

Frequently Asked Questions: Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU

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RFA Webinar Information

1. Where can I find the recording of the Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU RFA Webinar?
 - a. The recording is available under the “Resources” section of the Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU webpage (<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/agriculture-business-innovation-center-historically-black-college-and-university-hbcu>)
2. Where can I find the PowerPoint Presentation from the Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU Webinar?
 - a. The PowerPoint slides are available under the “Resources” section of the Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU webpage (<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/agriculture-business-innovation-center-historically-black-college-and-university-hbcu>)

RFA Process

3. Where can I find the RFA for the Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU funding opportunity?
 - a. You can search for the RFA using the “Search for a Grant” feature under the “Grants” tab on the NIFA homepage (<https://nifa.usda.gov/page/search-grant>), using keyword “ABIC”.
 - b. You can also search for the RFA using the “Search Grants” tab on Grants.gov, using keyword “ABIC”.
4. What is the funding opportunity number for the Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU funding opportunity?
 - a. The Funding Opportunity number is USDA-NIFA-CBGP-008602.
5. When are applications for the Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU funding opportunity due?
 - a. Applications are due **January 13, 2022 at 5pm Eastern Standard Time (EST)**.
6. How do I apply for the Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU funding opportunity?

- a. You can search for the RFA using the “Search for a Grant” feature under the “Grants” tab on the NIFA homepage (<https://nifa.usda.gov/page/search-grant>), using keyword “ABIC”. Select the Funding Opportunity. Then select the “Apply for Grant” button.
 - b. You can also search for the RFA using the “Search Grants” tab on Grants.gov, using keyword “ABIC”. Select the funding opportunity. Then select the “Apply” button on the top right of the screen.
7. Can the RFA information be made available to us via email?
- a. The RFA information can be found via the NIFA home page, Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU webpage or Grants.gov. To view details on how to apply see question number 6.
8. Will there be an award made for each sub-theme?
- a. No, only one award will be made for the Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU funding opportunity.
9. Who is considered to be a lead at an HBCU institution?
- a. Faculty, Administrator, or Staff member employed by the HBCU.
10. Can the proposal be written for 2 years rather than the stipulated 3 years?
- a. Yes, the program can be completed prior to the 3- year stipulated duration but should not be planned to exceed 3 years.
11. Is the expectation for the Center to house all program activities or can some or all activities take place at other HBCUs?
- a. Programmatic activities can take place at collaborating institutions selected by the applicant.
12. Where can I find the evaluation criteria?
- a. The evaluation criteria can be found on pages 21 - 22 of the RFA.
13. How is the strength of the applicant determined?
- a. The merit of applications will be assessed based upon the evaluation criteria on pages 21-22 of the RFA. This will be conducted through a peer-panel review process.

Application

14. What are the scoring points for each of the evaluation criteria?
- a. Points are not assigned to evaluation criteria. To view NIFA’s evaluation process visit the NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications webpage (<https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/nifa-peer-review-process-competitive-grant-applications>)
15. What is the start date for the ABIC?
- a. On average, a competitive proposal takes about 6-9 months from RFA release to an award being made to an institution.
16. Is it advantageous for multiple HBCU's to combine and submit one application?

- a. No. Reviewers will assess the merit of the proposal based on the evaluation criteria found on pages 21 - 22 of the RFA.
17. Although the included project types are: “Teaching/Education”, “Outreach”, and “Integrated”, can research be included?
 - a. The objective of ABIC is to serve as a technical assistance hub to enhance agriculture-based business development opportunities. While research may be included to support the objective, it cannot be the main focus of the proposal.
18. Is the collaboration/sub-contractor limited to HBCU institutions only or is collaboration open for other institutions?
 - a. HBCU lead applicants may choose to subcontract/collaborate with institutions or agencies as they see fit, as described on page 9 - 10 of RFA.
19. Can I be listed as a co-PD on one submitted grant and submit another application from a separate institution as the primary PD?
 - a. Yes. There is also no limit on number of applications per institution.
20. Is there a requirement to reapply annually for the 3-year duration?
 - a. No. There will not be a need to reapply annually. The \$2 million allocation is provided in the 1st year of the 3-year duration.
21. Would an HBCU that already has an Agriculture Program have an advantage?
 - a. No. Applications will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria listed on pages 21-22 of the RFA.
22. Can a business school collaborate with a campus Agriculture program for this grant?
 - a. HBCU lead applicants may choose to subcontract/collaborate with institutions or agencies as they see fit, as described on page 9 - 10 of RFA.
23. Can you define what an innovative project would encompass?
 - a. Innovation is defined as a creative approach aimed to address the quality of food and agriculture.
24. Does the page limit of 20 include the budget justification?
 - a. No, this is submitted as a separate document. Please see [Application Guide](#).
25. Who can I contact if I have a question?
 - a. Contact National Program Leader, Maurice Smith (maurice.smith2@usda.gov) and Program Specialist, Keesha Corbin (keesha.corbin@usda.gov) with questions.
26. If a project is funded, can a Center have a competitive process for applications to fund specific outreach projects? If so, can funding for these projects be allocated in the budget?
 - a. Yes, the center can have a competitive application process and allocate funds for outreach projects.
27. Is there assistance for subcontractors looking for HBCU partnerships?
 - a. Subcontractors are responsible for reaching out to HBCUS regarding potential partnerships. For a list of HBCUs visit: <https://hbcuconnect.com/colleges/>

28. Can an application include two lead institutions?
 - a. No, there must be a designated lead and co-lead.
29. Can an external evaluator be included in the proposal?
 - a. An external evaluator can be included.
30. How much would an applicant need to allocate for NIFA or any other foundation?
 - a. This program has **no** 1890 foundation allocation requirement. However, for this program the Indirect Cost (IDC) should not exceed 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) of the recipient. Please review the Budget and Cost-Effectiveness information on Page 17-19 of the RFA here <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/agriculture-business-innovation-center-hbcu-institution>.

Background Information

31. Is this the first year for this award, or has an HBCU received it previously?
 - a. Yes, this is the first year that funds were appropriated by Congress for the establishment of an Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an HBCU.
32. What is the purpose of providing a single award?
 - a. A single \$2 million was appropriated by Congress for the establishment of an Agriculture Business Innovation Center at an Historically Black College or University.
33. Will the funding be limited to HBCU land grants and/or non-profits?
 - a. The lead must be a faculty or staff member from an Historically Black College or University, but collaborator/sub-contract affiliation will be determined by and is at the discretion of the lead institution.