

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Community Food Projects

Competitive Grant Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 and 2026

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FY 2025: Thursday, November 7, 2024 - 5:00 P.M. ET
FY 2026: Thursday, October 30, 2025 - 5:00 P.M. ET

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: Fiscal Year 2025: \$4,800,000
Fiscal Year 2026: \$4,800,000

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD RANGE: \$25,000 - \$400,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-CFP-010954

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.225

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.225.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	FY 2025: Thursday, November 7, 2024 - 5:00 P.M. ET FY 2026: Thursday, October 30, 2025 - 5:00 P.M. ET
Approximate Award Selection Dates:	May 30, 2025 May 29, 2026 These dates are estimates of when applicants will receive award application status. Dates are subject to change.
Approximate Project Start Dates:	September 1, 2025 September 1, 2026 These dates are estimates to be used for planning and are subject to change.
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 (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Community Food Projects RFA.

WHAT'S NEW FOR FY 2025

- 1) This RFA will be used to solicit applications for two fiscal years to allow applicants to plan. Although the RFA will open and close each year, there may be modifications of this RFA between 2025 and 2026.
- 2) Proposal submissions should be made for the appropriate year. Example: Only applications to be considered for FY 2025 should be submitted in FY 2024.
- 3) This RFA includes revised program descriptions, clarified goals and program preference elements including food loss and waste reduction.
- 4) Clarifies expectations for domestic travel and attendance at the annual project director's meetings during the tenure of the Project Director is designated and entered on the Form SF-424 R&R Budget described in this RFA at Part IV B. Content and Form of The Application.
- 5) Emphasizes that a list of required documents for applications to be accepted for review is included in PART IV APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION.
- 6) Clarifies the review criteria at Part V of this RFA.

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

**COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS COMPETITIVE GRANT PROGRAM (CFPCGP)
CFPCGP-TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (T&TA) PROVIDER**

1. The T&TA provider is available to provide free one-on-one technical support and resources to all applicants. The CFPCGP T&TA provider may be reached at this [website](#) or by filling out this on-line [form](#).
2. When preparing to apply to this program, consult the T&TA provider for free support. Grantees awarded under this program will be *required* to cooperate with the T&TA provider for the following services: (i) Attend Project Director (PD) meetings and (ii) Sharing information provided in NIFA progress reports and final reports with T&TA provider annually for the life of the grant, for preparation of CFPCGP program annual report.
3. Applicants and grantees are strongly encouraged to participate in these additional activities provided by the T&TA provider including: (i) technical assistance related to application preparation and, project development, etc.; (ii) grant writing training; (iii) project evaluation training, and (iv) leadership/capacity development training. These activities may be provided through a variety of methods. Carefully review this RFA and the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.

GRANTS.GOV TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

For technical issues with Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. NIFA staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts questions or issues.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for Fiscal Years (FY) 2025 and FY 2026. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or a full appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

The amount available for CFPCGP in FY 2025 is approximately \$4,800,000 and approximately \$4,800,000 for FY 2026.

This notice identifies the objectives for CFPCGP projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions for FY 2025, and FY 2026. The CFPCGP requests proposals for two types of projects: 1) Planning Projects (PP), and 2) Community Food Projects (CFP).

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

The Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP) ([7 U.S.C. 2034](#)) is authorized by [Public Law 104-127](#) (Title IV, section 401(g), April 4, 1996) which amended the Food Stamp Act of 1977 ([7 U.S.C. 2011](#)) and added Section 25, Assistance for Community Food Projects.

B. PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES

The CFPCGP projects are to be designed to require a one-time contribution of Federal assistance to become self-sustaining and meet short- and long-term goals. Applicants are required to address two or more of the CFPCGP goals that best fit the plan or project being proposed to ensure a comprehensive and sustainable approach to resolving food and nutrition security and hunger.

Short term goals: (Select at least one)

- 1) Meet the food needs of food-insecure individuals through food distribution.
- 2) Develop community outreach to assist in participation in Federal nutrition assistance programs.
- 3) Improve access to nutrient dense food as part of a comprehensive service.

Long term goals: (Select at least one)

- 1) Develop long-term sustainable projects that increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the community.
- 2) Develop long-term projects that promote comprehensive responses to local food, food access, farm, and nutrition issues.
- 3) Meet specific State, local, Tribal, Territory, or neighborhood food and agricultural long-term needs including needs for equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a CFPCGP project.
- 4) Develop a comprehensive plan for long-term solutions to food and nutrition security.
- 5) Develop long term projects that lead to the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and income-eligible consumers.

Program Preference Elements

In addition to meeting the [Purpose and Priorities](#) of the program, in selecting projects to receive federal assistance for this program, NIFA shall give preference to Planning Projects (PP) and Community Food Projects (CFP) designed to include these elements:

1. Develop linkages between two or more sectors of the food system.
2. Support the development of entrepreneurial projects.
3. Develop innovative linkages between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors.
4. Encourage long-term planning activities, and multisystem, interagency approaches with multistakeholder collaborations, that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the communities, such as food policy councils and food planning associations.
5. Develop new resources and strategies to help reduce food and nutrition insecurity in the community and prevent food and nutrition insecurity in the future by either;
 - a. Developing creative food resources.

