



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

FEEDING PEOPLE, FUELING PROGRESS

USDA NIFA

**AFRI Research and Extension
Experiences for Undergraduates
(REEU)
Notice of Funding Opportunity
(NOFO)
Technical Assistance Webinar**

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

Topics We Will Cover

- NIFA Overview
- Program Overview
- Application Details and Documents
- Application Evaluation Process
- Tips for Success
- Additional Information/Resources



NIFA Overview



NIFA Overview



National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is the extramural science-funding agency within USDA's Research, Education, and Economics mission area.



NIFA **invests in and supports** initiatives that ensure the long-term viability of agriculture.



NIFA provides **funding and strategic leadership** for programs that ensure groundbreaking discoveries in agriculture-related sciences and technologies reach the people who can put them into practice.



Program Overview

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Overview

Farm Bill priorities:

- Agriculture economics and rural communities
- Agriculture systems and technology
- Animal health and production and animal products
- Bioenergy, natural resources, and environment
- Food safety, nutrition, and health
- Plant health and production and plant products

Three Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- Foundational and Applied Science
- Strengthening Agricultural Systems
- ✓ **Education and Workforce Development**
 - Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy
 - Agricultural Workforce Training at Community Colleges
 - Food and Agricultural Non-formal Education
- ✓ **Research & Extension Experiences for Undergraduates**
 - Pre-doctoral and Postdoctoral Fellowships
 - Education and Workforce Development Workshop Grants



AFRI Education & Workforce Development (EWD) Programs

Focus on

developing the next generation of research, education, and Extension professionals in the food and agricultural sciences.

An official website of the United States government [Here's how you know](#) ▼ [Contact Us](#)


USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE





Search

TOPICS | GRANTS | DATA | RESOURCES | ABOUT

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Agriculture and Food Research Initiative - Education and Workforce Development



SHARE    

The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative - Education and Workforce Development (EWD) focuses on developing the next generation of research, education, and extension professionals in the food and agricultural sciences. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) requests applications for the AFRI's Education and Workforce Development program areas to support:

1. professional development opportunities for K-14 educational professionals;
2. non-formal education that cultivates food and agricultural interest in youth;
3. workforce training at community, junior, and technical colleges;
4. training of undergraduate students in research and extension;
5. fellowships for predoctoral candidates and postdoctoral scholars.



Purpose and Priorities

- The REEU program area priority promotes **research and Extension learning experiences for undergraduates** such that upon graduation they may enter the agricultural workforce with exceptional skills.
- This initiative allows colleges and universities to provide opportunities for undergraduate students, including those from community colleges and universities. **NOTE: At least 50% of the undergraduate fellows must come from outside the host institution or organization**, particularly from small institutions where opportunities are not readily available for these experiences.



Purpose and Priorities, cont

- Of interest are projects that provide experiences in **innovative agricultural technologies**, including artificial intelligence (AI), data science, robotics and other cutting edge digital tools.
- Incorporation of mentoring opportunities for undergraduates to train K-12 students in these areas to equip them with the foundational knowledge and skills and expose them to educational and career pathways in AI for food and agricultural sciences is encouraged.



Purpose and Priorities, cont 2

Non-exhaustive examples of experiential projects include:

- a) **Apprenticeships, internships**, or similar participatory learning
- b) **Practica** in agricultural laboratories, farms, or Cooperative Extension programs
- c) **Externships** in the private or public sector



Eligibility

Eligibility is **linked to the project type** as specified below.

Eligible applicants for **single-function Research, Education or Extension Projects** include:

- a) State Agricultural Experiment Stations
- b) Colleges and Universities (*including junior colleges offering associate degrees or higher*)
- c) University research foundations
- d) Other research institutions and organizations
- e) Federal agencies
- f) National laboratories
- g) Private organizations or corporations
- h) Individuals who are U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent residents
- i) Any group consisting of two or more entities identified in a) through h).



Eligibility, cont

Eligibility is **linked to the project type** as specified below.

Eligible applicants for **Integrated Projects (Research & Extension; Research & Education; Extension & Education; Research & Extension & Education)** include:

- a) Colleges and universities (provides an educational program for which a bachelor's degree or any other higher degree is awarded)
- b) 1994 Land-grant Institutions
- c) Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities
(see [NIFA's Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities](#) page).



