



National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

## Grant Support Technical Assistance Workshop

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

# NIFA

## New Investigators in the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Program

INVESTING IN SCIENCE | SECURING OUR FUTURE | [WWW.NIFA.USDA.GOV](http://WWW.NIFA.USDA.GOV)

USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER, EMPLOYER, AND LENDER

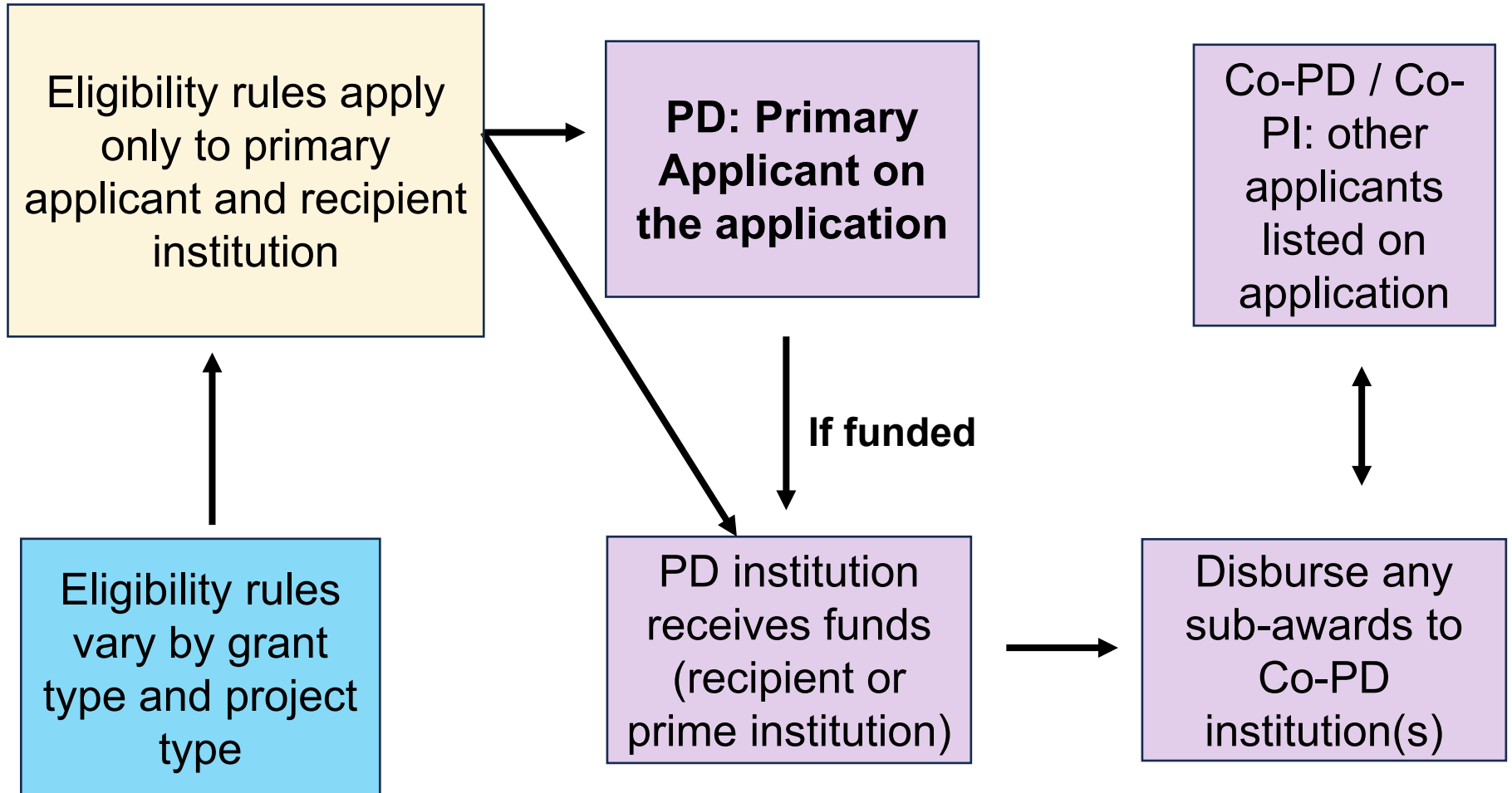
Mark Mirando

# Abbreviations

- Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI)
- Project Director (PD)
- New Investigator (NI)
- Pre / Postdoctoral fellowship (Pre/Postdoc)
- Food and Agriculture Science Enhancement (FASE)



