Renewable Resources Extension Act Program – Capacity RFA

FY 2016 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: September 1, 2015

USDA
United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

RENEWABLE RESOURCES EXTENSION ACT PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.500.

DATES: Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on September 1, 2015. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within 6 months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks your comments about this RFA. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we’ll use them to 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)). Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice to: policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Renewable Resources Extension Act Program Capacity RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) Program for fiscal year (FY) 2016 to assist all states in carrying out a program of extension activities designed to (1) provide educational programs that enable individuals to recognize, analyze, and resolve problems dealing with renewable resources, including forest- and range-based outdoor recreation opportunities, trees, and forests in urban areas, and trees and shrubs in shelterbelts; (2) use educational programs to disseminate the results of research on renewable resources; (3) conduct educational programs that transfer the best available technology to those involved in the management and protection of forests and rangelands and the processing and use of their associated renewable resources; (4) develop and implement educational programs that give special attention to the educational needs of small, private non-industrial forest landowners; (5) develop and implement educational programs in range and fish and wildlife management; (6) assist in providing continuing education programs for professionally trained individuals in fish and wildlife, forest, range, and watershed management and related fields; (7) help forest and range landowners in securing technical and financial assistance to bring appropriate expertise to bear on their problems; and (8) help identify areas of needed research regarding renewable resources.

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2016. Enactment of continuing resolutions (CR) or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. Subject to any 2016 Continuing Resolution, funds will be distributed to the institutions on a quarterly basis and according to the amounts allocated in FY 2015.
Adjustments will be made to the allocations for FY 2016 once the FY 2016 appropriations are finalized. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2015 was $4,060,000. Funds are to be distributed through grants to the institutions on a quarterly basis. The specific distributions are included in Appendix A of this RFA. In FY 2016, subject to the availability of funds and the applicant having met the previous year’s reporting requirements, quarterly payments will be issued.

This notice identifies the objectives for the RREA project/program, the eligibility criteria for projects/program and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a RREA grant.
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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The Renewable Resources Extension Act (Pub. L. 95-306 (92 Stat. 349, 16 U.S.C. 1671 et seq.) established the Renewable Resources Extension Act Program in 1978. This law provides the basis for Federal funding for extension activities associated with fish, wildlife, and water resources on private forest and rangelands and for renewable resource education programs at State Land-Grant Institutions established under the Morrill Act of July 2, 1862, as amended; the Hatch Act of March 2, 1887, as amended; the Morrill Act of August 30, 1890, as amended, including Tuskegee University; and other State-supported colleges and universities offering graduate training in the sciences basic to forestry and having a forestry school.

States are eligible for funds appropriated under this Act according to the respective capabilities of their private forests and rangelands for yielding renewable resources and relative needs for such resources identified in the periodic Renewable Resource Assessment provided for in Section 3 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the periodic appraisal of land and water resources provided for in Section 5 of the Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977.

Please note that the submission of this application package does not change the following:

- Delegated authorities of the State Extension Director or 1890 Extension Administrator
- How funds are managed at your institution; and
- Indirect costs and tuition remission are unallowable costs.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this funding is to assist states in carrying out an extension program designed to assist forest and range landowners and managers in making resource management decisions based on research findings. Forest and rangeland resources include vegetation, water, fisheries and wildlife, soil, and recreation. A RREA Strategic Plan was established for FY 2012-2016 and the priorities listed in this plan are to be the focus of RREA expenditures by recipients.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

Subject to any 2016 Continuing Resolution, funds will be distributed to the institutions on a quarterly basis and according to the amounts allocated in FY 2015. Adjustments will be made to the allocations for FY 2016 once the FY 2016 appropriations are finalized. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2015 was $4,060,000.

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury’s Bureau of the Fiscal Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see http://fms.treas.gov/index1.html.

B. Type of Application

In FY 2016, submit applications to the RREA Program as a “new” application.

C. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

RREA funds may not be used for research activities. The funds are to be used exclusively for Extension programs.
PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by State colleges and universities in accordance with Section 3(b) of P. L. 95-306, Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978: Auburn University; Alabama A&M University; Tuskegee University; University of Alaska - Fairbanks; University of Arizona; University of Arkansas; University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff; University of California; Central State University; Colorado State University; University of Connecticut; University of Delaware; Delaware State University; University of the District of Columbia; University of Florida; Florida A&M University; University of Georgia; Fort Valley State University; University of Guam; University of Hawaii; University of Idaho; University of Illinois; Purdue University; Iowa State University; Kansas State University; University of Kentucky; Kentucky State University; Louisiana State University; Southern University; University of Maine; University of Maryland (College Park); University of Maryland (Eastern Shore); University of Massachusetts; Michigan State University; University of Minnesota; Mississippi State University; Alcorn State University; University of Missouri; Lincoln University; Montana State University; University of Nebraska; University of Nevada; University of New Hampshire; Rutgers University; New Mexico State University; Cornell University; North Carolina State University; North Carolina A&T State University; North Dakota State University; Ohio State University; Oklahoma State University; Langston University; Oregon State University; Pennsylvania State University; University of Puerto Rico; University of Rhode Island; Clemson University; South Carolina State University; South Dakota State University; University of Tennessee; Texas A&M University; Prairie View A&M University; Utah State University; University of Vermont; University of the Virgin Islands; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; Virginia State University; Washington State University; West Virginia University; West Virginia State University; University of Wisconsin; and University of Wyoming.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost-sharing or matching requirement for this program.
PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA. We urge you to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/grant-application-process.html.

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, we recommend that the Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) first contact an Authorized Representative (AR, also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR)\(^1\) (see B.,1.,d. of this Part to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If not (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then you must complete the one-time registration process PRIOR to submitting an application. It can take as long as 2 weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations, the AR should go to “Register” in the top right corner of the Grants.gov web page (or go to http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov. Item 2. below mentions the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” Part II., 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains additional explanatory language regarding the registration process.

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

To receive application materials:

1. You must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov to access, complete, and submit applications. For basic system requirements and download instructions, see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determination whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.

2. To obtain the application package from Grants.gov, go to http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html. Under Step 1 click on “Download a Grant Application Package,” and enter the funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-OP-005317 in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

The application package contains the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” This guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a

\(^1\)The Authorized Representative (AR) must have the authority to represent and bind the organization for any agreement (i.e., the individual who is authorized to commit the awardee’s time and other resources to the project, to commit the awardee to comply with the terms and conditions of the award instrument including those set out herein, and to otherwise act for or on behalf of the awardee institution or organization).
If you require assistance to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms) or submitting the application, refer to resources available on the Grants.gov website (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-resources.html). Grants.gov assistance is also available at:

Grants.gov customer support
800-518-4726 toll-free or 606-545-5035
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on federal holidays.
Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov iPortal: Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), searchable knowledge base, self-service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7 am - 9 p.m. ET). Get help now!

Have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov:

- Funding opportunity number (FON)
- Name of agency to which you are applying
- Specific area of concern

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

You should prepare electronic applications following Parts V and VI of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this part). The following is additional information needed to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III, Section 3. of the guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until the established deadline in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

For any questions related to the preparation of an application, review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable RFA. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

- Email: electronic@nifa.usda.gov
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET, excluding federal holidays.

Each grant application must contain a(n):

- “Application for Federal Assistance,” Form SF-424 R&R Cover Sheet
• Key Contacts Form.
• NIFA Supplemental Information Form.
The following is an optional form:
• Attachment Form

The NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide includes instructions for additional forms that are not needed for an application in response to this RFA. Complete and submit only the forms associated with the funding opportunity package and as instructed below.

1. **SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. The following are additional instructions.

   a. **Field 1. Type of Submission** – Check “application.”
   b. **Field 8. Type of Application** – Enter “new.”
   c. **Field 15. Estimated Project Funding** – For item a. enter your institution’s FY 2015 allocation as listed in Appendix A to this announcement.

2. **Key Contacts Form**
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

   a. **Contact 1 Project Role:** Enter the contact information for the State Extension Director or 1890 Administrator.
   b. **Contact 2 Project Role:** Enter the contact information for the RREA Principal Investigator as designated by the State Extension Director’s or 1890 Administrator’s designee.
   c. **Contact 3 Project Role:** Enter the contact information for the Business Office Manager/Administrator.
   d. **Contact 4 Project Role:** Enter the contact information for the person responsible for Drawdowns.

3. **Supplemental Information Form**
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. The following are additional instructions.

   a. **Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “Renewable Resources Extension Act Formula”) and the program code (i.e., enter “RREAF”).
   b. **Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** Do not attach a conflict of interest list.

4. **Attachment Form**
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.
C. Submission Dates and Times

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on September 1, 2015**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

**If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV, A. for Grants.gov contact information.**

We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. Therefore, we strongly encourage applicants to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence from NIFA regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact the Agency Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being processed and funding being held. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

**1) Approved NIFA RREA Projects**
RREA federal funding must be used on the strategic issues from the FY 2012-2016 RREA Strategic Plan identified in the institution’s approved 5-Year Plan of Work for FYs 2012-2016.