Project and Grant Types

Project Types

Research
Education
Extension
Integrated

Grant Types

Standard
Food and
Agricultural Science
Enhancement (FASE)
Strengthening
Standard

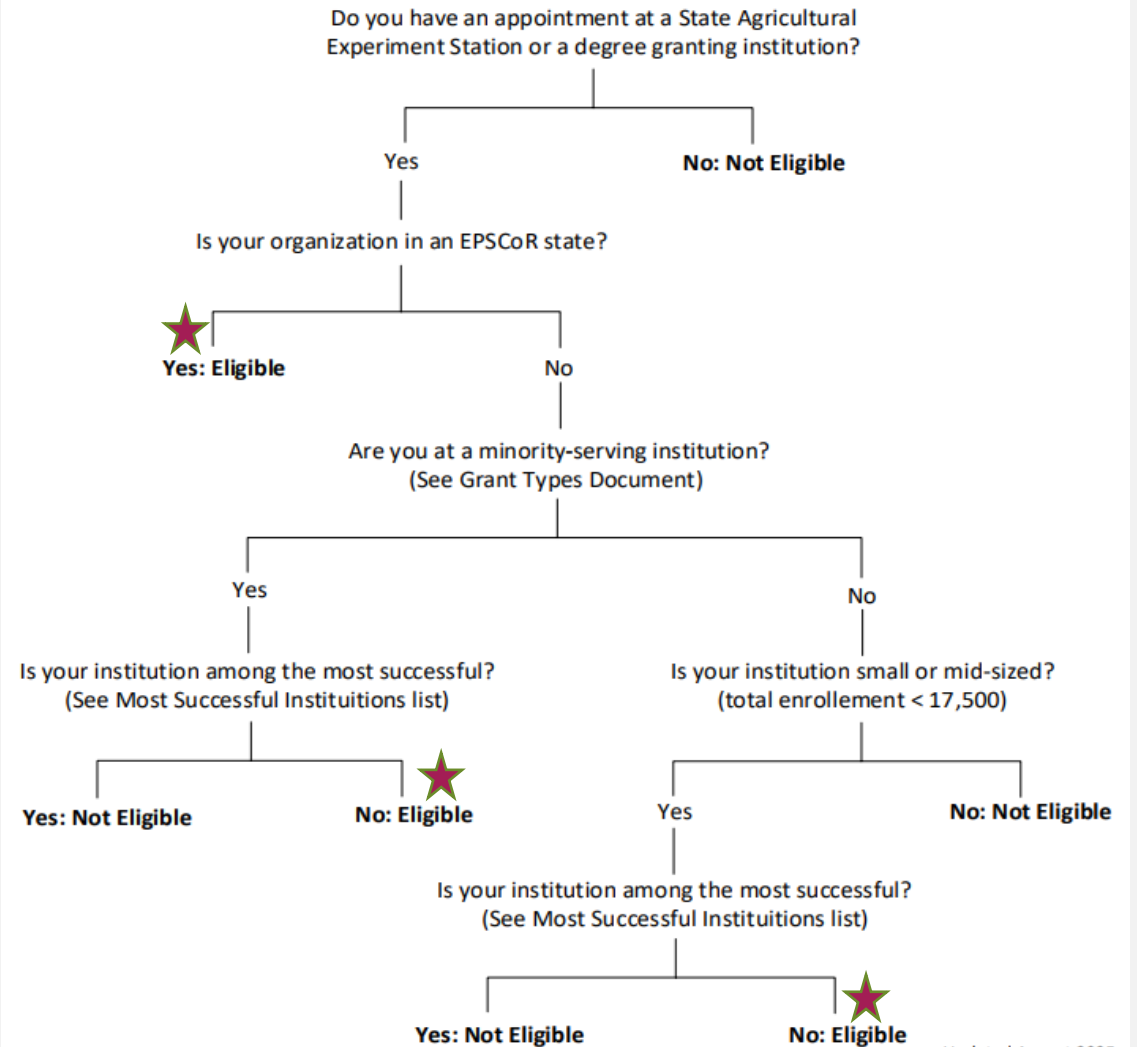
Decision Tree: Eligibility for Strengthening Grants

1. USDA Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) State (new list each year)
2. Minority-serving Institution not among most successful with grants
3. Small or midsized institution (total enrollment < 17,500) not among most successful with grants

[AFRI FASE & EPSCoR Program | NIFA \(usda.gov\)](#)

[AFRI Notice of Funding Opportunities Resources | NIFA \(usda.gov\)](#)

Figure 1: Flow Chart for Strengthening Grant Eligibility



Award Specifics

Indirect Costs

Federal Indirect Costs (IDC) are **not to exceed 30 percent** of total Federal funds awarded.