- b. Coordinating food services with park and recreation programs and other community-based outlets to reduce barriers to access; or
 - c. Creating nutrition education programs for at-risk populations to enhance food-purchasing and food-preparation skills and to heighten awareness of the connection between diet and health.
6. Integrate actionable plans or activities that would reduce food loss and waste within the local food system by keeping food in the human food supply chain and ensuring that such actions are directly tied to reducing community food insecurity. The overarching goal is to create pathways to strengthen food rescue and get surplus food to feed those experiencing food and nutrition insecurity; reduce food loss and food waste, such as by gleaning surplus produce on the farm or finding new outlets for uneaten food to bolster supply chain resiliency or improve human health.

The Program Purpose Priorities listed above inform the evaluation section [Part V.B.](#) of this RFA. NIFA encourages pursuing these priorities listed above through application of Traditional Knowledge in collaboration and consultation with Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples if consistent with the project goals and priorities. NIFA also encourages applicants to highlight proposed project plans that emphasize food and nutrition security, nutritional quality, environmental stewardship (e.g., food loss and waste, climate), culturally sensitive food and/or food practices, and economic and social equity.

Additionally, NIFA encourages projects that serve underrepresented communities, such as tribal communities, communities of color, women, LGBTQIA+ communities, individuals with disabilities, Veterans, rural and remote communities, insular areas, or communities with residents predominantly living under the Federal poverty line.

The CFPCGP is directly aligned with the following:

[USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026](#): USDA Strategic Goal 4: Make Safe, Nutritious Food Available to All Americans; Objective 4.1; Increase Food Security Through Assistance and Access to Nutritious and Affordable Food.

[USDA Science and Research Strategy, 2023–2026 priority](#): Priority 3: Bolstering Nutrition Security & Health

C. PROGRAM AREA DESCRIPTION

The CFPCGP is intended to bring together stakeholders from distinct parts of the food system and to foster understanding of national food security trends and how they might improve local food systems. Understanding that people with low incomes experience disproportionate access to healthy foods, projects should address food and nutrition security, particularly among our nation's historically underrepresented communities. CFPCGP projects are to include food insecure community members in the planning, designing, development, implementation and evaluation of activities, services, programs, and policies to combat food and nutrition insecurity; and to address underlying causes and factors related to hunger.

The CFPCGP will fund **Standard Grants** under two **Project Types**:

- 1) Planning Projects (PP)
- 2) Community Food Projects (CFP).

Purpose of Planning Projects (PP) Grant: To provide early-stage investment in new, startup projects or to invest in completing project plans toward the improvement of community food security in keeping with the primary goals of the CFPCGP (see [Part I](#)). Planning Projects are to focus on a defined community and describe in detail the activities and outcomes of the planning project. The PP is to prepare a plan for a successful Community Food Project in keeping with the purpose of program goals.

Table 2: Planning Project (PP) Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	LN. B
Program Code Name:	Planning Projects
Assistance Listing Number:	10.225
Project Type:	Planning Project
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline:	FY 2025: Thursday, November 7, 2024 - 5:00 P.M. ET FY 2026: Thursday, October 30, 2025 - 5:00 P.M. ET
Planning Grant Duration:	12-36 Months; Up to 3 years
Anticipated Number of Awards Per Applicant:	One
Anticipated Number of Awards:	5 for FY 2025 5 for FY 2026
Minimum Request	\$25,000
Maximum Request:	\$50,000
Matching requirements	1:1 or Dollar for Dollar Match is required.

PP applicants should request a budget commensurate with the proposed project. Please see Table 2 for PP funding details. This is a one-time award. Applicants are to provide matching on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all federal funds requested at the time the application is submitted. See Part III-B. All PP awards will be made based on the merit of the proposed project and supporting documents. USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with applicants recommended for awards. Proposals with budget requests that do not adhere to the criteria specified in Table 2 above will not be reviewed. Plans are not limited to any of the [suggested activities](#)¹ referred to in

¹ House Concurrent Resolution 302, referred to in subsec. (a)(3), is H. Con. Res. 302, Oct. 5, 1992, **106 Stat. 5204**, not classified

7 USC 2034, subsection (a)(3), pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution and the Senate concurring 302, Oct. 5, 1992, 106 Stat. 5204 as they work towards a hunger-free community.

Examples: Click on the link provided here for examples of [funded projects](#).

Purpose of Community Food Projects (CFP) Grant: To seek solutions over the longer term rather than focusing on short-term food relief. Applicants will seek comprehensive solutions to problems across all levels of the food system from farmer to consumer. Community food projects should not be designed to merely support individual food pantries, farmers markets, community gardens or other established projects. Rather, the community food projects should build on these experiences and encourage innovative long-term solutions to food and nutrition security. A successful project should be sustainable beyond government and matching funding. CFP should be designed to become self-supporting (or have a sustainable funding source) and expand or prove to be a replicable model. Funding can support the development of such long-term projects or to accelerate or expand the work of a project. CFP are designed to create community-based food projects with objectives, activities and outcomes that are in alignment with CFPCGP primary goals.

Table 3: Community Food Project (CFP) Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	LN.C
Program Code Name	Community Food Projects
Assistance Listing Number	10.225
Project Type:	Community Food Projects
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadlines:	FY 2025: Thursday, November 7, 2024 - 5:00 P.M. ET FY 2026: Thursday, October 30, 2025 - 5:00 P.M. ET
Grant Duration:	Not to exceed 48 Months
Anticipated Number of Awards:	15 for FY 2025 15 for FY 2026
Minimum Request Per Year	\$125,000 over 12 months
Maximum Request Per 4 years:	\$400,000 over 48 months
Number of awards per project:	Award supports the development of a Community Food Project with a ONE-TIME contribution of federal dollars to become self-sustaining (7 U.S.C. 2034(b)).
Matching requirement	1:1 or Dollar for Dollar Match is required.

