Special Research Grants Program
Potato Breeding Research

FY 2013 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 25, 2013

U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

SPECIAL RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM, POTATO BREEDING RESEARCH

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.200, Grants for Agricultural Research, Special Research Grants.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **June 25, 2013 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six 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) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used 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)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight Division; Office of Grants and Financial Management; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail 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 Special Research Grants Program, Potato Breeding Research RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Special Research Grants Program, Potato Breeding Research (Potato Breeding Research) for fiscal year (FY) 2013 to facilitate or expand ongoing state-federal food and agricultural research programs. The approximate amount available for support of this program in FY 2013 is $1,238,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for Potato Breeding Research projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a Potato Breeding Research grant. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The authority for this program is contained in subsection (c)(1)(B) of section 2 of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act, Pub. L. No. 89-106, as amended (7 USC 450i(c)(1)(B)).

In accordance with the statutory authority, grants awarded under this program will be for the purpose of facilitating or expanding ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research programs that: (i) Promote excellence in research on a regional and national level; (ii) promote the development of regional research centers; (iii) promote the research partnership between the Department of Agriculture, colleges and universities, research foundations, and State Agricultural Experiment Stations for regional research efforts; and (iv) facilitate coordination and cooperation of research among States through regional research grants.

The statutory time limitation for awards issued under this authority is three years. No award may exceed this statutory time limitation.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of this grant program is to support potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) research programs that focus on varietal development and testing and potato varieties for commercial production. As used herein, varietal development and testing is research using classical breeding and/or biotechnological approaches to develop improved potato varieties. Aspects of evaluation, screening and testing must support variety development.

C. Program Area Description

Program Name: Potato Breeding Research
Program Code: AN
The Potato Breeding Research program funds projects that have a high potential to develop potato varieties with a high value to the potato industry. Priority will be given to projects demonstrating qualified staff, adequate facilities and equipment, a multi-institutional, multi-state approach, and evidence of stakeholder participation in developing project objectives and plans for implementation.

Examples of previously funded projects can be found on the NIFA Current Research Information System (CRIS) – Potato Breeding Research (http://cris.csrees.usda.gov/cgi-bin/starfinder/0?path=fastlink1.txt&id=anon&pass=&search=gc=an%20AND%20gy%3E2002&format=WEBTITLESG).

The Potato Breeding Research program directly aligns with the Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan (www.usda.gov/documents/usda-ree-science-action-plan.pdf) and specifically addresses the following goals:

Goal 1 – Local and Global Food Supply and Security, Subgoals 1A, 1B, and 1C (which focus on Crop Production, Health, Genetics, Genomics, Genetic Resources, and Biotechnology); and
Goal 2, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, Subgoal 2A. Responding to Climate Variability; and Goal 4. Nutrition and Childhood Obesity.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Approximately $1,238,000 is available to fund applications in FY 2013.

On March 26, 2013, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (Public Law 113-6) was signed into law. Title I of this bill provides appropriations for the majority of NIFA's discretionary grant programs, including this one, and continues Agency operations for the remainder of FY 2013.

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 Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method_of_payment.html.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2013 applications may be submitted to the Potato Breeding Research Program as one of the following two types of requests:

(1) New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the Potato Breeding Research Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

(2) Renewal application. This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications, and additionally must contain a Progress Report (see Project Narrative, Part IV). Renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

Each special research grant proposal submitted in FY 2013 shall request funding for a period not to exceed one year. FY 2013 awardees will need to recompete by submitting renewal applications for additional funding in the second and third years of the project. Renewals are subject to the availability of funding.

D. Scientific Peer Review

Subsection (c)(5) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 450i(c)(5)) requires applicants to conduct scientific peer review of their proposed

research activities in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary prior to the Secretary making a grant award under this authority. Regulations implementing this requirement are set forth in 7 CFR Part 3400.20. The regulations impose the following requirements:

(1) Scientific peer review: Prior to the award of a standard or continuation grant, any proposed research project shall have undergone a review arranged by the grantee. Such review must be a scientific peer review conducted in accordance with 7 CFR 3400.21. Scientific per review is an evaluation of a proposed project for technical quality and relevance to regional or national goals performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed research work. It must be credible, independent, and arranged by the grantee. Often this review is conducted by faculty peers. It may include USDA employees, but should not be conducted solely by USDA employees. Although evidence of a scientific peer review is not required until an award is ready to be finalized, peer reviews can improve the quality of a proposal. We thus encourage applicants to have proposals peer reviewed before submission.

