or have operated a farm or ranch for not more than ten years. The BFRDP projects cover all production systems, including conventional and organic systems. Applicants must identify as well as define Beginning Farmer and Rancher (BFR) category of trainees to be served. There are five BFR training categories that should be specified based on number of years operating a farm or ranch:

    Category I: Has not operated a farm or ranch;
    Category II: 1-3 years in farming;
    Category III: 4-6 years in farming;
    Category IV: 7-10 years in farming; or
    Category V: planning to serve trainees in all categories listed.

The BFRDP's goal is to ensure that participants are adequately equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to sustainably own or lease a farm business operation. Individuals would need to meet the following criteria:
1. age 18 or older by the completion of the project funding and;
2. be able to operate a farm or ranch achieving a minimum annual value of $1000 in production.

Targeted Set-Aside Funds. In addition, a portion of BFRDP funding is a targeted set aside

for projects that address the needs of two subsets of beginning farmers and ranchers:
1. At least five percent of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; and/or farm workers (including immigrants and refugees) desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers.
2. At least five percent of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers who are military veterans. A recipient of such a grant may coordinate with a recipient of a grant from the AgrAbility program (www.agrability.org) in addressing the needs of veteran farmers and ranchers with disabilities.

Please note: Not all applications need to address the needs of these two subsets of beginning farmers and ranchers. Inclusion of socially disadvantaged and of veteran beginning farmers or ranchers in the applications will not result in higher proposal scores or ratings, however, priority may be given to applications that address either of the two subsets, if necessary, to achieve the targets, by awarding funding to the highest-ranked proposals that meet the set-aside.

For applications to be considered under either of the two subsets, applicants must:
1. Identify the target audience of any of the group(s) identified above and state clearly what percentage of the total project budget will be allocated to serving each group(s).
2. Explain how the beginning farmers and ranchers in the identified target audience will be identified, recruited, and retained.
3. Provided descriptions of what appropriate training, education, outreach, and mentoring will be provided.
4. Document evidence of the applicant's ability to serve the specific needs of the identified audience (s), e.g., involvement of partner(s) with expertise and a strong track record of having previously done so.

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

The BFRDP is aligned with the following:

USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 goals:
> **Strategic Goal 1:** Combat Climate Change to Support America's Working Lands, Natural Resources and Communities
> **Strategic Goal 2:** Ensure America's Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous
> **Strategic Goal 3:** Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers
> **Strategic Goal 4:** Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food
> **Strategic Goal 5:** Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities

[USDA Science and Research Strategy, 2023–2026](#) priorities:

> **Priority 1:** Accelerating Innovative Technologies and Practices
> **Priority 2:** Driving Climate-Smart Solutions

Please note: research projects are unallowable under the BFRDP

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

To achieve program goals, BFRDP projects will be expected to conduct education, training, outreach and technical assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers on one or more of the topics listed in [Part I, B (1-15).](#) Applicants should carefully consider the topics that will be addressed by the proposed project (i.e., clearly identify the topics in the project narrative and why those topics are the most appropriate for the project's audience). Evidence of farmer input on topic selection is very important. Applicants should make use of existing curriculum (whether USDA funded or not), including entries in the BFRDP curriculum and training clearinghouse: www.farmanswers.org. The following applications will not be accepted for review if:

    a. applications seek to develop coursework for credit for four-year degrees at colleges and universities;

    b. applications seek to educate students for careers in agriculture other than as farmers or ranchers; or

    c. applications seek to conduct research.

C.   Program Area Description

NIFA is soliciting applications under the following program award categories:

1. Standard Grants (Small, Medium, Large and Simplified Standard)
2. Education Team Grants

Standard Grants

Key Information 1. Standard Grants Key Information

> Program Code: BFRDA
> Program Code Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Standard
> Assistance Listing Number: 10.311
> Project Type: Training and Technical Assistance
> Grant Type: Standard
> Application Deadline: FY 2024: April 4, 2024, 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time
> Grant Duration: 12-36 months
> Anticipated Number of Awards: 45
> Maximum Award Amount: $750,000

Maximum Total Award

> Large Standard: No more than $250,000 per year for three years, for a maximum of $750,000;
> Medium Standard: No more than $175,000 per year for three years, for a maximum of $525,000;
> Small Standard: No more than $100,000 per year for three years, for a maximum of $300,000; and
> Simplified Standard: No more than $49,999 for one year for a simplified standard grant.

Small, medium, and large standard BFRDP projects support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers, on the priority topics listed in Part I, B (1-15). The primary goal of Standard Grants is to increase the number of beginning farmers and ranchers and enhance their success and sustainability by providing them with knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions. Standard Grant applications are expected to:
1. Identify the audience of beginning farmers and ranchers they aim to serve describing their characteristics and unique needs;
2. Document the applicant's knowledge and experience in education and assistance methods to be used that are appropriate and effective in engaging the audience and meeting their needs; and
3. Propose an ambitious yet achievable plan of work that will accomplish meaningful and measurable success in enhancing the number and success of beginning farmers and ranchers.

Small, medium, and large standard grant proposals will be evaluated using the same evaluation criteria (see Part V, B of this RFA), including priority for partnership and collaborations that are led by or include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), or school-based agricultural education organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in beginning agricultural producer training and outreach. Smaller projects' scope of work are expected to have smaller audiences, limited geographic reach, and less complex collaborative arrangements. This provides an opportunity for smaller or less experienced organizations to propose projects that have smaller budgets and less complex administration. Those with larger award requests will be expected to undertake larger-scale projects, in terms of numbers reached, intensity of training, other services to be provided, and geographic service areas (*e.g.*, statewide, regional, or even national in scale). All standard grant proposals for federal funds requested should be commensurate with the scope of work.

Successful grant applicants provide training and assistance with business and financial management, as well as production and marketing topics that align with the priority list in Part I, B (1-15) of this RFA.

Simplified standard BFRDP projects develop action plans to address societal challenges; strengthen program ideas to develop a full proposal; curriculum development; develop apprenticeship programs and hands-on materials; as well as develop an advisory committee to strengthen future program activities. Educating and training a small group of individuals to become farmers and ranchers is required.