Community Food Projects (CFP) applicants should request a budget commensurate with the proposed project. Proposals with budget requests that do not adhere to the criteria specified in Table 3 above will not be reviewed. Applicants are to provide matching on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all federal funds requested at the time the application is submitted (See [Part III-B](#)). Applicants may request one, two, three, or four years of funding, but in all cases, the grant term may not exceed four years for any proposal. If awarded, a no-cost extension to a fifth year may be

requested. All CFP awards will be made based on the merit of the proposed project and supporting documents. USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with applicants recommended for awards. Projects are not limited to any of these [suggested activities](#) as they work towards a hunger -free community. **Examples:** Click on the link provided here for examples of [funded projects](#).

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. AVAILABLE FUNDING

This RFA is being released prior to passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2025 and FY 2026. Enactment of a continuing resolution or a full appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. The estimated amount available for the CFPCGP in FY 2025 and FY 2026 is approximately \$4,800,000 for each year. USDA is not committed to fund any 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.

1. Applications for FY 2025 and FY 2026 are limited to the following application types:
 - New applications: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in Part V of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (See [Appendix III](#) for definition).
 - Resubmitted applications: Resubmitted 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). Resubmitted applications must include the response to the previous review panel summary and are subject to the same criteria. Resubmitting applicants must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application in the Federal Field (Field 4) on the application form (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).
2. Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) to assist with this review.
3. NIFA will only communicate with the Project Director (PD) and Authorized Representative (AR) regarding the status of submitted applications. This program requires two different contacts for the PD and AR roles. For your proposal ensure the roles are correctly assigned. Please review the [Policy Guide](#) on the responsibilities of these roles and assign the appropriate, qualified individuals. Contact information on the grant application must be accurate. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 and the R&R Application for Federal Assistance.
4. If the PD and/or AR has not received correspondence from NIFA regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact any of the three Agency Contacts identified in Appendix I of this RFA and include the grants.gov tracking number 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 a proposal number, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.

5. NIFA [application status dashboard](#) allows applicants to search for the status of their application. Enter your grants.gov tracking number to check status once the application has been submitted.

C. 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 CFPCGP must meet all the eligibility requirements stated in this RFA and provide qualifying documentation to support their eligibility for this program at the time of application. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or preclude NIFA from making an award.
- Individuals and for-profit entities are not eligible to apply for this program.
- 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.

To be eligible for a grant under 7 USC 2034, [CFPCGP](#), a public food program service provider, a tribal organization, or a private nonprofit entity, including gleaners, must

- 1) have experience in the area of-
 - a. community food work, particularly concerning small and medium-sized farms, including the provision of food to people in communities with low incomes and the development of new markets in communities with low incomes for agricultural producers;
 - b. job training and business development activities for food-related activities in communities with low incomes; or
 - c. efforts to reduce food and nutrition insecurity in the community, including food distribution, improving access to services, or coordinating services and programs;
- 2) demonstrate competency to implement a project, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation;
- 3) demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, practitioners, and other interested parties; and
- 4) collaborate with one or more local partner organizations using one or more action [steps proposed by Congress to achieve a "hunger-free communities" goal](#).

Definition of Private Non-Profit: "Private Nonprofit entities" are defined as any nongovernmental corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization which:

- a. Is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest.
- b. Is not organized primarily for profit; and
- c. Uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations.

Acceptable Evidence: The following documents can be used as proof of Private Non-Profit eligibility.

- 1) A copy of a currently valid Internal Revenue Service tax exemption certificate.
- 2) A statement from a state taxing body, State Attorney General, or other appropriate state official certifying that the applicant organization has a non-profit status.
- 3) A certified copy of the organization's certificate of incorporation or similar document that clearly establishes private non-profit status.

- 4) Any of the above proof for a state or national parent organization and a statement signed by the parent organization that the applicant organization is a local non-profit affiliate. See the [NIFA Policy Guide](#) for additional information.

~~**Competency:** Applicants must demonstrate competency to implement a project, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation.~~

Fiscal Agents: A Fiscal Agent is an organization managing financial responsibilities on behalf of the applicant. If an eligible applicant's institution/organization cannot accept Federal funds directly, the applicant must have an assigned Fiscal Agent. The fiscal agent is not required to meet CFPCGP eligibility.

The applicant must provide a letter in the application stating that in the event the application results in an award, the award funds must be administered through a Fiscal Agent on their behalf. This agent must be identified in the letter from the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by an authorized representative of the fiscal agent organization.

The letter should include the Fiscal Agent's point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. This letter is to be included as an attachment to Field 12, Other Attachments (see [Part IV § B](#) of this RFA). In the event an application is recommended for funding, NIFA will request that both the applicant or institution/organization and the fiscal agent organization submit complete management information (see [Part V § C](#) of this RFA).

Partners and Collaborators: Applicants are encouraged to seek and create partnerships with public or private, nonprofit, or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority serving colleges and universities), and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, and local government entities. When planning collaborations, see [Part III § A](#) of this RFA.

Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements. Project partners and collaborators do not need to meet the eligibility requirements. Award recipients may sub-award to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the successful completion of the project. See [Part IV § C](#) of this RFA.

