Notice of Funding Opportunity
New Beginning for Tribal Students Program

FUNDING YEAR:	Fiscal Year (FY) 2026
APPLICATION DEADLINE:	July 2, 2026
ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING:	$5,000,000
AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD RANGE:	$250,000 - $500,000
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:	USDA-NIFA-TGP-011836
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER:	10.527

ANNOUNCEMENT

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The *New Beginning for Tribal Students (NBTS)* is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.527.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, July 2, 2026
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (*NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month*)

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to the extent permitted by law, will no longer make grants or otherwise fund programs or activities that improperly discriminate on the basis of race or sex, including discrimination in the name of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies. Instead, USDA will prioritize merit and efficiency. USDA recognizes programs and initiatives will have the greatest impact when these programs and initiatives put American farmers, ranchers, and foresters first by:

- solving the most pressing challenges they face;
- protecting America's food, fuel, and fiber supply to enhance national security;
- supporting production of healthy and safe food for consumers;
- expanding and developing domestic markets;
- training the next generation of agriculturalists; and
- fueling innovation to keep American farmers at the forefront of productivity.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is committed to advancing these principles and encourages applicants to actively engage farmers, ranchers, and foresters when applying for funding opportunities to ensure relevancy and adherence to them. NIFA also encourages agricultural leaders to engage in the peer review panel process to ensure American producers are better served through research, education, and extension activities.

Projects submitted under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) should align with USDA Secretary's Memorandum 1078-020 Directive on Departmental Research and Development Priorities:

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

Stakeholder Input. NIFA seeks comments on all NOFOs 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 NOFOs and uses comments to help meet the requirements of Section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Applicants may submit written comments to Policy@usda.gov. Please use the following subject line: Response to the New Beginning for Tribal Students NOFO.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The amount available in FY 2026 for the NBTS Program is approximately $5,000,000.

This program supports Land-grant Colleges and Universities to assist in supporting Tribal students on their path to higher education. The NBTS program makes competitive grants to Land-grant Colleges and Universities to provide identifiable support specifically for Tribal students. A Land-grant College or University that receives this grant will use funds for, but not limited to, support of Tribal students for articulation agreements with 1994s; dual credit programs; recruiting; tuition and related fees; experiential learning; student services, including tutoring; counseling; academic advising; and other student services that would increase the retention and graduation rate of Tribal students enrolled at the Land-grant College or University, as determined by the Secretary.

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

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

In accordance with 7 U.S.C. 3222e the Secretary is authorized to make competitive grants to Land-grant Colleges and Universities to provide identifiable support specifically targeted for Tribal students through the NBTS grant program.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the NBTS grant program, Assistance Listing 10.527, is to increase the retention and graduation rate of Tribal students attending 1994, 1862, and 1890 Land-grant Institutions. The primary goals and objectives of the program are for Land-grant Colleges or Universities to use NBTS funding to support Tribal students through all the following, but not limited to: recruiting; tuition and related fees; experiential learning; student services, including tutoring; counseling; academic advising; and other student services that would increase the retention and graduation rate of Tribal students enrolled at Land-grant Colleges or Universities.

The NBTS grant program may support Tribal students by fostering a path from secondary to postsecondary education to encourage Tribal students to attend Land-grant Colleges and Universities. Only Land-grant Colleges and Universities, including 1994 Institutions, are eligible to apply for NBTS funding. Land-grant Colleges and Universities are encouraged to partner with Tribal Governments, community colleges, high schools, technical institutions, and other organizations that work with Tribal students.

Any student in any discipline can be funded under this project if they are taking or have taken STEM-related general education requirements that are required in any of the agricultural sciences. The students funded under this program do not need to be enrolled in an agriculture-seeking degree program, but the project needs to show how the project will enhance agriculture in the future.

Of interest are the projects involving innovative agricultural technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), agricultural cybersecurity, data science, robotics, and other cutting-edge digital tools. NIFA encourages projects that incorporate opportunities for training undergraduate students in these areas to equip them with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to adapt to and thrive in an increasingly digital society and expose them to educational and career pathways in AI for the food and agricultural sciences.