Simplified standard grants are for applicants with limited capacity to enhance their abilities to create and sustain beginning farmers and ranchers. These grants are designed for new applicants without much experience in coordinating education and technical training.
Simplified Standard grants are intended to assist organizations:
1. Develop and enhance important collaborations and innovative activities relevant to beginning farmer and rancher programs; and
2. Initiate and develop beginning farmer and rancher project ideas to lead to future program success or success in obtaining other grants for beginning farmer and rancher education.

Evaluation criteria for reviewing the simplified standard grants (see Part V, B of this RFA) are different from those utilized for reviewing small, medium, and large standard grants. Priority for funding under the simplified standard grants will be given to applicants who have not received BFRDP grant funding in the past. This priority does not exclude previous grant recipients from being funded.

Education Team Grants

Key Information 2. Education Team Grants Key Information
> Program Code: BFRDB
> Program Code Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Education Team
> Assistance Listing Number: 10.311
> Project Type: Training
> Grant Type: Education Team
> Application Deadline: FY 2024: April 4, 2024, 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time
> Grant Duration: 36 Months
> Anticipated Number of Awards: 2
> Maximum Award Amount: $750,000

Maximum Total Award

Approximately $250,000 per year for up to three years, for a maximum of $750,000.

Education Team (ET) BFRDP projects identify gaps in beginning farmer and rancher training by evaluating existing programs, and by developing and conducting train-the-trainer projects to address these gaps. Additionally, ET projects enhance beginning farmer and rancher efforts based on a particular topic, region, or audience.

ET applications must support the development of curricula and the delivery of education programs and workshops for beginning farmers or ranchers in diverse geographical areas of the United States and its territories; or provide training for trainers and service providers that improve and amplify their work with beginning farmers or ranchers. ET applications should complement previously funded ET projects. Education Teams should involve teams of experts with diverse backgrounds (*e.g.*, NGO, CBO, SAEO, farmers, university, and government) to do the following:

1. Identify, collect, and assess existing curricula and programs.
2. Identify gaps, develop, and deliver curricula and train-the-trainer programs to fill the identified gaps; and
3. Collaborate with the BFRDP Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse https://farmanswers.org) and beginning farmers and ranchers' education providers to enhance successful use of the ET curricula and programs.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

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

The amount available for Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) grants is approximately $24,000,000 in FY 2024. 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. All applications for FY 2024 should state September 15 project starting dates on all applications. In FY 2024, applications may be submitted to BFRDP as one of the following types of requests:

1. *New application.* New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in Part V of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see Appendix III for definition). This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to BFRDP or an application from a previously funded BFRDP project that has completed its project work and is starting a completely new project.

   The new applications from a Project Director (PD) who has received a prior BFRDP award must contain the same information as required for new applications; they also must contain an additional one-page "Accomplishment-Based" narrative (see Part IV B.), including adequacy of plans for continuous improvement. Evaluation of performance during the previous BFRDP grant(s) will include the outcomes achieved and, where appropriate, contributions to the BFRDP Clearinghouse and Project Directors' Annual Meeting.

   Note: During the review process, NIFA seeks to meet legislative requirements for geographical distribution to achieve regional balance. To avoid chances of Project Directors providing oversight on two BFRDP grants concurrently, Project Directors of active awards can apply for new BFRDP awards when they are in their final year of project work.

2. *Resubmitted application.* Resubmitted applications must include the response to the previous review panel comments and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Resubmitted applications 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).

   This is an application that has previously been submitted to BFRDP but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel comments; they must include an additional one-page "Response to Previous Review" narrative (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates and will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the appropriate area to which they are assigned. These applications will be reviewed

according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications. Addressing previous comments is important as each year is a new competition. Resubmitting applicants should strengthen their proposals in every way possible.

C.   Project and Grant Types
The following describes the types of projects or grants that are eligible for funding:
1. Project Types. Applicants must propose a Training and/or Technical Assistance project as described in Part I, C of this RFA. Only Training and/or Technical Assistance projects described in Part I, C of this RFA will be considered for review.
2. Grant Types. Applicants must select either the Standard or Education Team grant described in Part I, C of this RFA. Only Standard or Education Team grants described in Part I, C of this RFA will be considered for review.

Please note that research is unallowable in BFRDP.

BFRDP applications may not request more than the maximum annual award amount listed for the grant type being applied to with a project period not to exceed 12 months for Simplified Standard or 36 months for Small, Medium, or Large Standard and Education Team. Proposal requests exceeding these limits will be excluded from review.

FY 2024 Suggested Project Start and Ending Timeline:
For Simplified Standard: September 15, 2024, through September 15, 2025
For Small, Medium, or Large Standard and Education Team: September 15, 2024, through September 15, 2027

After the award is made, a no cost extension may be requested for up to 12 months. Please see the NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide for additional details.

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 Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) 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.

Applications may only be submitted by a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally based network or partnership of qualified public and/or private entities. These collaborations may include the following entities: State Cooperative Extension Services; Federal, State, municipal or tribal agencies; community-based organizations (CBOs); nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); junior and four-year colleges or universities or foundations maintained by a college or university; and private for-profit organizations.

Application submission of a project effort that is a duplicate of a current beginning farmer project will not be accepted for review under this program.

Inclusions of beginning and/or non-beginning farmers and ranchers as part of the collaborative group is strongly encouraged.

Applications submitted by individuals, or by organizations that do not involve other entities in a network or partnership, are not eligible for consideration under any category applicable to the BFRDP and will be excluded from review.

To meet geographical diversity, multiple awards will not be made to the same organization, institution, or Project Director in the same calendar year. To assist BFRDP in meeting geographical distribution, Project Directors, and Co-Project Directors on current BFRDP projects are ineligible to apply for another BFRDP grant. **Further, organizations and institutions that have received a standard or education team grant in the last two funding cycles (FY 2022 or FY 2023) are ineligible to apply.** Please do not apply for another simplified standard grant if you were previously awarded a simplified standard BFRDP grant. Simplified standard grants are designed for new trainers who have never received grants nor gained more than three years of experience in assisting with the development of beginning farmers and ranchers.

Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, if reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions. NIFA will accept the most recent application 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 understand the Federal awards process.

B.   Cost Sharing or Matching

Match Required –For FY 2024, BFRDP awardees must provide a match from non-Federal sources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount equal to 25 percent of the funds provided by the grant or cooperative agreement. However, NIFA may waive or reduce the matching requirement if NIFA determines such a wavier or modification is necessary to effectively reach an underserved area or population.