Key Contacts Required: Applicants must ensure that the Project Director (PD) and Authorized Representative (AR) listed are two separate individuals. In addition, accurate contact information must be included for both PD and AR: email, address, and phone number. This is the information used to contact applicants regarding the award status.

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions: Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – submission of duplicate or predominantly overlapping applications are not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits multiple applications that are duplicative or substantially overlapping to NIFA programs within the same fiscal year. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provide information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

B. COST SHARING OR MATCHING

Applicants **MUST** provide matching contributions on a dollar-for-dollar (1:1) basis for all Federal funds requested at the time the application is submitted. Matching funds must be accurately documented for all project years at the time the application in the R&R Budget and SF-424 forms. Matching funds in excess of the required amount will not be considered as part of the application review.

If a project is selected for funding and includes match beyond the required amount, a revised budget will be required which may lead to delays in processing the award. Matching funds may include cash and/or in-kind contributions, including third-party in-kind contributions, fairly evaluated, including facilities, equipment, or services. In-kind contributions are donations of goods, services, or time.

The matching funds, or non-federal share of the funding, may come from State government, local government, other private non-profit entities, or private sources. Federal money cannot be used to match unless it is expressly authorized to be used for this purpose. Examples of qualifying matching contributions may include direct costs such as: rent for office space used exclusively for the funded project; duplication or postage costs; and staff time.

A complete list of matching sources must be secured and maintained at applicant's organization location. Do not submit this list to NIFA or provide match commitment letters unless requested. The responsibility to secure and expend matching funds rests with the grantee.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. METHOD OF APPLICATION

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 4** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. Part III of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process. The [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is contained in the specific funding opportunity package, or a sample of the guide can be found [here](#). When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

Table 4: Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements)
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-CFP-010954 search for application here: Opportunity Package .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess your organization’s readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 5: Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
Grants.gov Online Support Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: support@grants.gov Self-service customer-based support: Grants.gov iPortal Key Information: Customer service business hours 24/7, except federal holidays .	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except federal holidays

B. CONTENT AND FORM OF THE APPLICATION

The [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. Applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA’s review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all applications that meet the requirements of this RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 6** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 6: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the NIFA Grants Application Guide)
Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.	Part IV
Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.	Part IV
Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.	Part IV
Follow the submission instructions.	Part IV
Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.	Part V
Contact the Grants.gov helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.	N/A
Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 30 days of the application deadline.	N/A

SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet: See Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for the required certifications and assurances.

SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s): See Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

R&R Other Project Information Form: See Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program Accurate entry is critical.

- For Planning Projects, enter the program code **LN.B**
- For Community Food Project applications, enter the program code **LN.C**

Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract: The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the CFPCGP See Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.

Field 8. The Project Narrative: The project narrative is not to exceed 15 pages and may be written as 10 pages of text and 5 pages of tables and figures or tables and figures embedded in text for a maximum of 15 pages. Spacing required is 1.5 spacing. The font size for project

narrative and for all text on tables and figures are to be no smaller than 11 points, in Times New Roman, Arial or Calibri. The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. New applications that exceed 15 pages in project narrative will **NOT** be reviewed in this program. Resubmissions that exceed 16 pages of the project narrative will **NOT** be reviewed. Resubmissions are required to submit one additional page in their project narrative and should be titled "response to reviewer comments."

All application documents and attachments must be in a Portable Document Format (PDF). Only documents and attachments uploaded in PDF format will be considered for review. If documents are NOT in PDF, they will not be reviewed in this program. Follow the submission instructions – provided in Part IV § 1.5 of the NIFA Grants application guide.

Project Narrative Headings for Planning Projects (PP): The Project Narrative for PP should include the headings in the order provided below. Refer to the evaluation criteria for content expected under each heading.

- 1) Proposal Goals and Objectives and Alignment with Purpose and Priorities of CFPCGP
- 2) Proposal Significance and Relevance
- 3) Inclusion of Community Members Experiencing Food and Nutrition Insecurity
- 4) Timeline, Data Management and Evaluation
- 5) Organization's Capacity and Experience, and Partners and Collaborators

Project Narrative Headings for Community Food Projects (CFPs): The Project Narrative for CFP should include the headings in the order provided below. Refer to the evaluation criteria for content expected under each heading.

- 1) Proposal Goals and Objectives and Alignment with Purpose and Priorities of CGPCGP
- 2) Proposal Significance and Relevance
- 3) Inclusion of Community Members Experiencing Food and Nutrition Insecurity
- 4) Timeline, Data Management and Evaluation
- 5) Organization's Capacity and Experience, Partners, and Collaborators
- 6) Qualifications of Project Director (PD) and Key Personnel
- 7) Sustainability Plan

Field 12. Other Attachments: Attach where applicable relevant information below under this field.

