

Stakeholder Feedback for the AFRI Childhood Obesity Prevention Challenge Area

AFRI Stakeholder Input

The programs described herein were developed within the context of the authorized purposes of USDA research, extension, and education projects and activities. In addition, AFRI obtains input from Congress, the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board, as well as many university, scientific, and agricultural committees and organizations. NIFA developed a stakeholder's Web page (www.nifa.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder.html) to document stakeholder input that is considered when developing and updating Program Area Descriptions and Priorities each year.

Diverse stakeholders made valuable recommendations to the program area description and priorities of the AFRI Childhood Obesity Prevention Challenge Area Request for Applications (RFA). Recommendations included points of clarification, such as: 1) indicating if NIFA is open to receiving proposals that involve the generation and/or use of Big Data; 2) explicitly mentioning the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) as a program with which synergistic relationships can be created; and 3) ensuring that the RFA clearly and consistently states that an Integrated Childhood Obesity Prevention proposal includes all three functions of the agriculture knowledge system (i.e., Research, Extension, and Education). Suggested changes to the scientific priorities also included expanding the focus on prevention of obesity to include prevention of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes; examination of whether sustainable diets are affordable and accessible to the whole U.S. population; including assessment of plate waste in proposed projects; requiring applicants to include a participant recruitment plan with their application; continuing to offer smaller funding lines, but allowing smaller projects to address 2 functions of agriculture; addressing the gaps in the literature related to maintaining healthy lifestyle behaviors of young children as they mature into 9- to 13-year-olds and 14 to 19-year-olds; and calling for interventions that address physical activity in addition to diet as well as environmental targets, not only individual behaviors.

In response, the AFRI Childhood Obesity Prevention Challenge Area invites proposals that will 1) reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents ages 2-19 years or any subset of this age range and 2) investigate behavioral and environmental factors that influence excessive weight gain including improving diet quality, meeting guidelines for television viewing and computer use, and increasing physical activity. The RFA clearly states that incorporating Big Data may be necessary; and that a successful Integrated Project must include all three functions of the agricultural knowledge system (i.e., Research, Education, and Extension) within in a project focused around a problem or issue. The RFA also allows for the continuation of smaller funding lines. Lastly, the RFA specifically references the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children and states that high priority will be given to projects involving the measurement of food loss and plate waste.

Sources of Stakeholder Input:

- Stakeholder Listening Session hosted by scientific organizations in 2015.
 - Experimental Biology 2015
 - Society of Nutrition Education and Behavior 2015
- Comments, clarifying question, and suggestions made during Grantsmanship webinars.
- Correspondence from university partners.
- Recommendations from federal partners.
 - USDA – Food and Nutrition Service