Leadership Skills Development.—The development of leadership skills, knowledge, and qualities are necessary to prepare students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, government, and academia. New Beginning for Tribal Students teaching applications must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to equip students with technical and leadership abilities upon graduation. Specific activities may include:

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

Table 2: Program Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	NBTS
Program Code Name:	New Beginning for Tribal Students
ALN:	10.527
Project Type:	Education Projects
Grant Type:	Regular, Collaborative Grant Type 1
Application Deadline	July 2, 2026
Grant Duration:	24-48 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	10

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for New Beginning for Tribal Students in FY2026 is approximately $5,000,000. USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

The Automated Standard Application for Payments, operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this NOFO.

B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in Part V of this NOFO. Application for FY 2026 is limited to the following application types:

1. **New application.**—New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in Part V of this NOFO and are subject to the due dates herein (see Appendix III for definition).

C. Project and Grant Types

The following describes the types of projects or grants that are eligible for funding.

1. **Project Types**
    a. **Education Projects.** Single-function Education Projects develop human capital relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. Projects should focus on developing skills necessary for entry- and mid-level technical employment or for entering graduate programs in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences.
2. **Grant Types.** Applicants must propose one of two types of grant types: Standard or Collaborative Grant Type 1.
    a. **Standard Grant Type**
        i. Applicants may request up to $250,000 (including indirect costs) for a Standard Grant.
        ii. Project periods may not exceed 4 years/48 months.
        iii. Applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.
    b. **Collaborative Grant Type 1**
        i. Applicants may request up to $500,000 for a Collaborative Grant Type 1 (CG1) project.
        ii. Project periods may not exceed 4 years/48 months.
        iii. Applicant executes the project with assistance from one collaborator, for example, a 1994 Land-grant Institution or non-land-grant Tribal college, high school, Tribal Government, community college, technical school, or an organization that works with Tribal students.

D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects

In accordance with sections 2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422, institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and

effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award, that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients must, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research for further information.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for the NBTS program must meet all the requirements discussed in this NOFO. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or preclude NIFA from making an award. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's About Grants provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

To be eligible to apply for the New Beginning for Tribal Students (NBTS) program, the applying entity must be an 1862, 1890 or 1994 Land-grant College or University. Unless otherwise specified, only United States citizens, non-citizen nationals of the United States, and lawful permanent residents of the United States are eligible to apply for and receive NIFA awards.

USDA **will not accept** competitive applications for grant proposals for dangerous gain-of-function research, as defined in Section 8 of E.O. 14292.

Duplicate submissions of the same proposal by the same project director (PD) to different programs is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits duplicate submissions to multiple programs.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Match Required. Applicants **MUST** provide at minimum 100% matching contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all Federal funds awarded under the New Beginning for Tribal Students grant program. NIFA is not authorized to waive this matching requirement for any applicant or recipient.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this NOFO electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this NOFO and additional resources are available on Grants.gov and Grants 101. **Table 3** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the Grants.gov registration process. The NIFA Grants Application Guide is contained in the specific funding opportunity package or a sample of the guide can be found here. When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

Table 3. Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	*New Users* to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application.
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-TGP-011836**, search for application here: Opportunity Package.
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization's readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 4: 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 Customer service business Hours 24/7, except Federal holidays.	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov 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 NOFO. The NOFO 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 NOFO. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 5** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 5: Key Application Instructions

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

SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances.

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

R&R Other Project Information Form. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

1. **Field 7: *Project Summary (PS)/Abstract.*** The PS must show how the project goals align with the goals of the New Beginning for Tribal Students program. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for instructions and suggested templates.
2. **Field 8: *Project Narrative (PN).*** The PN must not exceed fifteen 1.5-spaced pages of written text in 12-point Times New Roman, and up to three 1.5-spaced additional pages for figures and tables (the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman). The page limits outlined here ensure fair competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they directly support the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. In addition to a Table of Contents, the PN must include all the following:
    a. **Project Description.** Describe the problem/challenge the proposal is addressing, including descriptions of the target population and the anticipated impact of the proposed project. Describe how the project will improve agricultural education and enhance agriculture in the future for America.
    b. **Project Justification.** Summarize the body of knowledge justifying the need for the proposed project. Describe any current New Beginning for Tribal Students awards

that you currently have, if applicable, or other programs in place that are similar in scope, if applicable.