- a. **Response to Previous Review:** This requirement only applies to "Resubmitted Applications" [Part II § B](#) identifies the type of application(s) that may be submitted in response to this RFA. PDs must respond to the previous review summary on no more than one page titled "RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW" and save file as 'Response to Previous Review'.
- b. **Appendices to Project Narrative:** Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Appendices germane to the project include, market analysis, business plans etc. The addition of appendices

must not exceed seven (7) pages and should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

- c. **Results from Prior CFPCGP Support:** This requirement only applies to applicants who have received prior grant award(s) under this program. If the PD or a co-PD has received CFPCGP, including support in the past five years, information on results from that prior funding is required. This information will be used in the review of the application. PDs must summarize prior results from funding and limit the response to one page per award. For each award, list the NIFA award number, the amount and period of support, the title of the project and a summary of the results of the completed work. Save file as “Prior CFPCGP Support”.
- d. **Letters of commitment:** These are important and strongly encouraged in supporting an application; but are **optional**. Attach a maximum of 5 signed letters of commitment from key organizations or individuals involved in the project acknowledging their support, contributions, and commitment: title the attachment ‘Letters of Commitment’. Provide evidence of broad community involvement in both planning and decision-making. This section is limited to two-page letters of commitment for each key organization. (See subsection 1. or 2., as appropriate, of [Part IV § B](#) for additional information).
- e. **Logic Model:** A logic model is optional for this program. Title the attachment as ‘Logic Model’ in the document header and save file as ‘LogicModel’. Applicants should seek the help of the T&TA team or other experts in evaluation design and implementation. See Logic Model Planning Process for more information
- f. **Data Management Plan (DMP):** A DMP is required and will be evaluated, for these programs. A DMP provides a written description on how the applicant will handle data collection procedures and any data collected and disseminated in this project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V § B](#) of this RFA, [Part III § 3.1 of the NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) and [NIFA’s Data Management Plan](#))
- g. **Fiscal Agent Letter:** See [Part III.A](#). If it is necessary to include a fiscal agent letter, then title the attachment as ‘Fiscal Agent’ in the document header and save file as ‘FiscalAgent’. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile). See Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.
- h. **Biographical Sketches/Curriculum Vitae:** All biographical sketches /Curriculum Vitae/Resumes must indicate the employment history of each PD and Co-PD for the last 10 years. See Part V of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.
- i. **Current and Pending:** Applicants must include the current and pending support form as an attachment in the application listing PD (also known as Principal Investigator (PI)), Co-PD’s and any named key personnel to be supported by the grant.
- j. **Conflict-of-interest (COI) Form:** The PD and Co-PDs must complete and attach a conflict-of-interest form. This is used to ensure a fair review process.
- k. **R&R Personal Data:** This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see Part V § 6 of the NIFA Grants Application Guide).
- l. **Supplemental Information Form:** See Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

R&R Budget: See Part V § 7 of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

- 1) **Match:** Match funds at 1:1 ratio is required for this program. A written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement) is not required. However, applicants are subject to the documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, as specified in [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(the Uniform Guidance\),”](#) and [7 CFR 3430, “Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions.”](#)
- 2) **Indirect costs (IDC):** See [Part IV § C](#) of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and Section H of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for additional information.
- 3) **Domestic Travel:** During the tenure of a grant Project Director (PD) meetings are required as a condition of the award during the period of performance. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss their projects, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. NIFA in collaboration with the T&TA provider reserves the right to make necessary changes to PD meeting dates, and mode, in-person or virtual. These PD meetings may alternate between in-person and virtual meetings. In either case, attendance is required as follows.
 - a. The T& TA and CFP project directors are to budget for in-person travel for all years that federal funding is requested, and award remains active. If funds do not get spent in any year due to attendance of a virtual PD meeting, budget adjustments may be made as necessary.
 - b. Planning Project (PP) Project Directors must budget travel expenses needed to attend only one PD meeting during their period of performance due award size and shorter period of performance.
 - c. Travel budgets must be reasonable to cover expenses including meeting registration, air fare, ground transportation, meals, and accommodation costs to attend in-person PD meetings. In-person PD meetings typically last 2-3-days, not including travel days. Estimates depend on applicants’ location and PD meeting venue and location. PD meeting dates are typically announced 3-5 months in advance. Venue for PD meeting is typically announced at 2-3 months in advance for planning. Here is an example to guide travel estimates: In 2023, the in-person PD meeting was held in New Orleans, Louisiana. Meeting registration cost was \$200, which included only 2 meals; hotel was discounted to \$162/night and PDs travelled from all over the country to attend for 2.5 days, excluding travel days.

C. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Fully negotiated Indirect Cost (IDC) rate: Applicants may use the current negotiated IDC rate established by its cognizant Federal agency (the agency that provides the most funds). If awarded, the applicant will be required to produce a negotiated IDC rate agreement from the cognizant agency to recover IDC. If unable to obtain a negotiated rate from the cognizant agency, the applicant is not permitted indirect cost reimbursement and may only be reimbursed for allowable direct costs. Violation of cost accounting principles is not permitted when re-budgeting or charging costs to awards, and costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs.

If the applicant wants full IDC (Indirect Cost), but does not have a negotiated rate, and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant must calculate an IDC rate in order to request IDC. Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process. Applicants need only to calculate an IDC rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC, please see National Institute of Food and Agriculture (usda.gov) for additional resources. If awarded, the applicant will be required to submit a complete IDC proposal package to obtain a negotiated rate.

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\(f\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-200/subpart-414/section-200.414-f)). Currently 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. OMB has updated the 2 CFR allowing an indirect cost de minimis rate increase from 10 to 15 percent effective October 1, 2024. Budgets for indirect costs will be increased accordingly if the recipient selects the de minimis indirect cost recovery option. As described above and in [2 CFR 200.403](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-A/part-200/subpart-403/section-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](#).

Sub-award Restriction: The applicant must perform a substantive portion of the project and no more than **50 percent (federal and Matching funds)** as determined by budget expenditures, may be sub awarded. Projects may divide their budget allocations between partners as it fits their work plan. (For additional knowledge or expertise that is not available within the applicant organization, funds for expert consultation may be included in the “All Other Direct Costs” section of the proposed budget.)