If you plan to serve an underserved area or population and would like to request the 25% match waiver, or match modification please enter the statement below, at the top of your budget justification form:
"This applicant plans to serve an underserved area or population and would like to request the 25% match waiver." Or "Match modification" whichever applies.

See Part IV, B of this RFA, R&R Budget Federal and Non-Federal, for details on requesting a match-waiver.

Matching funds must be from non-Federal sources except when authorized by statute.
An award will not be issued unless all matching funds over the life of the grant are secured with match support documentation, which will be requested of applicants at the time they are recommended for an award. There can be no contingencies on the matching amount.

The Budget Justification must list matching sources along with the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match as well as the total dollar amount being pledged. However, the applicant is still subject to documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, etc. as specified in 2 CFR Part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (the Uniform Guidance)," 7 CFR 3430, "Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions," and program-specific regulations, as applicable. In instances where match is required, any resulting award will require the signature of an Authorized Representative (AR). Only when NIFA receives the award signed by the AR will award funds be released and available for draw down.

The applicant must establish the value of matching contributions in accordance with applicable cost principles. Refer to 2 CFR Part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

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 and Grants 101. See Steps to Obtain Application Materials below for instructions on how to obtain electronic application. **Part III** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the 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.

Key Information 3. Steps to Obtain Application Materials

> **Step One:** Register or renew entity (annually) at SAM.gov to obtain Unique Entity Identifier (UEI), a 12-digit alphanumeric identifier required to conduct business with the Federal government. Registration can take 4-6 weeks to complete.
> **Step Two:** Register: New Users to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
> **Step Three:** Download Adobe. Download and Install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements).
> **Step Four:** Find Request for Application (RFA). Using this funding opportunity number **USDA-NIFA-BFR-010413**, search for RFA here: Opportunity Package.
> **Step 5:** Assess Readiness. Contact an Authorized Organizational Representative (AR) prior to starting an application to assess the organization's readiness to submit an electronic application.

Key Information 5. Help and Resources

> **Grants.gov 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.

> **NIFA Support**
>> **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. NIFA will accept subsequent submissions to an application until the application deadline. However, applicants that do not meet the application requirements, including 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. Key Application Instructions below outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Key Information 6. Key Application Instructions
All references are to the NIFA Grants Application Guide;
  a) Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format. **(Part IV.200)**
  b) Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format. **(Part VI.100 Option 2)**
  c) Follow the submission instructions. **(Part IV.300)**
  d) Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R. **(Part V.100 Field 5)**
  e) Contact the Grants.gov helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.
  f) Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within *30* days of the application deadline.

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in **Part IV.200** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide. *Any proposals that are non-compliant with the requirements* (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) *will be at risk of being excluded from the NIFA review*. Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or whether attachments are in PDF format; see **Part VI.100** Option 2 of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review.

BFRDP FY2024 Sample Checklist for Standard & Educational Team Grant Applications
  -*SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
  -*SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)
  -R&R Other Project Information Form
  - Project Summary (PDF)
  - Project Narrative (PDF)
    - Logic Model (see logic model template)
  - Bibliography & Cited References (PDF)
  - Facilities and Other Resources (PDF)
  - Equipment Documentation (PDF)
  - Other Attachments
    - Data Management Plan (PDF)
    - Commitment Letters (PDF)
  - Supplemental Information Form
    - Conflict of Interest List (PDF)
  -R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)
  - Biographical Sketch(es) (PDF)
  - Current & Pending Support (PDF)
  -R&R Personal Data
  -R&R Budget
  - Match
  - Indirect Costs
  - Budget Justification (PDF)

- R&R Sub-Award Budget(s)

-***SF 424 R&R**: Forms in the Application Package – see instructions in the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

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 BFRDP. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for instructions and suggested templates. The PS is limited to 250 words with font size no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman and should use NIFA's Project Summary Application Template. The PS should be attached as PDF.

   The PS must include a description of the problem or opportunity, project objectives, and a description of the effort.

   It is the responsibility of the applicant to review the attachment for the 250-word limit and PDF compliance before submission. NIFA will not review applications that exceed the required 250-word limit. The PS must include all the following:
   a. Project Title;
   b. List of Project Directors (PDs) and Co-PDs and their associated institutions/organizations;
   c. Project objectives and projected outcomes;
   d. List of all other collaborating institutions/organizations/farmer and rancher groups;
   e. Percent of total federal funds requested that are allocated to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and school-based agricultural education organizations (SAEOs);
   f. If applicable, percent of budget allocated to serving military veterans; and/or percent of budget allocated to serving socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or farmworker audiences; and
   g. List of any previous or current BFRDP projects that PD has been a part of leading (list project director and award number 20XX-XXXXX-XXXXX).

2. **Field 8**. **Project Narrative (PN).**
   Project Narrative for Small, Medium and Large Standard Grants, and Education Team Grant Applications. The PN must not exceed *20 pages* of written text including all figures and tables with line spacing set at 1.5 and at least 1-inch margins with font size no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman (the font size for tables and figures should be no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman). The only exception to the page limit requirement will be found in the directions as noted below under (a) Response to Previous Review for Resubmissions; (b) Prior BFRDP accomplishments; and (f) logic model. The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. It is

encouraged to include a one-page table of contents in the PN, which will **not** count towards the page limit for the PN. The PN must include all the following:

a. **Response to Previous Review for Resubmissions** – The response to previous review must not exceed 1 page with line spacing set at 1.5 and at least 1-inch margins with font size no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman. This does **not** count towards the page limit for the PN. Use the subheading "Response to Previous Review".

b. **Prior BFRDP Accomplishments** – If the Project Director (PD) has been involved in leading prior BFRDP project(s), briefly describe lessons learned, what can be improved, and how those lessons and improvements are being incorporated into the current application to ensure effective and successful program goals. The prior BFRDP accomplishments must not exceed 1 page with line spacing set at 1.5 and at least 1-inch margins with font size no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman. This does **not** count towards the page limit for the PN. Use the subheading "Prior BFRDP Accomplishments".

c. **Responsiveness to USDA BFRDP Program Priorities** – Please indicate if the application has a connection to the BFRDP priorities, Part I, B (1-15). Provide a brief explanation of how the application is related to the area(s) indicated.

