



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
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and Agriculture

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The logo for the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), featuring the letters "NIFA" in a large, white, serif font. The letters are set against a dark, stylized background that resembles a landscape with a sun or moon rising over hills.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year 2022

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 15, 2022

ANTICIPATED FUNDING: \$4,500,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-TCEG-008681

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.221

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Required

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistance Listing: The Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants program is listed in the Assistance Listings under the number 10.221.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, March 15, 2022 [Ref to Part IV § A of this RFA]
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (<i>NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month</i>)

Stakeholder Input. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) 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 RFAs and use 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 (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NIFA requests applications for the Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants (TCEG) program for fiscal year (FY) 2022 to promote post-secondary education at the 1994 Land-grant Institutions (1994s) and increase educational opportunities for American Indians. The anticipated amount available for this grant in FY 2022 is approximately \$4.5 million. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. This is a four-year continuation grant.

This notice identifies the objectives for TCEG 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

Authority for this program is contained in the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 ([7 U.S.C. 301 note](#)) as amended by the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 ([7 U.S.C. 7601 note](#)). Under this authority, appropriated funds are to be awarded to the 1994s for Education capacity building and funds are to be distributed equally among institutions that meet eligibility requirements.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants (TCEG) program (assistance listing 10.221) is designed to help build Tribal education capacity in the food and agricultural sciences for Native Alaskan/American Indian students. This request for applications (RFA) will begin a new four-year continuation funding cycle. The six legislatively mandated priorities are:

- Culturally relevant curricula design and materials development
- Culturally responsive faculty development and teacher preparation
- Student experiential learning
- Equipment and instrumentation for teaching Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math
- Student recruitment and retention
- Instruction delivery systems and strategic partnerships

The TCEG program focuses on development of culturally responsive students and faculty who use students' backgrounds and identities to create a dynamic and engaging learning environment. Preparing students for roles in Tribal leadership, traditional knowledge, and other qualities of one's culture that are necessary to prepare students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, for work with Tribal and non-Tribal government, and in academia. TCEG teaching applications must demonstrably incorporate a Tribal leadership development component to equip students with technical and leadership abilities upon graduation.

Specific activities may include but are not limited to:

- Developing practical applications to increase understanding of leadership roles for Tribes, including critical thinking, generosity and cooperation, independence and freedom, connectedness, responsibility, communication, and reflection;
- Connecting the academic classroom experience with students' identities and backgrounds to daily leadership roles and organizational activities;
- Providing opportunities for mentoring and shadowing; and
- Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc.

Tribal Leadership Skills Development. The development of Tribal leadership skills, traditional knowledge, and qualities of one's culture are necessary to prepare students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, Tribal and non-Tribal government, academia, and emotional awareness and health. TCEG teaching applications must incorporate a Tribal leadership development component to equip students with technical and leadership abilities upon graduation. Specific outcomes may include but are not limited to:

- Students being well grounded in the cultural heritage and agricultural traditions of their community.
- Students who can build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life.
- Students who can actively participate in various cultural environments.
- Students who can engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning.
- Students demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.

The TCEG program is aligned with Strategic Goal 4 of the USDA Strategic Plan found at [USDA Strategic Goals FY 2018-2022](#): Facilitate Rural Prosperity and Economic Development.

Global Engagement. NIFA supports global engagement that advances U.S. agricultural goals. NIFA recognizes that collaboration with international partners may be necessary to attain the agency's goals for U.S. agriculture, promote global competence of our nation's future agricultural workforce, and promote safe and nutritious food security in a growing world. Therefore, although application to this RFA is limited to eligible U.S. institutions, applicants may collaborate with international partners, to include subcontracts to international partners or other institutions. Applications must clearly demonstrate benefits to the United States.

Table 2: Program Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	KX
Program Code Name:	TCEG
CFDA Number	10.221
Project Type:	Education/Teaching
Grant Type:	Regular
Application Deadline	March 15, 2022
Grant Duration:	48 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	35
Maximum Award Amount:	\$130,000

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for the Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants (TCEG) program in FY 2022 is approximately \$4.5 million. The regular grant type will be administered as a four-year continuation award. USDA is not committed to fund any 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 RFA.

B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. In FY 2022 applications are limited to the following application type:

1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definition). This is a four-year continuation award.

C. Project and Grant Types

The following section provides information about the types of projects or grants that are eligible for funding.

1. Project Types

Education/Teaching Projects

An education project or teaching project should develop human capital to help meet current and future national food, agricultural, natural resources, and human sciences workplace needs. Examples of relevant activities under this project type include (but are not limited to) the following: formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and 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/Teaching projects must address one or more of the following need areas:

- Culturally relevant curricula design and materials development
- Culturally responsive faculty development and teacher preparation
- Student experiential learning
- Equipment and instrumentation for teaching Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math
- Student recruitment and retention
- Instruction delivery systems and strategic partnerships

Education/Teaching Projects may include any of the following activities:

- Institutional capacity building through faculty development and instructional delivery programs for K-12 and higher education instructors. Educational activities may include curriculum and instructional materials development; externship

opportunities that allow teachers to learn about industry environments and expectations for entry level workers; and opportunities to learn modern pedagogy and innovative teaching methodologies.