Unallowable Costs

Tuition for course credit and *promotional items* are **not** allowable costs in this program.

Application Details and Documents



Application Changes from Prior Years

- Applications that include study abroad or collaborations with international mentors must also include a description of how that experiential learning will:
 1. Directly benefit U.S. food and agriculture production systems
 2. Improve agricultural education and teaching, as well as
 3. Promote American leadership in innovation and ingenuity as described in this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO Page 10)
- Maximum amount and duration for ALL awards are set at **\$650,000 for 48 months** (NOFO Page 20)
- Budgets for student stipends should reflect standard annual increases in costs-of-living commensurate to those requested for faculty salaries (NOFO Page 21)



Application Changes from Prior Years, cont

- Projects submitted under this NOFO should align with [USDA Secretary's Memorandum 1078- 020](#) Directive on Departmental Research and Development Priorities (Dec. 30, 2025):
 - ◇ 1. Increasing Profitability of Farmers and Ranchers
 - ◇ 2. Expanding Markets and Creating New Uses of U.S. Agricultural Products
 - ◇ 3. Protecting the Integrity of American Agriculture from Invasive Species
 - ◇ 4. Promoting Soil Health to Regenerate Long-Term Productivity of Land
 - ◇ 5. Improving Human Health through Precision Nutrition and Food Quality