c. **Institutional Long-Range Goals.** Demonstrate how the institution/organization attributes a high priority to the project; how it increases the number of degrees that Tribal students receive; and how this project measures that number.
d. **Innovation**. Explain how the proposed project will improve the institution's capability to perform the project and describe the degree to which the project will strengthen its recruitment and retention of Tribal students. Describe the projected increase in the institution's graduation rates of Tribal students through literature review and the institution's knowledge.
e. **Methodology**. Describe how the institution is going to accomplish the project's objectives. How will resources and personnel be used What issues need to be addressed for the grant to be successful?
f. **Timetable**. Specify the project milestones, starting with the project initiation and ending with student graduation and workforce increases for students.
g. **Measurable Outcomes**. Articulate how the institution will measure the outcome of the project. State the intended impacts of the project.
h. **Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts**. Explain how the proposed project will maximize partnerships and collaborative efforts between 1862 and/or 1890 Land-grant Universities and/or 1994 Institutions and other Tribal colleges, high schools, Tribal Governments, community colleges, other organizations that work with Tribal students. Explain how this collaboration will help all organizations and institutions enhance outcomes for Tribal students looking beyond just graduation rates.
i. **Institutional/Organizational Commitment and Capability**. Demonstrate that the program administration is committed to this project and has the capability to ensure its completion.
j. **Key Personnel**. Discuss the adequacy and specific attributes and project responsibilities of each key person associated with the project. Also include the background and qualifications of those personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering the project.
k. **Summary of Previous Work.** If the applicant has received an NBTS award in the past, please explain the outcomes and impacts of that work.

3. **Field 12:** ***Add Other Attachments.*** See Part V of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.
    a. **Letters of Commitment.** For Collaborative Grant 1 applications, documentation of collaboration is required between each institution, organization, or entity that is identified as the collaborator (must be attached as PDF). Detailed commitment letters are required from the partner institutions, Tribal communities, and others participating in the project. These letters should clearly state the level of commitment and specific actions each entity will undertake as part of these projects. These letters should reflect that the budget is being fairly allocated to participants.
    b. **Institutional Review Board Approval.** This document must be attached as a PDF.
    c. **Data Management Plan (DMP).** A DMP is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will

be considered during the merit review process (see Part V. B of this NOFO, NIFA's Data Management Plan).

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.

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

R&R Budget. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

1. **Match.**
   Grants that require matching funds as specified under Part III. B of this NOFO must list in their **budget justification** the matching sources, the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match, and the total pledged amount. A written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement) is not required. However, applicants are subject to the documentation, valuing, and reporting requirements, as specified in 2 CFR Part 200, "Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (the Uniform Guidance)," and 7 CFR 3430, "Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions."
2. **Indirect Costs (IDC).** See Part IV. C of this NOFO for funding restrictions regarding IDC, and **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for additional information.
3. **CG1 Applications.** Must include both the Research & Related Federal and Non-Federal Budget and the Research & Related Federal and Non-Federal Subaward Budget Attachment Forms. The forms should clearly identify the total grant funding anticipated for the applicant and each partner to demonstrate the required sharing percentage. All expenditures for the applicant and all partner expenditures should be further itemized in the Budget Justification. Funds do not have to be divided equally among project years.