- Facilitating interaction with other academic institutions to maximize the use of resources supporting outstanding education in the food, agriculture and natural resource sciences, such as linkages between baccalaureate degree granting institutions, secondary, and/or two-year postsecondary institutions to make instruction targeted at undergraduate students available to secondary students as advanced placement credit or as transfer credit from associate degree programs into baccalaureate level programs.
- Experiential learning for students enrolled in Associate, Baccalaureate, Masters and Ph.D. degree programs. Experiential learning component must address one or two of the following key actions:
 - Research/extension internships for undergraduate students new to food, agriculture, natural resources and/or human sciences. Students new to food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences may include freshman enrolled in food and agricultural sciences; and sophomores or juniors enrolled in non-agricultural majors.
 - Graduate and postdoctoral students actively engaged in the scholarship of the research/extension projects, including in activities such as internships, externships, and clinics;
 - Recruitment and retention of underrepresented college students, including targeted recruitment, mentoring and experiential learning opportunities;
 - Student study abroad and international research opportunities relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture.

Educational activities must show direct alignment with one of the following:

- Increasing the number of graduates with the necessary technical skills for entry-level positions in food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences;
- Improving the technical competencies needed for the workforce to ensure that U.S. agriculture remains globally competitive.
- Enhancing the diversity of the workforce in food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences.

Note that routine use of graduate and postdoctoral students as personnel on research projects is not considered education for the purposes of this program. Only students actively engaged in the scholarship of the research/extension projects are considered as education. Actively engaged students could contribute to presentations, articles, posters, and other expressions of scholarship that reflect their own work on the project.

The activities for Education Projects must show direct alignment with increasing technical competency in priority area(s) to ensure that the United States remains globally competitive in the knowledge age.

2. Grant Types

Regular Grant

Regular Grants can support Education/Teaching projects. An eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system may submit a grant application for project activities to be undertaken principally on behalf of its own students or faculty, and to be managed primarily by its own personnel. The applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

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

Applications submitted to the Tribal Colleges Education Equity Grants (TCEG) program must meet all the requirements discussed in this RFA. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or, preclude NIFA from making an award.

Applications may only be submitted by Tribal Colleges or Universities designated as a 1994 Land-grant Institutions (1994 institution) under the Equity Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301, as amended). 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. The eligible 1994 institutions are listed below.

Aaniiih Nakoda College	Navajo Technical University
Bay Mills Community College	Nebraska Indian Community College
Blackfeet Community College	Northwest Indian College
Cankdeska Cikana Community College	Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College
Chief Dull Knife College	Oglala Lakota College
College of the Menominee Nation	Red Lake Nation College
College of the Muscogee Nation	Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College
Dine' College	Salish Kootenai College
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College	Sinte Gleska University
Fort Peck Community College	Sisseton Wahpeton College
Haskell Indian Nations University	Sitting Bull College
Iisagvik College	Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
Institute of American Indian Arts	Stone Child College
Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College	Tohono O'odham Community College
Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College	Turtle Mountain Community College
Leech Lake Tribal College	United Tribes Technical College
Little Big Horn College	White Earth Tribal and Community College
Little Priest Tribal College	

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – duplicate or multiple submissions are not allowed. Only one application will be allowed per institution. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No Match Required - The TCEG program has **NO** matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 3** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part II § 1** of the [NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide](#) (Application Guide) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process.

Table 3. Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
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-TCEG-008681 , 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 Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays .	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except federal holidays

B. Content and Form of the Application

The [Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the [Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. NIFA will accept subsequent submissions to an application until the application deadline. However, 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 RFA. 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 <u>Application Guide</u>)
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 V
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 received correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 45 days of the application deadline.	N/A

SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for the required certifications and assurances.

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

R&R Other Project Information Form. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

1. Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the Tribal College Equity Grant Program. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.

Specifications are as follows:

- The summary is not to exceed 250 words
- Include the title of the project
- Include the names and affiliated organizations of all PDs and Co-PDs

The summary shall focus on goals, strategies, and anticipated project outcomes.