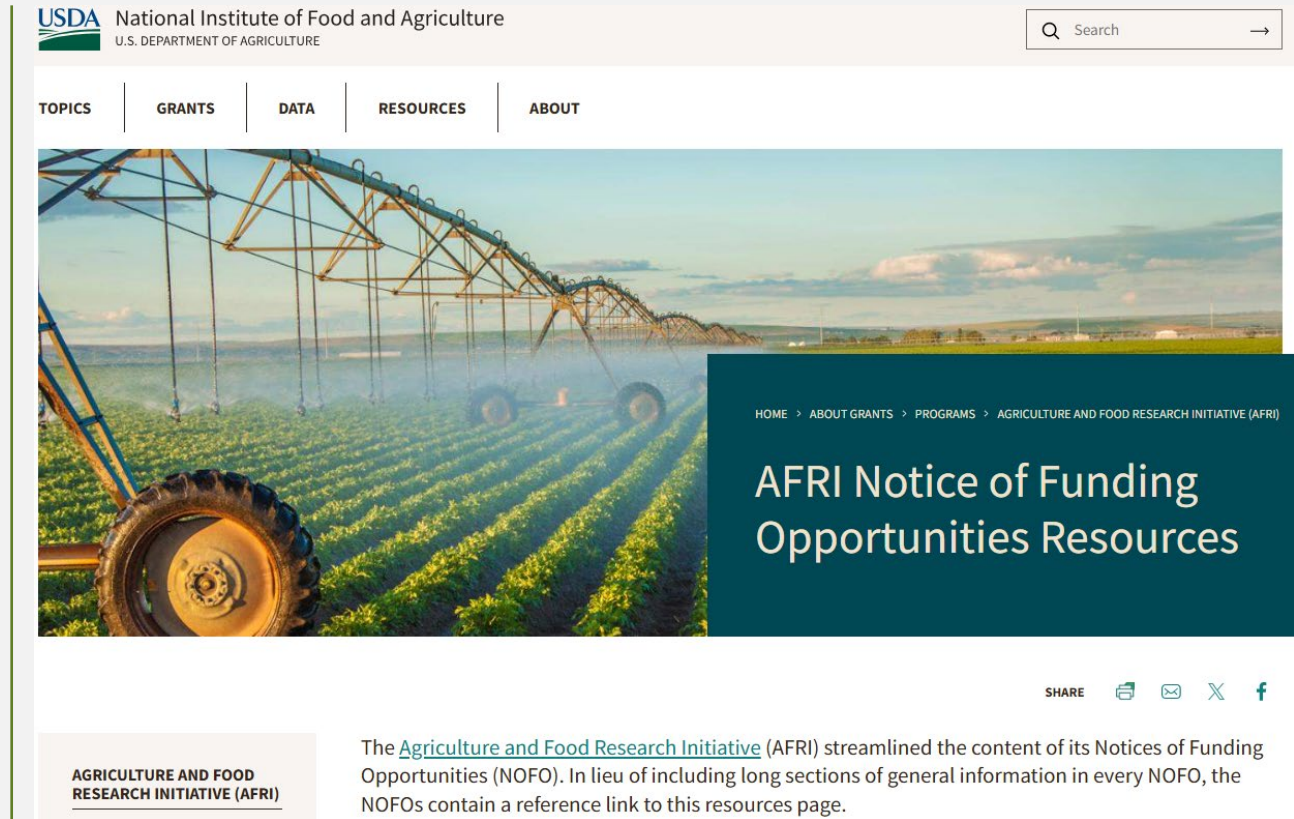
Application Details

- Application Deadline: **5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) March 19, 2026**
 - ◇ Submitted only through Grants.gov
- Program Code: **A7401**
- Maximum funding per award: **\$650,000 (48 months)**
- Maximum awards per Institution: 2
- NOFO is available online at <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/funding-opportunities/agriculture-food-research-initiative-education-workforce-development>.

AFRI NOFO Resources and Guidance

Additional application details and guidance documents can be found on the AFRI Notice of Funding Opportunity Resources page:
<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/afri-request-applications-resources>

- **FY 2026 Education and Workforce Development NOFO Additional Information for Part IV, C**
- **Data Management Plan**
- **FY 2026 AFRI Review Criteria**
- **FY 2026 AFRI Grant Types**
- **FY 2026 AFRI Project Types**
- **Strengthening Eligibility Decision Tree**



The screenshot shows the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture website. The header includes the USDA logo and the text "National Institute of Food and Agriculture U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE". A search bar is located in the top right corner. Below the header is a navigation menu with the following items: TOPICS, GRANTS, DATA, RESOURCES, and ABOUT. The main content area features a large image of a center pivot irrigation system over a field of green crops. Overlaid on the right side of this image is a dark teal box with the text "AFRI Notice of Funding Opportunities Resources". Above this box, a breadcrumb trail reads "HOME > ABOUT GRANTS > PROGRAMS > AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE (AFRI)". Below the image, there are social media sharing icons for "SHARE", a printer icon, an email icon, a Twitter icon, and a Facebook icon. At the bottom left of the page, there is a section titled "AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE (AFRI)" with a sub-heading "The [Agriculture and Food Research Initiative](#) (AFRI) streamlined the content of its Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFO). In lieu of including long sections of general information in every NOFO, the NOFOs contain a reference link to this resources page."



Key Documents

- Project Summary/Abstract
- Project Narrative
- Bibliography & References Cited
- Data Management Plan
- Other Documents (See NOFO and [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#))

Key Personnel Roles, Logic Model & Management Plan for Integrated projects (encouraged for others), Mentoring Plan, Documentation of Collaboration, Preprints, MSI documentation for strengthening grants, Budget, Budget Justification/Narrative



Key Documents (cont'd)

Add'l Info. Part IV, C
Pages 17-19

Project Narrative has a 10-page limit and will be strictly enforced

- **Single spacing**
- 12-point Times New Roman or similar font (do not use condensed or narrow fonts)
- Includes text, figures and tables

Within 10 pages describe:

- List of headings of information required in narrative (Overview; Research, Education and/or Extension Environment; Approach; Project Evaluation and Reporting)
- Impact on research, training infrastructure or Extension to achieve its goals
- Cooperation and institutional involvement & Project timeline

Expected Outputs (numbers of students served) do not count against the 10-page limit.

Begin resubmissions with a one-page response to previous review (does not count against the 10-page limit).

Applications exceeding the page limitation will be returned without review.



Data Management Plan

Add'l Info. Part IV, C
Page 26

Investigators must provide detailed (up to 2 pages) data management plans including:

- Expected data type
- Data format
- Data storage and preservation
- Data sharing, protection and public access
- Roles and responsibilities of PD and Co-PDs

Please also review: nifa.usda.gov/resource/data-management-plan-nifa-funded-research-projects



Application Submission

NIFA only accepts ELECTRONIC submission of applications.

➤ NIFA Grants Application Guide available:
nifa.usda.gov/nifa-22-001-nifa-grants-application-guide.

Application documents must be in **Portable Document Format (PDF)** to be accepted by NIFA, including your narrative and budget justifications.

- Grants.gov may allow other formats, but NIFA does not.
- Do not use third-party PDF builders.
- PDFs should not be password protected.

Application Evaluation Process



Evaluation Process

Applications are assigned for review to at least three reviewers with expertise in the proposed topic.

Reviewers will produce individual reviews of each application, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses.

These written reviews are used to begin panel discussions with other reviewers serving on the peer-review panel.