d. **Background and Rationale** – Indicate the overall background, technical approach, and need for the project. Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) of the proposed project. Identify the target audience and their needs (size, region, value of sales, structure of the industry (number of small, medium, and large farms), critical barriers, etc.). If helpful, provide a map of the target region. Summarize any similar beginning farmer and rancher education and training programs that are available for the identified target audience, including all programs at www.farmanswers.org.
If the project is Education Team, include rationale for the geographic area, topic, or other appropriate focus of the team and team composition.
Farmer Input: Include evidence that beginning farmers and ranchers were involved in conceptualizing the project design and activities.
If the project is Education Team, include the rationale for the geographic area, topic, or other appropriate focus of the team and team composition.
All works cited must be referenced in the "Bibliography & Cited References" in this section but will **not** count towards the page limit for the PN.
Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two (2) of the 20 pages for this section. Related evaluation criteria (see Part V, B of this RFA): Relevancy.

e. **Objectives and Outcomes** – Concisely present the goals, associated objectives, and expected outputs and outcomes of the project in relation to the audience and needs identified. Provide the number of beginning farmers and ranchers that will be served by category as described in Part 1.b. above. Estimate how many beginning farmers and ranchers will attain specified, anticipated knowledge gains or actions (*e.g.*, starting farming; improving production practices; entering new markets). How many are projected to qualify as beginning farmers by the end of the project? Project the expected impacts of the knowledge gains and actions on the success of the beginning farmer and rancher operations. Discuss whether and how this program can be adapted to other regions, communities and/or agricultural systems.
Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two (2) of the 20 pages for this section. Related evaluation criteria (see Part V, B of this RFA): Technical merit.

f. **Approach** – Clearly state the proposed activities and approaches to achieve each objective.
Specifically, this section must include:
   i.   Description of the activities proposed for each objective.
   ii. Timeline of the proposed project. The timeline should include activities, and major outputs and associated outcomes for each year of the project.
   iii. Discuss how and where the activities will be provided and the approach, as appropriate for the target audience.
   iv. Describe how the project, including its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the life of the grant (*e.g.*, plans for self-support or institutionalization, or other resources of support). If there are no plans to sustain the effort, explain how the impact of the project will be lasting.
   v.   For *Standard projects* describe how participants will be recruited for training. Specify their prior farming experience, and whether they are already beginning farmers and ranchers or not yet at that level.
   vi. For *Education Team projects* describe how beginning farmer and rancher curricula and programs will be identified and evaluated. Detail how curriculum will be developed and delivered in future years.
   vii. Detail novel ideas or contributions of the proposed project.
   viii. Describe any procedural limitations or expected obstacles, and how they will be addressed. For *Standard projects*, identify possible challenges of your proposed strategy for participant recruitment and plans to address those challenges.
   ix. Develop and include a **logic model** to guide program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Utilize graphical depiction to demonstrate the relationships between elements leading to outcomes (see logic model template). The logic model does **not** count towards the page limit for the PN.
   Applicants are encouraged to use approximately six (6) of the 20 pages for this section. Related evaluation criteria (see Part V, B of this RFA): Technical merit; Achievability.

g. **Personnel and Resources** – Detail key personnel's experience in serving the identified, or other beginning farmers and rancher's audiences. Include key personnel's ability to provide effective education, outreach, training, and mentoring programs for the identified audience. If working with socially disadvantaged audiences and/or veterans, it is very important to have partner(s) who have knowledge and experience working with such audiences. Additionally, it is important that such partner(s) be involved in the leadership of the project.

Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities of key personnel related to the proposed project, and associated impacts. This information may include:
   i.   Years and locations of prior activities;
   ii. Number of training assistance or education activities previously carried out;
   iii. Number of participants and graduates from the program;
   iv. Success rate in completing the program;
   v.   Percentage of graduates who are still in farming; and/or
   vi. Percentages of those who improved their operations.

Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two (2) of the 20 for this section. Related evaluation criteria (see Part V, B of this RFA): Expertise and track record; Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel.

h. **Plan for Outcome Based Reporting** – Detail a plan for project management, including methodology and resource utilization for outcome documentation, evaluation, data sharing, and reporting. Clearly identify expected performance targets, impacts, and outcomes that are measurable and achievable. Participatory, formative, and summative evaluation are encouraged. *Evaluators who are external to the performing institution are required.* A Data Management Plan is required for this program.

For greater detail on the appropriate evaluation measurement for a BFRDP grant, please see the BFRDP Outcomes Based Reporting Guide.

As a starting point for *Standard projects*, applicants should report:
1. Expected number of new farm startups as a result of the project; and
2. Expected number of beginning farmers (i.e., within their first ten (10) years of operation) who will make beneficial actions/changes as a result of the project; all beneficial actions/changes should be detailed.

As a starting point for *Education Team projects*, applicants should report:
1. Anticipated number of information products created as a result of the project;
2. Anticipated number and types of users of information products created as a result of the project; and/or
3. Anticipated number of trainers/organizations trained as a result of the project.

Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two (2) of the 20 pages for this section. Related evaluation criteria (see Part V, B of this RFA): Adequacy of Plans for the Participatory Evaluation Process).

i. **Management and Collaboration Plan** – Detail a management plan that describes roles, functions, and commitment of all partners, collaborators, and organizations, as related to the proposed project. Describe the plans for coordination, communication, data-sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. Detail how the collaboration and its impact will be sustained beyond the period of the award. Strong partnerships among complementary organizations (*e.g.*, NGOs, CBOs, SAEOs and universities) with shared leadership are essential to successful BFRDP projects, see "Definitions" (Appendix III of this RFA) for definitions of Partner and Collaborator. Include:
   a. Time allocated by each partner for attainment of objectives;
   b. Key roles of each partner and collaborator; and
   c. Plan for administration of the proposed project, maintenance, and partnerships.

Letters of commitment signed by the AR of the partnering organization demonstrating that the partners involved have agreed to abide by the Management Plan should be provided (see "Other Attachments" below).

Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two (2) of the 20 pages for this section. Related evaluation criteria (see Part V, B of this RFA): Partnerships and collaboration; Achievability.