2. Field 8. Project Narrative (PN). The PN must not exceed 12 1.5 spaced pages of written text and up to 3 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 and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly relevant to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. The Program Narrative must include all the following in PDF format:

- a. Introduction to the Tribal College.
- b. Rational and significance of what you are proposing and how it will help Tribal Nations, Tribal Colleges and Tribal Students. Please include alignment of the project with institutional long-range goals, justification for the project, innovation, advancing Tribal educational equity, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, potential for adoption by other institutions, if the project will enhance the understanding of cultural heritage and agricultural traditions of their community, whether the students are able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life, are students able to engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning, and does the proposed project build awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.
- c. Summary of previous years accomplishments and activities at your institution.
- d. Objectives that align with the legislatively mandated priorities of the program
 - 1) Culturally relevant curricula design and materials development
 - 2) Culturally responsive faculty development and teacher preparation
 - 3) Student experiential learning
 - 4) Equipment and instrumentation for teaching Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math
 - 5) Student recruitment and retention
 - 6) Instruction delivery systems and strategic partnerships
- e. Project timeline over the 4-year project plan and detail professional development activities for faculty and students, presentations of papers and posters, dissemination of findings at culturally appropriate conferences, Tribal gatherings or in publications.
- f. When and how the project will be evaluated. Will there be an internal or external reviewer, and how will they evaluate the cultural and sustainable learning practices?
- g. Describe the Institutional and Tribal involvement in the project. Describe the community members assistance with learning activities. Describe in what capacity the institution assesses activities from a class, programmatic and institutional level to ensure a holistic and culturally aware institution that will elevate Tribal leadership.
- h. Data management plan (DMP) (Required)
- i. Dissemination of lessons learned. Student participation in the annual FALCON conference and Faculty participation in the Project Directors meeting at FALCON annually are required. Other ways to inform community members and share ways of learning are encouraged. (Required)

3. Field 12, Add Other Attachments in PDF format. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates in PDF format.

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

R&R Budget. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

1. Match – No match is required.
2. Indirect costs (IDC) – See [Part IV § C](#) of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#) for additional information.
3. **Data Management Plan.** (REQUIRED) 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 in PDF format. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V § B](#) of this RFA, [Part III § 3.1 of the Application Guide](#) and [NIFA’s Data Management Plan](#)).

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name Tribal College Equity Grant Program (TCEG) and the program code (KX) in PDF format. Accurate entry is critical.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the [Application Guide](#).

Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants. This is required for corporate applicants. See **Part VI § 2** of the [Application Guide](#) for a description of the term, “corporation.”

C. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Cost (IDC) not to exceed 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) of the recipient. Section 1462(a) and (c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) limits IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum IDC rate allowed under the award is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:

1. the sum of an institution’s negotiated indirect cost rate and the indirect cost rate charged by sub-awardees, if any; or
2. 30 percent of TFFA.

The maximum allowable IDC rate under the award, including the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, is the lesser of the two rates.

If the result of number one is the lesser of the two rates, 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 rate 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 rates, then the maximum IDC rate 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.

Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities. Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. NIFA's Evaluation Process

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this RFA. 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., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess the relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and 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 minority and female representation and equitable age distribution; and
6. the need to include reviewers who can judge the practical 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 unfavorable review.

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 criteria to evaluate this RFA:

1. Potential for Advancing Quality of Tribal Education; Significance of the Problem

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs in Tribal communities. Elements considered include alignment of the project with institutional long-range goals, USDA's Goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing Tribal educational equity, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, potential for adoption by other institutions, will the project enhance the understanding of cultural heritage and agricultural traditions of their community, are students able to build on the knowledge and skills of the local cultural community as a foundation from which to achieve personal and academic success throughout life, are able to engage effectively in learning activities that are based on traditional ways of knowing and learning, and does the proposed project build awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of interaction of all elements in the world around them.

2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, sustainability, expected products and results, culturally relevant evaluation, and dissemination plans. Emphasis is placed on the quality of educational support provided to the applicant institution through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project.

3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building

This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its teaching capacity. Elements include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic enhancement, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support.

4. Key Personnel

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications 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 dissemination of these findings. Applicants must submit specific management information relating to an applicant prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only have to update their information if they had previously provided the information under this or another NIFA program.

5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness

This criterion relates to how well the total budget 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, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority Educational Need Areas.

C. 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 RFA. 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 RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and [NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions, 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E.](#)

Award Notice. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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 requiring);
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 [45 CFR Part 75 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,
5. [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
6. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR §200.456 Participant support costs](#));
7. 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;
8. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
9. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

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](#).

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

Program Contacts

Name	Email	Telephone
Erin Riley	Erin.riley@usda.gov	202-505-0361
Ara Staab	Ara.staab@usda.gov	816-908-3345

For administrative questions related to

- Grants.gov, see Part IV of this RFA
- Other RFA or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
- Awards under this RFA, 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
United States Department of Agriculture
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Name	Acronyms
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative	AFRI
Authorized Representative	AR
Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998	AREERA
Coordinated Agricultural Project	CAP
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	CFDA
Center of Excellence	COE
Data Management Plan	DMP
National Institute of Food and Agriculture	NIFA
Request for Application	RFA
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.

Terms	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 match 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.
Renewal Application	A project application that seeks additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award.
Resubmitted Application	A project application that was previously submitted to a program, but the application was not funded.
Resubmitted Renewal Application	A project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. This is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to but not funded.