**2) Indirect Costs and Tuition Remission**
In accordance with section 1473 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. §3319), indirect costs and tuition remission are unallowable as RREA capacity grant expenditures.

**3) Carryover of Funds**
RREA funds are expected to be fully expended in the fiscal year of appropriation; however current policy allows 50 percent of the prior fiscal year allocation to be carried over into the next fiscal year. These carryover funds must be fully expended by September 30 of the following year (e.g. September 30, 2017 for FY 2016 funds). However, waiver requests may be considered and approved. Requests should be submitted to the Program Managers listed in Part VII of this RFA, who will provide the required format for requesting carryover of excess (>50%) funds.
Prior approval is required to carry over excess funds for one additional year; however, no additional carryover requests may be considered or approved, as no legislative authority to do so is provided.

E. Other Submission Requirements

You should follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

For information about the status of a submitted application, see Part III, Section 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

**Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)** - each applicant (unless excepted under 2 CFR § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR § 25.110(d)) is required to:

(i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. It also must state that the Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.
PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

NIFA will review submitted documents to determine if all program, financial, and administrative requirements have been met and are current.

B. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis. This requirement is part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. We will provide you forms for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).
PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the NIFA awarding official shall make
grants to those responsible, eligible applicants.

B. Award Notice

The notice of Federal award (Form NIFA-2009) is the authorizing document. The award
document contains award provisions and other pertinent information. See

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to
project grants awarded under this program. These may include, but are not limited to, the ones

NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide—a compendium of basic NIFA policies and procedures
that apply to all NIFA awards, unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific
requirements to the contrary is available at http://nifa.usda.gov/policy-guide.

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Recipients are to provide an Annual Progress Report (by fiscal year), in REEport. The progress
report should include program outputs and outcomes that correspond to the RREA strategic
issues included in the recipient’s REEport project. Significant outputs and outcomes from
emergent program offerings should also be included in the Annual Progress Report.

The following is a description of project data reporting requirements through the REEport system
(located at http://portal.nifa.usda.gov) as well as the SF-425 reporting requirements:

Institutions must submit a REEport Project Initiation which includes the Project Description;
Project Classification; Assurance Form; and Project Proposal through the REEport System prior
to the initiation of each capacity-funded project. The project must undergo a review process and
be approved.

Each institution shall submit a REEport Progress Report annually for each eligible project. All
Progress Reports from institutions are based on the federal fiscal year and shall be submitted by
March 1, 2016 for the preceding fiscal year.

A Final Report shall be submitted to NIFA through REEport for each completed or terminated
project. Such reports shall be submitted at the same time as are progress reports on active
projects and should include a summary of accomplishments for the entire life of the project.
A Financial Report shall be submitted to NIFA through REEport annually for all eligible projects from the preceding fiscal year. A Financial Report is also required for expenditures on all State projects that are to be included in the non-Federal funds and matching funds computation. Reports shall be made on the federal fiscal year basis.

Financial reporting via the SF-425, Federal Financial Report for FY 2016 is due to the Capacity Grants Branch, Awards Management Division, OGFM, on December 31, 2016, for the period October 1, 2015, through September 30, 2016, and annually thereafter until the award is closed out.

See http://nifa.usda.gov/program/renewable-resources-extension-act-capacity-grant for additional details of annual, final technical and financial reporting requirements. Instructions for using the REEport system are included on the NIFA web site at: http://nifa.usda.gov/reeport-resources-land-grant-partners.
PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

For questions regarding RREA projects and the RREA program:

Please copy all questions to the RREA mailbox at RREA@nifa.usda.gov.

For questions regarding RREA projects/program, please contact:
Dr. Eric Norland; National Program Leader; Division of Environmental Systems; Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2210; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington DC 20250; (202) 401-5971; enorland@nifa.usda.gov.

Dr. James Dobrowolski, National Program Leader; Division of Environmental Systems; Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2210; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington DC 20250; (202) 401-5016; jdobrowolski@nifa.usda.gov.

For questions relating to the completion of the grants.gov forms please contact: Brenda Barnett, OGFM, NIFA/USDA, Stop 2271, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2271; Telephone: (202) 401-6520; Fax: (202) 401-1804; E-mail: formulagrantquestions@nifa.usda.gov.

For questions relating to REEport forms and submissions, please contact: Planning, Accountability, and Reporting Staff; Telephone: (202) 690-0009; Fax: (202) 690-0634; E-mail: electronic@nifa.usda.gov or reeport@nifa.usda.gov.
PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

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| Total Payments to States                      | $ 3,597,600 |
| Federal Administration                        | 162,400     |
| National Focus Projects                       | 300,000     |
| Total Appropriation                           | $ 4,060,000 |