Project Narrative for Simplified Standard Grants Applications. The PN must not exceed *10 pages* of written text including all figures and tables with line spacing set at

1.5 and at least 1-inch margins with font size no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman (the font size for tables and figures should be no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman). The only exception to the page limit requirement will be found in the directions as noted below under (a) Response to Previous Review for Resubmission and (c) logic model. The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. It is encouraged to include a one-page table of contents in the PN, which will not count towards the page limit for the PN. The PN must include all the following:

a. **Response to Previous Review for Resubmissions** – The response to previous review must not exceed 1 page with line spacing set at 1.5 and at least 1-inch margins with font size no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman. This does not count towards the page limit for the PN. Use the subheading "Response to Previous Review".

b. **Introduction** – Indicate the overall background, technical approach, and need for the project. Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) of the proposed project. Identify the target audience and their needs (size, region, value of sales, structure of the industry (number of small, medium, and large farms), critical barriers, etc.). If necessary, provide a map of the target region. Summarize any similar beginning farmer and rancher education and training programs that are available for the identified target audience, including all programs at www.farmanswers.org. Include evidence that beginning farmers and ranchers were involved in conceptualizing the project design and activities.

c. **Objectives and Outcomes** – Concisely present the goals, associated objectives, and expected outputs and outcomes of the project in relation to the audience and needs identified. Provide the number of beginning farmers and ranchers that will be served. Estimate how many beginning farmers and ranchers will attain specific, anticipated knowledge gains or actions (*e.g.*, starting farming; improving production practices; entering new markets). Project the expected impacts of the knowledge gains and actions on the success of the beginning farmer and rancher operations.

d. **Approach** – The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described.
   i. Description of the activities proposed for each objective.
   ii. Timeline of the proposed project. The timeline should include activities, and major outputs and associated outcomes for each year of the project.
   iii. Discuss how and where the activities will be provided and the approach, as appropriate for the target audience.
   iv. Describe how the project, including its partnerships and collaborations, will be sustained beyond the life of the grant (e.g., plans for self-support or institutionalization, or other resources of support). If there are no plans to sustain the effort, explain how the impact of the project will be lasting.
   v. Describe how beginning farmers and ranchers will be recruited for training.
   vi. Detail novel ideas or contributions of the proposed project.
   vii. Describe any procedural limitations or expected obstacles, and how they will be addressed. For Standard projects, identify possible challenges of your proposed strategy for participant recruitment and plans to address those challenges.
   viii. Develop and include a **logic model** to guide program planning, implementation, and evaluation. Utilize graphical depiction to demonstrate the

relationships between elements leading to outcomes (see logic model template). The logic model does **not** count towards the page limit for the PN.

e. **Personnel and Resources** – Detail key personnel's experience in serving the identified, or other beginning farmers and rancher's audiences. Include Key Personnel's ability to provide effective education, outreach, training, and mentoring programs for the identified audience. If working with socially disadvantaged audiences and/or veterans, it is very important to have partner(s) who have knowledge and experience working with such audiences. Additionally, it is important that such partner(s) be involved in the leadership of the project.
Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project, and associated impacts.

f. **Project Evaluation** – Clearly identify expected performance targets, impacts, and outcomes that are measurable and achievable. Participatory, formative, and summative evaluation are encouraged. A Data Management Plan is required for this program.
For greater detail on the appropriate evaluation measurement for a BFRDP grant, please see the BFRDP Outcomes Based Reporting Guide.
As a starting point, applicants should report:
1. Expected number of new farm startups as a result of the project; and
2. Expected number of beginning farmers (i.e., within their first ten (10) years of operation) who will make beneficial actions/changes as a result of the project; all beneficial actions/changes should be detailed.

g. **Project Results and Dissemination** – Describe the plans for coordination, communication, data-sharing and reporting results and outcomes among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. Demonstrate project benefits and results to growing and sustaining new and beginning farmers and ranchers.

3. **Field 9.** Bibliography & Cited References. Provide a complete list of all references cited in the application. For each reference, provide the complete name for each author (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the year of the publication, full title of the article, name of the journal or book published, volume, and the page numbers. No page limit.

4. **Field 10.** Facilities & Other Resources. Describe the types, location, and availability of instrumentation and physical facilities necessary to carry out the work proposed. If the work will be conducted at a facility not owned and operated by the applicant, see Field 12 for additional information.

5. **Field 11.** Equipment Documentation. Describe the types, location, and availability of equipment necessary to carry out the work proposed. Items of equipment to be purchased must be fully justified under this section.

6. **Field 12**. Add Other Attachments. See **Part V.120 Field 12** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.
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). The DMP should not be more than 2 pages.

Commitment Letters. Include Letters of Commitment from all partners (signed by the partnering institution AR). Letters should include partner roles in the proposed project and agreement to abide by the Management and Collaboration Plan. Letters of Commitment have no page limit. Title the attachment(s) as 'Letter of Commitment – Organization Name' in the document header and save file (PDF) as 'Letter of Commitment Organization Name.'

Letters from other organizations or people whose participation is important to the success of the project, committing those collaborators to specific roles, are also encouraged. Additionally, support letters that add merit to the grant application and help clarify project plans are welcomed. Support letters show that the project is well organized, ideas are achievable, and project activities will resolve societal challenges relevant to the target audience(s).

Please do not add any other attachments not specifically requested in this RFA. Attaching additional narrative or figures or tables other than those specifically requested in this RFA will result in disqualification from review.

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V.130** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates. A biographical sketch and current and pending form are required documents for all PD/PI and Co-PD/Co-PI. For the current and pending form, if no other funding is "Active," then this application is to be identified as "Pending" in the information submitted.

R&R Personal Data. This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see **Part V.140** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide).

R&R Budget. See **Part V.150** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.
A R&R Budget form must be completed for each year (or partial year) for which work is proposed under this program solicitation. Applicants must ensure that the budget provided in the R&R Budget forms matches the requested budget amount found in Field 15(a) on the SF–424 form and that this number does not exceed the budget ceiling.

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 IDC, and **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for additional information.
   3. **Budget Justification** – **Part V.150 Section L** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide Applicants must provide a detailed budget justification (PDF) in Section L of the R&R 44 Budget form. All items included in the R&R Budget Form should be addressed in the budget justification.