Funding Period Limitation: The funding period will commence on the effective date cited in the award instrument. Any such limitation also applies to sub-awards made under awards subject to a funding period limitation.

Infrastructure Improvement and Development: Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA for the purpose of infrastructure improvement and development. Equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a CFPCGP project is an allowable cost in this program.

Fully negotiated Indirect Cost (IDC) rate: Applicants may use the current negotiated IDC rate established by its cognizant Federal agency (the agency that provides the most funds). If awarded, the applicant will be required to produce a negotiated IDC rate agreement from the cognizant agency to recover IDC. If unable to obtain a negotiated rate from the cognizant agency, the applicant is not permitted indirect cost reimbursement and may only be reimbursed for allowable direct costs. Violation of cost accounting principles is not permitted when re-budgeting or charging costs to awards, and costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs.

If the applicant wants full IDC (Indirect Cost), but does not have a negotiated rate, and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant must calculate an IDC rate in order to request IDC. Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process. Applicants need only to calculate an IDC rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC, please see National Institute of Food and Agriculture (usda.gov) for additional resources. If awarded, the applicant will be required to submit a complete IDC proposal package to obtain a negotiated rate.

Organizations that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, may elect the De Minimis rate ([2 CFR 200.414](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-200/subpart-414/section-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](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/chapter-I/subchapter-D/part-200/subpart-403/section-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.

Sub-award Restriction: The applicant must perform a substantive portion of the project and no more than **50 percent (federal and Matching funds)** as determined by budget expenditures, may be sub awarded. Projects may divide their budget allocations between partners as it fits their work plan. (For additional knowledge or expertise that is not available within the applicant organization, funds for expert consultation may be included in the “All Other Direct Costs” section of the proposed budget.)

Funding Period Limitation: The funding period will commence on the effective date cited in the award instrument. Any such limitation also applies to sub-awards made under awards subject to a funding period limitation.

Infrastructure Improvement and Development: Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA for the purpose of infrastructure improvement and development. Equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a CFPCGP project is an allowable cost in this program.

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 for the application to proceed to the next level of review.

Part One: Administrative Requirements for this Program

NIFA will **not** review applications that do not meet the following administrative requirements for review:

- **Exceed the budgetary guidelines:** Proposals for planning grants requesting below \$25,000 or over \$50,000 will not be reviewed. Proposals for CFP requesting under \$125,000 per year or over \$400,000 will not be reviewed.
- **Proposals missing required documents:** The following documents are necessary for peer review process:
 - 1) Evidence/Proof of eligibility.
 - 2) One-page Abstract/Project Summary
 - 3) 15-pages Project Narrative
 - 4) Separate PDFs for Project Summary and Project Narrative. Combining the abstract and the project narrative as one document will result in the application not being reviewed.
 - 5) [Conflict of Interest Form](#)
 - 6) [Current and Pending Form](#)
 - 7) Data Management Plan (DMP) [Review NIFA DMP guidelines.](#)
 - 8) Budget for each year of funding requested plus cumulative budget.
 - 9) Budget Narrative for federal and matching funds for each year of funding requested.
 - 10) Matching funds. A dollar-for-dollar matching is required for CFP and PP applications. Budget and budget narrative to include matching funds. The dollar-for-dollar must be secured for all federal funds requested at the time the application is submitted. A written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement) is not required at time of application submission.
 - 11) Matching funds must be accurately provided in the R&R Budget and SF-424 forms in the application.
- **Portable Document Format (PDF):** All documents and attachments must be in a Portable Document Format (PDF).

Part Two: Scientific Peer Review Process:

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](#)).

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.

Responsible program staff will follow the peer review panel recommendations to the maximum extent practicable. NIFA reserves the right to evaluate the peer review panel recommendations to ensure balance of award recommendations across lead organization, PD, and geographical distribution.

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

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel comments to the PD.

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

B. EVALUATION CRITERIA

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate proposals responding to this RFA.

NIFA Will Use this Evaluation Criteria Below for Planning Project Applications.

The listed five (5) elements in the criteria are given equal consideration in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1) Proposal Goals and Objectives and Alignment with Purpose and Priorities of CFPCGP

How well the proposed project meets the [Purpose and Priorities](#) of the program, including evaluation of the description of long and short-term goal (s) selected and subsequent measurable objectives and activities. How feasible, appropriate, and detailed the activities are in reducing long and short-term food and nutrition insecurity. Program preference elements if addressed should be well described and in alignment with proposed project goals and objectives.

2) Proposal Significance and Relevance.

Significance and relevance of food security needs and issues addressed by the proposed planning project. Strength of the approach to determining the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food system. An informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs, including demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area including zip codes and community to be served. NIFA recognizes that there are different low-income thresholds depending on states, metropolitan areas, or cities.

3) Inclusion of Community Members Experiencing Food and Nutrition Insecurity

Strength of the approach to include food insecure community members or community members with low incomes in all aspects of the planning, designing, development, implementation and evaluation of activities, services, programs, and policies to combat food and nutrition insecurity, underlying causes of hunger. This includes amount of participation by historically underserved groups or groups serving historically underserved individuals in the community.