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

1. **Field 2:** ***Program to which the applicant is applying.*****—**Enter the program name "New Beginning for Tribal Students" and the program code "NBTS." Accurate entry is critical.
2. **Field 8:** ***Conflict of Interest List***.—See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.
3. **Mentoring Plan–PDF Attachment.**—Title the attachment as "Mentoring Plan" in the document header and save file as "Mentoring Plan Undergraduate Students" or "Mentoring Plan Graduate Students" or "Mentoring Plan Postdoc," as applicable. If the proposal anticipates requesting funding for student or postdoctoral support including scholarships or fellowships, it must include a maximum of a 2-page Mentoring Plan (MP) for all recipients. If various tiers of students or scholars are represented in the proposal, please provide separate mentoring plans for each educational or professional level targeted (e.g., high school students, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, etc.). The Mentoring Plan should incorporate:
   a. The roles and responsibilities of the project director and co-project directors in managing the mentoring process
   b. Training for and/or credentials of individuals who will serve as mentors (i.e. mentor training)

(1) Mentors may be experienced mentors from academia, industry, or government, or student peers at various levels who are expected to: (a) provide guidance, cultural support, and sense of community with the activities; and (b) facilitate the amplification of program-specific perspectives and accomplishments of the mentees.

c. A description of mentoring activities that may include, but is not limited to, peer mentoring or layered mentoring, whereby a set of mentees are progressively mentored by others at a higher level in their careers; please incorporate these activities into the overall project timeline

d. A description of processes to ensure reasonable accommodations for program participants with disabilities or challenges with accessing program activities.

(1) Scholarship programs should include plans to accommodate scholarship recipients who find it necessary to interrupt their program of study because of health, personal, or other reasonable non-academic and nondisciplinary cause(s).

C. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Cost (IDC) is not to exceed 30 percent of the recipient's Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA). 7 U.S.C. 3310 limits the recovery of IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of the TFFA under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum allowable IDC amount recoverable under the award, including the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, is the lesser of the following and is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:

a. the sum of an institution's negotiated indirect cost rate and the indirect cost rate charged by sub-awardees, if any; or
b. 30 percent of TFFA.

If the result of number one is the lesser of the two amounts, the grant recipient is allowed to charge the negotiated IDC rate on the prime award and the sub-award(s), if any. Any sub-awards would be subject to the sub-awardee's negotiated IDC rate. The sub-awardee may charge its negotiated IDC rate on its portion of the award, provided the sum of the IDC amount charged under the award by the prime awardee and the sub-awardee(s) does not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

If the result of number two is the lesser of the two amounts, then the maximum IDC allowed for the overall award, including any sub-award(s), is limited to 30 percent of the TFFA. That is, the IDC of the prime awardee plus the sum of the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, may not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

In the event of an award, the prime awardee is responsible for ensuring the maximum indirect cost allowed for the award is not exceeded when combining IDC for the Federal portion (i.e., prime and sub-awardee(s)) and any applicable cost-sharing. Amounts exceeding the maximum allowable IDC are considered unallowable. See sections 408 and 410 of 2 CFR 200.

If the applicant does not have a negotiated rate and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant 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)). The Uniform Guidance offers the option of electing to charge a de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described above and in 2 CFR 200.403, costs must be charged consistently as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If elected, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which it may do at any time.

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

PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. NIFA's Evaluation Process

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, each application is screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this NOFO. All administrative requirements must be met in order for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see NIFA Peer Review Process).

Scientific Peer Review Process

NIFA selects reviewers for the review panel based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities.
2. The need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.
3. The need to include other experts (e.g., agricultural producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, educators, evaluators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to the reviewer's area of expertise, geographic area, and entity type, as appropriate.
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 review results.

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 equally weighted criteria to evaluate applications to this program:

1. **Potential for Increasing Tribal Students' Graduation Rates with A.A./B.S./graduate degrees from Land-grant Institutions.** This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the number of Tribal students that graduate at Land-grant Institutions by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs of Tribal students. Elements considered include long-range institutional goals; identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed; justification for the project; innovation; advancing education; multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus; and potential for adoption by other institutions/organizations. The proposed project must also show its relevance to the goals of the NBTS program of increasing the number of Tribal students graduating from Land-grant institutions.
2. **Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages.** This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. The project evaluation plan must state the methodologies in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results, and measurable impacts from the project. The approach must be based on sound educational principles and outreach concepts that are effective in Tribal communities, which may be documented through background literature or actual institutional data. Emphasis is placed on the quality of support provided to the applicant institution/organization through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project. Any perceived pitfalls and alternative strategies or approaches need to be addressed.
3. **Institutional Capability.** This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its recruitment and retention of Tribal students. Elements include all documented partners' commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, cultural support, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic enhancement of Tribal students, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support. Include institutional data (i.e., financial, personnel, and physical resources available to support the project could all be potential data provided by the applicant, depending upon the need area) to show all documented partners' ability to support the proposed project. Evaluation criteria must include suitability and feasibility of the Data Management Plan.
4. **Key Personnel.** This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number, qualifications, and expertise of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts and the dissemination of these findings. Specific roles for each key personnel must be defined to ensure appropriate project leadership and to avoid any duplication of effort. Professional expertise should address all critical activities of the project and letters of collaboration should be included.
5. **Budget and Cost-Effectiveness.** This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost-effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, including through low administrative costs, optimizes educational value for the

dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority educational or research need areas.

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 non-financial 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 NOFO. 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 NOFO may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the program-specific laws and regulations, NIFA General Awards Administrative Provisions (7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E), USDA Regulations for Grants and Agreements (2 CFR Chapter IV), Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance (2 CFR part 200), NIFA-specific terms and conditions, USDA General Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards, and approved budget and project plans.

The Notice of Award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in 2 CFR 200.211.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions. If there are any program or award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the Award Notice.

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 required);
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 2 CFR Part 300 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;
8. The need for additional Federal funds to complete the project;
9. Salary rates of pay exceeding an Executive Level IV salary range (see "Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule" under the "Executive & Senior Level Employee Pay Tables" header at https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/) require prior NIFA approval. This rate does not include any fringe benefits, general and administrative (G&A), overhead, or other expenses. Requests for approval must include the salary rate of pay and a justification for the rate and be sent to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) to awards@usda.gov;
10. No more than 50 percent of the total dollars of this award may be subcontracted to another party(ies) without prior written approval of the ADO, except subcontracts to Federal agencies;
11. Transferring funds between the construction and non-construction work under a Federal award; and
12. A no-cost extension (meaning, an extension of time that does not require the obligation of additional Federal funds) of the period of performance, other than any one-time extension authorized by the Federal agency in accordance with paragraph 2 CFR 200.308(g)(2). All requests for no-cost extensions should be submitted at least 10 calendar days before the

conclusion of the period of performance. The Federal agency may approve multiple no-cost extensions under a federal award if not prohibited by Federal statute or regulation.

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. Language Access Services

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.

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

For programmatic questions please email.
NIFAtribalprograms@usda.gov

For administrative questions related to;

1. Grants.gov, see Part IV of this NOFO
2. Other NOFO or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
3. Awards under this NOFO, please email awards@usda.gov

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

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

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of Terms

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – AFRI
Assistance Listing Number – ALN
Authorized Departmental Officer – ADO
Authorized Representative – AR
Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 – AREERA
Coordinated Agricultural Project – CAP
Centers of Excellence – COE
Data Management Plan – DMP
National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA
Notice of Funding Opportunity – NOFO
Research, Education, and Economics – REE
United States Department of Agriculture – USDA

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

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

Definitions

Continuation Award:

An award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the Federal Government and the public.

Matching:

The process through which a grant recipient matches 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.

Resubmitted Application:

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

Single-function Education Projects:

develop human capital relevant to overall portfolio goals for U.S. agriculture. An education activity or teaching activity is formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, or practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies. Applications for Education Projects may include any of the following activities: conducting classroom and laboratory instruction or providing practicum experience; faculty research internships for curricula development; cutting-edge agricultural science and technology curriculum development; innovative teaching methodologies; instructional materials development; education delivery systems; student experiential learning (student led-research; internships; externships; clinics); student learning styles and student-centered instruction; student recruitment and retention efforts; career planning materials and counseling; pedagogy; faculty development programs; development of modules for on-the-job training; providing knowledge and skills for professionals creating policy or transferring to the agriculture workforce; faculty and student exchanges; and international research opportunities relevant to overall goals for U.S. agriculture.