BFRDP requires Project Directors to participate in Project Director annual meetings that can be expensed with awarded grant funds not to exceed $3,000 per award year. Annual meetings allow grantees to network, encourage partnerships, and gain additional knowledge on evaluation methods to strengthen documentation of project outcomes in measurable terms.

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part V.300** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.
   1. **Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying.** Enter the program name and the program code. See Program Codes below. Accurate entry is critical.
   2. **Field 8**. **Conflict of Interest List.** See **Part V.300** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide. Required for all Senior/Key Persons. Combine all Conflict-of-Interest forms into a single PDF attachment. A template is located at NIFA's Application Support Template Resource.

Key Information 7. Program Codes
   Standard Grant – Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Standard (includes simplified, small, and large); Program Code: *BFRDA*
   Education Team Grant – Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Education Team; Program Code: *BFRDB*

C.   Funding Restrictions
Section 12301 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334) 7 U.S.C. 2279(l) (7) limits indirect costs for this program to 10% of total federal funds awarded. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants for Standard Grants, and Education Teams (ETs), proposals must limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to 10 percent of the total funds requested. If an applicant has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement with their cognizant agency they may recover indirect costs according to that agreement however, recovery is still limited to 10% of total federal funds awarded.

If the applicant does not have a negotiated rate and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant may request an IDC rate. Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process and need only to calculate a rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC. 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.

See NIFA Indirect Costs for information including additional resources and NIFA Indirect Cost Guidance Chart.

D.   Submission Dates and Times
We recommend that you conduct an administrative review of the application before submission via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions including page limits and PDF requirements.

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV.300 of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

Applications for FY 2024 must be received by Grants.gov by 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time on April 4, 2024. Applications received after this deadline WILL NOT be considered for review or funding.

If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV, A of this RFA for Grants.gov contact information.

Applicants must allow additional time for electronic submission and plan to allow time for correction of technical errors identified by Grants.gov. It is recommended that applicants begin submitting their completed application at least one day prior to the deadline. The USDA NIFA BFRDP Programs rarely accept late applications. Exceptions are only made for delays due to natural disasters or technical problems experienced by Grants.gov that impact the entire applicant community. Documentation of the problem will be required. Exceptions made for technical problems will be for Grants.gov system failures prior to the deadline that impact the entire applicant community. Applicants who have problems with their submissions to Grants.gov must call the Grants.gov help desk to resolve the problems and keep a record of the following:
1. Grants.gov Tracking Numbers
2. Case numbers provided by Grants.gov
3. Any correspondence with Grants.gov regarding the submission problem
4. Any correspondence with SAM.gov and Dunn and Bradstreet during the registration process

Once the application is successfully submitted to Grants.gov, the applicant must forward the information above via email to Denis.Ebodaghe@usda.gov. Information obtained from the case number and correspondence will be used to verify if the submission problem was due to a Grants.gov system failure that impacted the entire applicant community or due to a problem with the applicant. This information will be used to determine the final decision to accept or not accept a late application.

We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence from NIFA regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact BFRDP@usda.gov and request the application number that was assigned to the application. Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned an application number, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.

It is anticipated that the evaluation of BFRDP applications will require approximately six months from submission deadline, and no information on application status will be available until final selections have been made. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of final award decisions via email within approximately 6 months after the submission deadline.

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, researchers, public health practitioners, educators, consumers, and commercial reviews) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (*e.g.*, colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to race, ethnicity, gender representation, and an equitable age distribution.
6. The need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

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

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

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, _not_ including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel comments to the PD.

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

B.   Evaluation Criteria

NIFA anticipates that the evaluation of the BFRDP applications will require approximately six months from the submission deadline. No information on application status will be available until NIFA makes the final selections. NIFA will notify both successful and unsuccessful applicants of final award decisions via email. For information about the status of a submitted application, see **Part VI.100** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

Applicants should be aware that applications that do not satisfy all the screening criteria will be returned to the proposing entity without review. Returned applications may not be resubmitted (with or without revision) under this solicitation. The initial screening criteria are the following:

    a. The application must meet the Application Content and Format requirements as described in this RFA. This includes page length and format requirements, all required forms and all files in PDF.
    b. The proposed budget must be within the dollar ceiling identified in this RFA.
    c. An application must contain adequate technical information that clearly states the project plan and objectives. USDA NIFA reserves the right not to submit for review any application that it finds to have insufficient information.

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals submitted in response to this RFA that pass the screening criteria as described above:

Small, Medium, and Large Standard Grants & Education Team Grant Evaluation Criteria

   1. **Partnerships and Collaborations**
        a. Collaborative network and/or partnership of public and/or private entities are established and detailed;
        b. Description of how partnership(s)/collaboration(s) are to be supported by this grant;
        c. Partners have expertise necessary to meet the needs of the target audience;
        d. Description of how partnership(s)/collaboration(s) and/or their impact will be sustained beyond the period of the award; and
        e. Letter(s) of Commitment signed by the AR of the partnering organization(s) demonstrate all partners have agreed to abide by the Management Plan; relevant Letters of Support must be included.
   2. **Consultation of BFRs**
        a. Evidence of beginning farmer and ranchers' role in the proposed project
             i. Initial planning and design,
            ii. Implementation throughout the entire project, and
           iii. Decision making during the project.
   3. **Relevancy**
        a. Indication and explanation of project connection to the BFRDP priorities, [Part I, B (1-15)](#);
        b. Sufficient justification for the importance of the problem;
        c. Identification of a target audience and description of their needs;
             i. **Target Audience** – The target audience for BFRDP is farmers and ranchers who have not operated a farm or ranch or have operated a farm or ranch for not more than ten years. Applicants must identify, define, and provide recruitment strategies for all BFR training categories:

1. Category I: Has not operated a farm or ranch;
2. Category II: 1-3 years in farming and/or ranching;
3. Category III: 4-6 years in farming and/or ranching;
4. Category IV: 7-10 years in farming and/or ranching; or
5. Category V: planning to serve trainees in all categories listed.

d. For *Education Team grants*, rationale for the geographic area, topic, or other appropriate focus of the team and team composition provided.