4) Timeline, Data Management and Evaluation

Overall description of the timeline of activities and milestones and how realistic and achievable the timeline is, in accomplishing project goals, objectives, and outcomes. Depth of the Data Management Plan (DMP) including data management practices procedures and policies established to secure, and organize, data collection and dissemination. Strength of the evaluation plan, to include descriptive metrics and indicators aligned with the long and short-term project goals, objectives, and activities; and how they will be used to measure success, accomplishments, and outcomes. Use of a logic model is encouraged but optional.

5) Organization's Capacity and Experience, and Partners, and Collaborators

Applicant organization demonstrates competency to lead and report on a planning project, and history of commitment to food security projects in communities with low incomes. Qualifications, experience, and skills of Project Director (PD). Experience in and connections with the community as well as Traditional Ecological Knowledge will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials. All resumes/curriculum vitae also known as biographical sketches must indicate the employment history of each PD for the last 10 years. Strength of

partners and collaborators and use of one or more action [steps proposed by Congress to achieve a 'hunger-free communities' goal](#) in contributing to the success of the planning project goals. Letters of commitment from partners and collaborators are optional and if provided should be limited to five (5) or less.

NIFA Will Use this Evaluation Criteria for Community Food Projects

The listed seven (7) elements in the criteria are given equal consideration in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1) Proposal Goals and Objectives and Alignment with Purpose and Priorities of CGPCGP

How well the proposed project meets the [Purpose and Priorities](#) of the program, including evaluation of the description of long and short-term goal (s) selected and subsequent measurable objectives and activities. How feasible, appropriate, and detailed the activities are in reducing long and short-term food and nutrition insecurity. Program preference elements if addressed should be well described and in alignment with proposed project goals and objectives.

2) Proposal Significance and Relevance

Significance and relevance of food security needs and issues addressed by the proposed community foods project. Strength of the approach to determining the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food system. An informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs, including demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area including zip codes and community to be served. NIFA recognizes that there are different low-income thresholds depending on states, metropolitan areas, or cities.

3) Inclusion of Community Members Experiencing Food and Nutrition Insecurity

Strength of the approach to include food insecure community members or community members with low incomes in all aspects of the planning, designing, development, implementation and evaluation of activities, services, programs, and policies to combat food and nutrition insecurity, underlying causes of hunger. This includes amount of participation by historically underserved groups or groups serving historically underserved individuals in the community.

4) Timeline, Data Management and Evaluation

Overall description of the timeline of activities and milestones and how realistic and achievable the timeline is, in accomplishing project goals, objectives, and outcomes. Depth of the Data Management Plan (DMP) including data management practices procedures and policies established to secure, and organize, data collection and dissemination. Strength of the evaluation plan, to include descriptive metrics and indicators aligned with the long and short-term project goals, objectives, and activities; and how they will be used to measure success, accomplishments, and outcomes. It is recommended to include a budget line for evaluation purposes in the budget and budget narrative. Use of a logic model is encouraged but optional.

5) Organization's Capacity and Experience, Partners, and Collaborators

Applicant organization's demonstrated competency to implement and report on a project, provide fiscal accountability, and history of commitment to food security projects in communities with low incomes. Demonstrated experience in working in the food system particularly with small and

medium-sized farms, agricultural job training, and the development of new markets for agricultural producers. Strength of partners and collaborators and how their proposed activities will contribute to the success of the project goals, and the community being served. Including the use of one or more action [steps proposed by congress to achieve a “hunger-free communities’ goal.](#) Where possible, project collaborators should represent a variety of disciplines and experiences directly related to the deliverables proposed and complementary to the qualifications of the core project team. Letters of commitment from partners and collaborators are optional and if provided should be limited to five (5) or less.

6) *Qualifications of Project Director (PD) and Key Personnel*

Qualifications of project director, and key staff in the narrative and resumes, (also known as bio sketches), as evidence of experiences and skills necessary to direct the proposed project activities. Overall organizational leadership should reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed activities. Experience in and connections with the community as well as Traditional Ecological Knowledge will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials.

7) *Sustainability Plan*

Overall approach and feasibility of the sustainability plan to ensure that the project endures and outlives the one-time infusion of government and matching funds. Projects may provide evidence, e.g., a market analysis or the outline of a business plan, to demonstrate that it is likely to become self-sustaining and provide employees with important job skills. Business plan outlines or any other document of evidence for sustainability are optional and limited to five pages and should be included as an appendix.

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](#).

Federal Financial Management Requirements: Grantees are expected to comply with applicable federal financial management requirements included in the award's terms and conditions and [2 CFR Part 200](#). Below is a list of major requirements. Failure to comply could trigger significant audit liability and require global reconstruction of the grantees accounting system.

Separation of Funds: To avoid commingling of funds, grantees must establish a unique account(s) in their accounting system to capture and accumulate funding and related costs of the grant, apart from other federal and non-federal grants, projects and cost centers.

Budget Categories: To reduce the risk of material budget fluctuations changing the grant's scope and of applying indirect cost rates to prohibited cost categories, grantees must establish unique object codes in their accounting system to capture and accumulate costs by budget category (e.g., salaries, fringe benefits, consultants, travel, participant support costs, and subcontracts).

Consistent Treatment of Costs: Grantees must treat costs consistently across all federal and non-federal grants, projects, and cost centers. For example, grantees may not direct-charge federal grants for costs typically considered indirect in nature, unless done consistently. Examples of indirect costs include administrative salaries, rent, accounting fees, and utilities. In most cases, the cost to develop an accounting system adequate to justify direct charging of the aforementioned items outweighs the benefits. As a result, use of an indirect cost rate is the most effective mechanism to recover these costs and not violate federal financial requirements of consistency, allocability and allowability. Additional guidance on indirect cost calculations can be found at [Indirect Costs](#).