Through these discussions, peer-review panelists come to consensus on the final rating and ranking of applications.

Evaluation Criteria

Project-specific Evaluation Criteria can be found in the AFRI Notice of Funding Opportunity Resources

(<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/agriculture-food-research-initiative/afri-funding-opportunities-resources>).

Attachment: FY 26 AFRI Review Criteria

The screenshot shows the top of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture website. It features a search bar, navigation tabs for TOPICS, GRANTS, DATA, RESOURCES, and ABOUT, and a large banner image of a center pivot irrigation system over a field. The banner text reads: HOME > ABOUT GRANTS > PROGRAMS > AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE (AFRI) and AFRI Notice of Funding Opportunities Resources. Below the banner are social media share icons and a main text block stating: The [Agriculture and Food Research Initiative \(AFRI\)](#) streamlined the content of its Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFO). In lieu of including long sections of general information in every NOFO, the NOFOs contain a reference link to this resources page. A sidebar on the left lists: AGRICULTURE AND FOOD RESEARCH INITIATIVE (AFRI) with sub-items: > Annual Review, > AFRI PROGRAM AREAS with sub-items: > Foundational and Applied Science, > Crosscutting Programs, > Education and Workforce. At the bottom, it says: Applicants must review the relevant information and application guidance in the links below carefully in order to prepare a complete application. Failure to comply with this guidance may result in return of applications without review. View PDF Documents referenced below under the "Related Documents" section at the bottom of the webpage. A small image of a yellow field is visible in the bottom right corner.



Evaluation Criteria, cont.

- a) Scientific and Pedagogical Merit of the Application
- b) Qualifications of Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities, and Project Management
- c) Project Relevance
- d) Center of Excellence status, if applicable



Timeline of Competitive Programs

MONTHS 1-3

- NOFO release
- Application writing and planning
- Application due

MONTHS 3-8

- Application under peer review
- Application funding notifications

MONTHS 8-9+

- Awards are finalized and made

On average, a competitive program takes about 6-9 months from the application due date to an award being made to an institution.

We will keep you updated as much as possible. We appreciate your patience!

Tips for Success



Before You Start Writing

CONSIDER

- Is your topic appropriate for this program or is there a better program?
 - Don't waste time applying to the wrong program.
- Are you eligible to apply for this program?
- Do you understand the requirements from the NOFO?
- Are you familiar with the application review process?
- Do you have all the needed resources—matching if required, qualified/experienced staff, partners, and stakeholders—to manage the project?

TIPS

- Write clearly and logically; organize the documents according to the NOFO outline or evaluation criteria.
- Prepare budget with a strong justification. Follow the guidelines from the NOFO—they are judged on degree of reasonableness.
- Obtain critical input from experienced and successful colleagues.
- Fill out forms completely and correctly.
- Use tables and figures to help illustrate important points.
- Write for both the expert and the novice.



Planning Checklist

Application writing is a complex process and involves several steps. Planning for writing an application needs a strategic approach.

The planning checklist can help identify and prioritize several steps like:

- Locating the appropriate program.
- Assembling a team.
- Creating a timeline.
- Completing all required forms and registration.
- Completing the required documents, editing and converting to pdf.
- Submitting on time.



Document Checklist

- Application package may need several documents as mentioned in the NOFO.
- Complete and accurate application packages help reviewers in understanding the intended project and its requirements.
- Create a list of documents needed from the NOFO.
- Mark documents complete as you go along.
- The checklist will also help when you are submitting the documents in the system as you can mark off when done.

Additional Information



Use NIFA Reporting Portal to Find Funded Awards

Project Details Financial Details **Advanced Search** Annual Reports on Planned Programs

Advanced Search Panel [?]

▶ Results should match ALL the Conditions in this Group (AND) ☰

▶ **Program Code** ▶ should match this QUERY expression ☰

A7401

↑ Generated Query... [?]

↑ Show these fields in the results... [?]

View results as: Document Tabular *(* always hidden in tabular view)*

Expected Results: 195 Projects Search Reset

195 Projects Found [?] <https://portal.nifa.usda.gov/enterprise-search/ss/1723>

<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/data/data-gateway>



Grant Resources

- [Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Competitive Grants Flowchart](#)
- [NIFA Training Resources](#)
- [NIFA Policy Guide](#)
- [Indirect Costs](#)
- [A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov](#)



National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Questions?

Email: A7401@usda.gov



Non-Discrimination Statement

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

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