4. **Technical Merit**
   a. Project objectives and anticipated outcomes are clearly described, adequate, and appropriate. All project components (education, outreach, and/or technical assistance) are reflected in one or more project objectives;
   b. Proposed approach, procedures, or methodologies are innovative, original, clearly described, suitable, and feasible;
   c. Proposed project is adaptable to other locations, communities, and/or agricultural products or technologies;
   d. Expected performance targets, impacts, and outcomes are clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within the allotted time frame requested;
   e. The budget is appropriate for the proposed project;
   f. There is sufficient budget detail to indicate clearly how the funds would be utilized;
   g. For *Education Team grants*, a clear plan is described to identify gaps in BFR training, evaluate all existing programs, and develop and conduct train-the-trainer projects; proposed project complements previously funded and currently active ETs; and
   h. For *previous BFRDP awardees*, briefly describe lessons learned, what can be improved, and how those lessons are being incorporated into the current proposed project; detail prior project outcomes, achievements, and/or contributions of curriculum to the BFRDP Clearinghouse; describe participation and contributions to the Results Verification System (RVS); and outline participation in BFRDP Project Directors' (PDs) meetings.

5. **The Secretary of Agriculture places a priority for projects that address climate change with climate smart ag and forestry solutions including:**
   a. Conservation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and other environmental concerns; efficient and renewable energy practices; building resilience to climate change; and coordination in working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to include training on conservation practices, farming principles and practices that increase biodiversity, enrich soils, land, improve watersheds, and enhance ecosystem services.

6. **The Secretary of Agriculture places a priority for funding on projects that present problem-solving strategies that focus on removing systemic barriers and increasing equitable participation in USDA's program and services:**
   a. Proposed activities increase equitable participation in USDA's programs and services; and
   b. Provide training to increase equitable participation in programs and services offered by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service

Agency, Agricultural Marketing Service, Risk Management Agency, Forest Service, and other USDA agencies as deemed appropriate.

7. **Achievability**
   a. Proposed approach, procedures, or methodologies are innovative, original, clearly described, suitable, and feasible;
   b. Expected performance targets, impacts, and outcomes are clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within the allotted time frame requested;
   c. Plans for administration and management of proposed project and partnerships/collaborative arrangements are adequate (e.g., clearly defined project roles of key personnel and collaborators); and
   d. Description of procedural limitations or expected obstacles, and how they will be addressed.

8. **Expertise and Track Record of the Applicants**
   a. Roles of key personnel are clearly defined;
   b. Key personnel have sufficient experience in education, outreach, mentoring, and/or technical assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to complete the proposed project (including quantitative and qualitative evidence of past successful education, training, and technical assistance activities);
   c. Key personnel have demonstrated experience working the proposed target audience;
   d. Key personnel have demonstrated experience evaluating project outcomes; and
   e. PD and Co-PD biographic information/resumes provide relevant employment history.

9. **Adequacy of Available or Obtainable Support Personnel, Facilities, and Instrumentation**
   a. Support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation (equipment) are sufficient; and
   b. Personnel on subcontract(s)/subaward(s) have defined roles and responsibilities.

10. **Adequacy of Plans for Participatory Evaluation Process, Outcome-Based Reporting, and the Communication of Findings and Results Beyond the Immediate Target Audience**
    a. A clear plan is articulated for project management, including time allocated for attainment of objectives and project delivery, maintenance of partnerships and collaborations, and a strategy to enhance communication, data sharing, and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups;
    b. Expected performance targets, impacts, and outcomes are clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within the allotted time frame requested by the applicant;
    c. Evaluation team has been identified; *evaluators who are external to the performing institution are required*;
    d. For *Educational Team grants*, the number and description of activities (and new curricula) planned are described with plans for dissemination; the anticipated number of users of newly developed information products is included; and
    e. Data Management Plan included.

Simplified Standard Grant Evaluation Criteria
1. **Partnerships and Collaborations**

     a. Collaborative network and/or partnership of public and/or private entities are established and detailed;

     b. Description of how partnership(s)/collaboration(s) and/or their impact will be sustained beyond the period of the award; and

     c. Letter(s) of Commitment signed by the AR of the partnering organization(s) demonstrate all partners have agreed to abide by the Management Plan; relevant Letters of Support must be included.

2. **Consultation of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers**
   a. Evidence of beginning farmer and ranchers' role in the proposed project
      i. Design,
      ii. Implementation, and
      iii. Decision making.

3. **Relevancy**
   a. Indication and explanation of project connection to the BFRDP priorities, [Part I, B (1-15)](#);
   b. Sufficient justification for the importance of the problem; and
   c. Identification of a target audience and description of their needs.

4. **Technical Merit**
   a. Project objectives and anticipated outcomes are clearly described, adequate, and appropriate. All project components (education, outreach, and/or technical assistance) are reflected in one or more project objectives;
   b. Proposed approach, procedures, or methodologies are innovative, original, clearly described, suitable, and feasible;
   c. Expected performance targets, impacts, and outcomes are clearly stated and measurable;
   d. The budget is appropriate for the proposed project; and
   e. There is sufficient budget detail to indicate clearly how the funds would be utilized.

5. **The Secretary of Agriculture places a priority for projects that address climate change with climate smart ag and forestry solutions including:**
   a. Conservation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and other environmental concerns; efficient and renewable energy practices; building resilience to climate change; and coordination in working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to include training on conservation practices, farming principles and practices that increase biodiversity, enrich soils, land, improve watersheds, and enhance ecosystem services; and
   b. farming principles and practices that increase biodiversity, enrich soils, land, improve watersheds, and enhance ecosystem services.

6. **The Secretary of Agriculture places a priority for funding on projects that present problem-solving strategies that focus on removing systemic barriers and increasing equitable participation in USDA's program and services:**
   a. Proposed activities increase equitable participation in USDA's programs and services.
   b. Provide training to increase equitable participation in programs and services offered by USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency,

Agricultural Marketing Service, Risk Management Agency, Forest Service, and other USDA agencies as deemed appropriate.

7. **Achievability**
   a. Proposed approach, procedures, or methodologies are innovative, original, clearly described, suitable, and feasible;
   b. Specified performance targets, impacts, and outcomes are achievable within the allotted time frame requested; and
   c. Description of pitfalls or expected obstacles, and how they will be addressed.

8. **Expertise and track record of the applicants**
   a. Roles of key personnel are clearly defined;
   b. Key personnel have some experience in education, outreach, mentoring, and/or technical assistance to beginning farmers and ranchers to complete the proposed project;
   c. Key personnel have demonstrated experience working with the proposed target audience; and
   d. PD and Co-PD biographic information/resumes provide relevant employment history.