# Who is a PD?





# Who is an AFRI NI?

## CRITERIA

Career Track < 5 years

Scientific publications <75,  
First or corresponding author <25

Previous federal funding limited to  
Pre/Postdoc fellowship, Seed grants

Competitive research  
grant funding only

Career Track  $\neq$  Tenure track

**Purpose:**  
Support early career  
development

Career path at one  
or more institutions

NI Grants available  
only in AFRI

NI PDs may include Co-PDs that  
are not also NI

**Established Applicant:**  
PD who does not meet the NI  
criteria



National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Career Track



# Beginning of a Career

Begins with applicant's first position where the institution of employment allows them to apply as the PD

- Tenure-track position at academic institutions
- Career or career conditional appointment in federal jobs
- Career positions at for-profit or non-profit institutions
- First institution may be your company (self-employed)

Most institutions do not allow Postdoctoral scholars to submit as the PD except for a fellowship grant. Time spend as Postdoc is typically considered as training and is not counted as part of career track

However, individuals will not qualify as NI if they have had successful career and extensive publication record in soft money positions in academia or have had success in industry



# Time in Career

## NI Clock starts

with first job when you are eligible to apply or when you first apply, whichever comes first

## No-reset or Pause in NI Clock

- Transition from non-tenure track to tenure track position
- Institution change
  - e.g., industry to academia
- Field change
  - e.g., teaching to research

- Whether you apply or not in your first career track position, if your institution allows you to apply as PD, the NI clock starts when you begin this position
  - If you had teaching position and you could have applied for a federal grant but did not apply, that will not pause your NI clock



# Previous Federal Funding

- These do not count against NI eligibility
  - Pre- and Postdoc fellowships
  - AFRI Seed grant or equivalent
  - Other federal grants equivalent to AFRI Seed grants
  - Non research grants (e.g., teaching grants)
  - Awards received as Co-PD
- These count against NI eligibility
  - All federal competitive research grants, including those from NIFA, other than listed above
  - Awards received as PD





# NI status

- Does not mean lack of expertise, only lack of extensive experience
- NI still must compete for grants
- Lack of preliminary data is acceptable for Seed grants, but NI must make the case for knowledge gap in their field to justify their proposed project



# Opportunities and Funding

NI fall into two categories based on the **strengthening** status of their institution of employment

NI Grants for Non-Strengthening Institutions

- NI seed grants
- NI standard grants

New Investigator Grants for Strengthening Institutions (FASE)

Two funding sources

Regular program funds

FASE funds (set aside funds for strengthening-eligible institutions)





National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

---

# NI from non-strengthening institutions



# NI Seed and NI Standard Grants

PD must meet all other eligibility criteria for application to AFRI; NI status is added bonus

## NI seed grants

- Up to \$300,000 for 2 years
- No other seed grants (or equivalent) from NIFA
- Can submit only one seed grant application per year
  - Can be PD or Co-PD on only one Seed Grant application per year
- **One-time award benefit only**

## NI standard grants

- No competitive federal research grants except pre/postdoctoral fellowships or seed grant (or seed grant equivalent)
- Can apply even if have received a NI seed grant from NIFA
- **One-time award benefit only**

- Seed grants in non-strengthening institutions are available to only NI
- Funding advantage (explained next)

NI can apply for one seed grant and one standard grant in same program, but projects must differ

# Funding Advantage for NI Grants

## For NI Seed Grants:

- Compete only against other Seed grant applications
- Seed grant applications do not require preliminary data

## For NI Standard Grants:

- If ranked above the funding line, then are funded
- If ranked below the funding line, can also be funded – get a second "bite at the apple"

NIFA Program staff working with AFRI are expected to fund NI grants – important to support the next generation of agricultural scientists



# NI at Non-strengthening Institutions

OMB Number: 0524-0039  
Expiration Date: 12/31/2021

## AFRI PROJECT TYPE

**Instructions:**

**Who completes this form:** Each project director (PD) applying to the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Request for Applications (RFA).

