



PURPOSE

To annually recognize exemplary work from a team or individual at a Land-grant University or other cooperating institution or organization supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The NIFA Partnership Awards Program will allow recognition of outstanding contributions in support of the NIFA mission and USDA Strategic Goals or Priorities that provide an outcome that positively impacts agriculture, the environment, communities, or people.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for these awards, nominees must be from a Land-grant University or other cooperating institution or organization supported by NIFA. NIFA employees are not eligible to submit nominations but can be a part of a nomination submitted by a partner institution. The program, project, or accomplishment described must be supported by NIFA funding. All nominations must be related to programs or projects that demonstrated measurable and continuing accomplishments, achievements, and/or impacts within the past three years.

For team awards, all members of the team must have played a substantial or significant role or made a significant contribution to the work of the project or program. Teams are limited to 20 members.

There can be a maximum of two nominations total (combined total across all categories) from any one institution, meaning the entire institution – including research, education, and extension as part of one entire institution.

CATEGORIES OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

This awards program recognizes outstanding outcomes in the following five categories:

Category I – <i>Mission Integration of Research, Education, or Extension</i>	This involves implementation of a program or project which incorporates, in a meaningful way, full integration of research, education, or extension and results in a positive outcome that impacts agriculture, the environment, communities or people.
Category II – <i>Multistate Efforts</i>	The program or project must show a partnership with two or more states that responds to critical needs important to each state. It must show how the states contributed by providing enhancement in breadth or depth of resources to the program. The fiscal relationships should represent equity in access and distribution of resources and the individuals or team must show a commitment to evaluation of the impact in all states participating.
Category III – <i>Innovative Programs and Projects</i>	The program or project should impress the reviewers with response to an issue or need that combines resources (including disciplines) in innovative ways and/or develops an unusual response to a common problem. The program or project should include response to adverse or critical/emerging regional or national issues, or engagement of stakeholders or customers in program planning or implementation. A positive outcome that impacts agriculture, the environment, communities or people in solving a problem or issue should be evident.



<p>Category IV – <i>Effective and Efficient Use of Resources</i></p>	<p>This would include projects or programs that improved efficiency and effectiveness and resulted in a positive outcome that will have a lasting impact by using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partnerships ➤ Technologies ➤ Prioritization of programs / budget allocation ➤ Reduction of obsolete, or less used, programs ➤ Innovation ➤ Risk-taking
<p>Category V – <i>Program Improvement through Global Engagement</i></p>	<p>The program or project should strengthen U.S. agriculture through effective international engagement in research, education, and/or extension. Qualifying international activities could address needs overseas, engender international partnerships and information exchange, develop international markets, promote outreach to American youth, families, and communities, enrich U.S. classroom experiences, and/or hasten research breakthroughs that benefit American agriculture.</p>

USDA STRATEGIC GOALS AND PRIORITIES

Nominations should support one of the [USDA Strategic Goals](#) or [USDA FY 2022 Priorities](#) listed:

Strategic Goal 1	Ensure USDA programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, and with integrity and a focus on customer service.
Strategic Goal 2	Maximize the ability of American agricultural producers to prosper by feeding and clothing the world.
Strategic Goal 3	Promote American agricultural products and exports.
Strategic Goal 4	Facilitate rural prosperity and economic development.
Strategic Goal 5	Strengthen the stewardship of private lands through technology and research.
Strategic Goal 6	Foster productive and sustainable use of our National Forest System Lands.
Strategic Goal 7	Provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious and secure food supply.

Priority 1	Addressing Climate Change via Climate Smart Agriculture & Forestry
Priority 2	Advancing Racial Justice, Equity and Opportunity
Priority 3	Creating More and Better Market Opportunities
Priority 4	Tackling Food and Nutrition Insecurity
Priority 5	Making USDA a Great Place to Work for Everyone



SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations must demonstrate how an individual or group pro-actively excelled in one of the five categories listed above.

Nominations must clearly and succinctly be written to demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. Exemplary program impact, including appropriate evaluation of outcomes. Include critical or unique impacts in particular.
2. National or international recognition.
3. Ongoing efforts. (Nominations for projects or programs that have not had sufficient time to demonstrate measurable and continuing success should be deferred to a future nomination period.)

NOMINATION PROCEDURES

1. Nominations must be submitted using the NIFA Partnership Award Nomination Form.
2. Justifications must clearly and concisely address the selection criteria shown above and include brief but specific documentation of the substantial or significant role of each team member. Team award nominations are limited to a maximum of 20 members including the team lead. Nominations listing more than 20 members will be disqualified.

Each nomination must include a synopsis of the following:

1. Situation to which the program or project responded.
 2. Objectives/goals (including expected outcomes).
 3. Research, education, or extension project or program developed.
 4. What was done (brief).
 5. Method(s) for evaluating impact.
 6. Measurable outcomes realized to date.
3. All nominations must be approved and endorsed by the Dean, Director, or Administrator for the lead institution(s). Team awards do not need the signature of the Dean, Director, or Administrator of every person on the team, but at least one Dean or Director must vouch for all team members and must sign the nomination form signifying approval of the nomination of all team members involved.
 4. All signed nomination forms must be submitted by **April 1, 2022**, via email using scanned files that have been saved as .pdf or .jpg files to performance@ars.usda.gov. Please include “NIFA Partnership Award Nomination” in the email subject line.

SELECTION PROCEDURES

A selection panel will evaluate the nominations and rank nominees in each respective category. The selection panel will focus on the significance, impact, and outcome of the accomplishments and achievements of those nominated. The panel’s recommendations will be forwarded to the NIFA Director for final review and approval. Nominators and nominees cannot be a part of the selection process.

NATURE OF RECOGNITION

All awardees will be recognized at the annual NIFA Day of Appreciation tentatively scheduled for June/July.

POINT OF CONTACT

Questions regarding this program may be directed to Kelly (Michael) Sprute at kelly.sprute@usda.gov.