9. **Personnel**
   a. Support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation (equipment) are sufficient; and
   b. Personnel on subcontract(s)/subaward(s) have defined roles and responsibilities.

10. **Project Evaluation**
    a. Expected performance targets, impacts, and outcomes are clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within the allotted time frame requested by the applicant;
    b. Evaluation team has been identified; and
    c. Data Management Plan included.

11. **Project Results and Dissemination**
    a. Detailed plans for reporting, and communication of results and outcomes within target audience and local area; and
    b. Demonstrate project benefits to growing new and BFRs; emphasize creating and sustaining BFRs.

C. Organizational Management Information

Applicants must submit specific management information prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only need to provide an update if there was a change in previously provided information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

D. Application Disposition

Applicants may withdraw at any time before NIFA makes a final funding decision. NIFA will retain all applications, including withdrawn applications and unfunded applications.

PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A.   General
Within the limit of funds authorized, the NIFA awarding official will make grants to responsible and eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant must be no later than September 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions, 7 CFR Part 3430, subparts A through E.

Award Notice. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in 2 CFR 200.211 (see NIFA's Terms and Conditions).

B.   Administrative and National Policy Requirements
Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: Federal Regulations). Unless specifically noted by statue or award-specific requirements, NIFA Federal Assistance 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 BFRDP award terms). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those, if any, will be identified in the award.

Please note: All technical reports are held confidential for a period covering twenty years after the termination of the project. As such, proprietary information may be included in the interim and comprehensive final reports when necessary to provide the USDA NIFA BFRDP staff adequate information to evaluate the progress and outcome of the project.

REEport
Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual and final reports to NIFA's electronic, Web-based inventory system, REEport, that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions (see REEport Guide for Project Directors). Please note: Reports submitted via REEport will be placed in the USDA Current Research Information System (CRIS) database. CRIS is an online public database meant to provide information to the general public on all awards made by USDA NIFA. As such, proprietary information should not be included in these reports. Additionally, a REEport submission does not meet the requirements for the interim technical and comprehensive final reports as these are additional reports required under the terms and conditions for the BFRDP grant.

RVS

The [Results Verification System (RVS)](#) was developed by the BFRDP-funded Clearinghouse, [www.farmanswers.org](#). Besides REEport reporting, BFRDP grantees are required to contribute information, including project results and outcomes to the digital library via RVS. Gathering reporting and outcomes information via RVS helps the team analyze and share results across the BFRDP. It is strongly encouraged for grantees to utilize RVS reporting first, before entering information into REEport. See BFRDP Outcomes Based Reporting Guide for details.

Federal Financial Management Requirements

Grantees are expected to comply with applicable Federal financial management requirements included in the award's terms and conditions, [7 CFR 3403](#), [48 CFR part 31](#) and [2 CFR part 200](#). Failure to comply could trigger significant audit liability and require global reconstruction of the grantees accounting system.

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 CONTACTS

Program Contacts
Denis Ebodaghe
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202-445-5460

Rebekah Hanson
Rebekah.Hanson@usda.gov
515-766-9899

Award Management Division Contact
Shatorya Wallace
Shatorya.Wallace@usda.gov
972-357-3224

Steven Evans
Steven.Evans@usda.gov
816-550-4336

For administrative questions related to;
1. Grants.gov, see Part IV of this RFA.
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
3. Awards under this RFA, please email awards@usda.gov

U.S. Postal Mailing Address:
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

Courier/Package Delivery Address:
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of Terms
Authorized Representative – AR
Beginning Farmer and Rancher – BFR
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program – BFRDP
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance – CFDA
Community Based Organizations – CBO
Data Management Plan – DMP
Education Team – ET
Indirect Costs – IDC
National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA
Nongovernmental Organization – NGO
Portable Document Format – PDF
Project Director – PD
Project Narrative – PN
Project Summary – PS
Request for Application – RFA
Research, Education, and Economics – REE
School-based Agricultural Education Organization – SAEO
United States Department of Agriculture – USDA

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

Refer to [7 CFR 3430 Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions](#) for additional definitions.

Definitions

Beginning Farmer or Rancher:
> A person that has not operated a farm or ranch or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years.

Clearinghouse:
> An online repository that will make available to beginning farmers or rancher's education curricula and training materials and programs, and which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.

Collaborator:
> A person or an organization that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project but is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs):
> Private non-profit organizations that are representative of a community or a significant segment of a community that provides services to that local community.

Education:
> An act or process that delivers knowledge and informal education programs to beginning farmers and ranchers, enabling them to make practical decisions.

Limited resource farmer or rancher:
> An operator of a farm or ranch that has both low levels of farm sales and low household income.

Military Veteran:
> A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs):
> Legally constituted, non-governmental organizations created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government and serving one (1) or more communities.

Partnership:
> A relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.

Performance target:
> A specific, verifiable change in people's actions or conditions. It defines how many people will change and what degree of change constitutes success.

Producer:
> An individual, family, or other entity in the U.S. engaged in the business of agriculture, crop, livestock, forestry, and range production, management, and marketing.

Qualified Public and Private Entities:
> Public or private groups, organizations, or institutions that have established and demonstrated capacities to conduct projects that accomplish the purposes of the program as designated in these guidelines.

Regions:

Are subdivided into four categories and include the states and territories as described below:

1. The Northeast Region: Includes the 12 Northeast States and the District of Columbia (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia).
2. The Southern Region: Includes 13 States plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma).
3. The North Central Region: Includes 12 States (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri; Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota) and;
4. The Western Region: Includes 12 States and the American Territories in the Pacific (Hawaii, Alaska, Washington State, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Micronesia).

School-based agricultural education organizations (SAEOs):

Organizations that deliver career and/or technical education in agriculture to high school students, which may include classroom and/or experiential learning, for example, FFA (formerly known as the Future Farmers of America), National Young Farmer Education Organization, or other similar organizations.

Socially disadvantaged beginning farmer or rancher:

A farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group (i.e., a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) (7 U.S.C. 2003(e)).

Veteran farmer or rancher:

A farmer or rancher who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable. (See 7 U.S.C. 2279(a)(7) for further details.)