**How this template is completed:**

- \* Check one Project Type Box and one Grant Type Box
- \* For FASE Grants, select an appropriate sub-category. NOTE: New Investigators may also qualify for a strengthening sub-category.

**Project Type**

- Research
- Education
- Extension
- Integrated

**Grant Type**

- Standard Grant
- Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) Grant
- Conference Grant
- Other:
- Food and Agriculture Science Enhancement (FASE) Grant
  - New Investigator
  - Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant
  - Predoctoral Fellowship Grant
  - Strengthening
    - Sabbatical
    - Equipment
    - Seed
    - Strengthening Standard
    - Strengthening CAP
    - Conference Grant
  - Other:

mark New Investigator  
for standard NI

mark New  
investigator and seed  
for NI seed grant



# NI at Strengthening Institutions

## For NI Seed Grants:

- Compete only against other Seed grant applications
- Compete for program funds and Strengthening funds
- Seed grant applications do not require preliminary data

## For NI Standard Grants:

- If ranked above the funding line, then are funded
- Compete for program funds and Strengthening funds
- Can also be funded if ranked below the funding line
  - get a second "bite at the apple"



# NI at Strengthening Institutions

OMB Number: 0524-0039  
Expiration Date: 12/31/2021

## AFRI PROJECT TYPE

**Instructions:**

**Who completes this form:** Each project director (PD) applying to the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Request for Applications (RFA).

**How this template is completed:**

- \* Check one Project Type Box and one Grant Type Box
- \* For FASE Grants, select an appropriate sub-category. NOTE: New Investigators may also qualify for a strengthening sub-category.

**Project Type**

Research

Education

Extension

Integrated

**Grant Type**

Standard Grant

Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) Grant

Conference Grant

Other:

Food and Agriculture Science Enhancement (FASE) Grant

New Investigator

Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant

Predoctoral Fellowship Grant

Strengthening

Sabbatical

Equipment

Seed

Strengthening Standard

Strengthening CAP

Conference Grant

Other:

**Standard Grant Applications:**  
mark New Investigator, Strengthening and Strengthening Standard

**Seed Grant applications:**  
mark New Investigator, Strengthening and Seed



## Preliminary Data requirement of NI Seed grants

One goal of Seed grants is to collect preliminary data to support a future standard grant application to AFRI, so it is not required.

- Strong justification is still required to support performing the work proposed

## Preliminary Data requirement of NI Standard grants

For NI Standard grant applications, quality and rigor of preliminary data are important

- NI Standard grant applications are Standard grants in all respects
- Some reviewers, especially the most experienced, may sometimes be less critical of a lack of extensive preliminary data in NI applications



# Submitting Multiple Applications

You may submit multiple applications to same or different programs in the same year if projects are different.

Some considerations:

- AFRI programs are highly competitive with an average of 10 to 15% chance of success at funding
- You have a finite amount to write each application
- That time you have available will be divided among all the applications you submit – if you submit only one application, then you can spend more time on it to improve its quality
- Submitting multiple applications is likely to reduce the quality of each application – success is dependent on quality of applications submitted not number of applications



# Learn about NIFA's Peer Review Process for Competitive Grants

Read about NIFA's Peer Review Process in detail:

- <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/nifa-peer-review-process-competitive-grant-applications>

Serve on review panels:

- <https://prs.nifa.usda.gov/prs/preLogin>
  - Click on “Panelist Recruitment” under the “Volunteer”
- NIFA does not allow applicants to serve on review panels in which they have an application being reviewed during that fiscal year



# AFRI Coordination Team ([AFRI@usda.gov](mailto:AFRI@usda.gov))

AFRI Coordinator: Lelan Dixon

AFRI Program Specialist: Keesha Corbin

AFRI Science Coordinators: Mark  
Mirando and Mallory Koenings



# Questions???

## Panelists

Susan Muhidin

Mark Mirando

Please put your questions in the Q and A Box

Questions/comments/feedback: [AdminOpsTeam.NIFA@usda.gov](mailto:AdminOpsTeam.NIFA@usda.gov)  
Subject line: Grant Support Technical Assistance Workshop:2024



# Non-Discrimination Statement

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

- In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs, are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.
- Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.
- To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).
- USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.