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

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

C. EXPECTED PROGRAM OUTPUTS AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions. If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those will be identified in the award. All awardees are expected to contribute to the data collected by the T&TA providers. Each awardee conducts an evaluation, and the PD is expected to ensure the evaluation data is provided to NIFA and the T&TA provider.

PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. USE OF FUNDS AND CHANGES IN BUDGET

Delegation of fiscal responsibility: Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

Changes in Budget or Project Plans: In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring).
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project.
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, \(Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals\)](#), or [48 CFR](#), unless waived by the federal awarding agency, [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
5. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
6. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR 200.333, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
7. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
8. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

B. CONFIDENTIAL ASPECTS OF APPLICATIONS AND AWARDS

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw at any time prior to the final action thereon.

C. REGULATORY INFORMATION

This program is not subject to the provisions of [Executive Order 12372](#), which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials. Under the provisions of the [Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 \(44 U.S.C. Chapter 35\)](#), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under [OMB Document No. 0524-0039](#).

D. LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

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

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

Program Contacts

Lydia Kaume, Ph.D., RDN
sm.nifa.cfp@usda.gov

Yamilis Ocasio
sm.nifa.cfp@usda.gov

Chonique Hendrickson
sm.nifa.cfp@usda.gov

For administrative questions related to

1. Grants.gov, see Part IV of this RFA
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
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

Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 - AREERA
Authorized Representative - AR
Assistance Listing Number - ALN
Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program - CFPCGP
Community Food Projects - CFP
Data Management Plan - DMP
National Institute of Food and Agriculture - NIFA
Planning Project - PP
Training and Technical Assistance – T&TA
Request for Application - RFA
United States Department of Agriculture - USDA

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

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

Community Food Assessment:

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

Community Food Project:

A community-based project that (A) requires a one-time contribution of federal assistance to become self-sustaining; and (B)(i) is designed (I) to meet the food needs of low-income individuals through food distribution, community outreach to assist in participation in Federally assisted nutrition programs, or improving access to food as part of a comprehensive service; (II) to increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for the food needs of the communities; (III) to promote comprehensive responses to local food access, farm, and nutrition issues; or (B)(ii) to meet specific state, local or neighborhood food and agricultural needs including needs relating to (I) equipment necessary for the efficient operation of a project; (II) planning for long-term solutions; or (III) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and consumers with low incomes.

Exemplary Practices:

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

Expert Reviews:

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

Food Loss and Waste (FLW):

USDA is adopting the convention of using the general term “food loss and waste” to describe reductions in edible food mass anywhere along the human food supply chain (i.e. farm to table).

Food Planning Association:

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

Food Policy Council:

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

Food Security:

[Food security](#) for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: The ready availability of

nutritionally adequate and safe foods; and assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).

Gleaner:

An entity that (a) collects edible, surplus food that would be thrown away and distributes the food to agencies or nonprofit organizations that feed the hungry; or (b) harvests for free distribution to the needy, or for donation to agencies or nonprofit organizations for ultimate distribution to the needy, an agricultural crop that has been donated by the owner of the crop.

Hunger-Free Communities Goal:

Any of the [14 action steps described in House Concurrent Resolution 302, 102nd Congress, agreed to October 5, 1992.](#)

Indicators of Success:

A way of evaluating across projects to get indications of success for the entire CFP program. It is structured according to the fields of Whole Measures for Community Food Systems. Value-based practices reflect a vision for whole communities seen through the lens of community food system development; Healthy People, Strong Communities, Thriving Local Economies, Vibrant Farms and Gardens, Sustainable Ecosystems, and Justice and Fairness. Measures of these values were co-developed with CFP grantees. Each project is asked to report on IOS each year.

Logic Model:

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

Matching:

The process through which a grant recipient match awarded USDA funds with cash and in-kind contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The matching funds must derive from non-Federal sources.

New Application:

An application not previously submitted to a program.

Nutrition Security:

Having consistent access, availability, and affordability of foods and beverages that promote well-being and prevent (and if needed, treat) disease, particularly among racial/ethnic minority populations, lower income populations, and rural and remote populations.

Non-Profit Entity:

Any nongovernmental corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization which: (i) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (ii) is not organized primarily for profit; and (iii) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations. Period of Performance “Period of Performance” has the meaning given in 2 CFR 200.1, with the additional clarification that the term includes any extension of the end date of the award, such as a no-cost extension authorized by 2 CFR 200.308, paragraph (e)(2). The period of performance is identified in the Notice of Award. Statutory language or agency policy may limit the maximum potential period of performance (including any awards

transferred from another institution or organization). The period of performance will commence on the effective date cited in the federal award. Any such limitation also applies to sub awards made under awards subject to a period of performance limitation.

Planning Project:

An activity initiated by an eligible organization to assess food security in a defined community and develop plans aimed to improve community food security.

Private Non-Profit Entity:

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

Resubmitted Application:

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

Sustainably Produced Food:

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

Value Chain:

Adding value to a product, including production, marketing, and the provision of after-sales service, and incorporating fair pricing to farms. It also involves keeping the final pricing to customers within competitive range. Value chain development, therefore, is a process of building relationships between supplier and buyer that are reciprocal and win-win; instead of always striving to buy at lowest cost.