(2) Notice of completion and retention of records: A notice of completion of the review shall be conveyed in writing to NIFA as part of the Other Attachments (Field 12. of the R&R Other Project Information Form). The written notice constitutes certification by the applicant that a review in compliance with these regulations has occurred. Applicants are not required to submit results of the review to NIFA; however, proper documentation of the review process and results should be retained by the applicant. The notice should state "In accordance with 7 CFR 3400.21 this memo is to certify that this project [title] has undergone a scientific peer review." If this notification is included within the application, a signature is not necessary. If, however, it is submitted to NIFA after the application is submitted through Grants.gov, the memo must be on the institution's letterhead and signed by the Authorized Representative.

E. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR) is critical for excellence, as well as public trust, in science and engineering. Consequently, education in RCR is considered essential in the preparation of future scientists. In accordance with sections 2, 3, and 8 of 7 CFR Part 3022, institutions that conduct extramural research funded by USDA must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct and are to maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the AOR assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Per award terms and conditions, grant recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies and procedures as well as documentation to support the conduct of the training.

Note that the training referred to herein shall be either on-campus or off-campus training. The general content of the ethics training, at a minimum, will emphasize three key areas of research ethics: authorship and plagiarism, data and research integration and reporting misconduct. Each institution will be responsible for developing its own training system, as schools will need flexibility to develop training tailored to their specific student needs. Grantees should consider the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program for RCR

(www.citiprogram.org/rcrpage.asp). Typically this RCR education addresses the topics of: Data Acquisition and Management - collection, accuracy, security, access; Authorship and Publication; Peer Review; Mentor/Trainee Responsibilities; Collaboration; Conflict of Interest; Research Misconduct; Human Subject Research; and Use of Animals in Research.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by State agricultural experiment stations, land-grant colleges and universities, research foundations established by land-grant colleges and universities, colleges and universities receiving funds under the Act of October 10, 1962, as amended (16 USC 582a et seq.), and accredited schools or colleges of veterinary medicine. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an 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

NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

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. **Applicants are advised to submit early to the Grants.gov system.**

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR)(also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If the organization is not prepared (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed **PRIOR** to submitting an application. It can take as much as two weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations the AR should go to **"Get Registered" on the Grants.gov left navigation bar (or go to http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov. A quick reference guide listing the steps is available as a 4-page PDF document at the following website: http://www.grants.gov/assets/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf.** 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

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp.

2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to http://www.grants.gov, click on "Apply for Grants" in the left-hand column, click on "**Step 1:** Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions," enter the funding opportunity number **USDA-NIFA-SRGP-004288** in the appropriate box and click "Download Package." From the search results, click "Download" to access the application package.

   Contained within the application package is the "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov." This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If assistance is needed to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms), **or submitting the application** then refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (http://www.grants.gov/). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

Grants.gov customer support
1-800-518-4726 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 7:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M. ET). Get help now!

Please have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov, to help expedite your inquiry:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of Agency You Are Applying To
- Specific Area of Concern

See http://grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp or http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Parts V and VI of the document entitled "A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov." This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order 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., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (i.e., 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. With documented prior approval, subsequent submissions of an application will be accepted until close of business on the closing date in the RFA.

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to "Convert Documents to PDF" on http://grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs.

For any questions related to the preparation of an application please review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable request for applications. 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, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm Eastern Time, excluding Federal holidays.

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.

2. SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of Potato Breeding Research. See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template at: www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/project_summary.doc

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed **18 pages** with 12 point font and line spacing not exceeding 6 lines per vertical inch including all figures and tables. This maximum page limit (18 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Proposals exceeding 18 pages in length will not be considered for awards and may not be resubmitted once the deadline has passed for the RFA.

The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

1. Summary of previous potato research: Provide a brief report giving evidence of previous outputs, outcomes, and impacts. For example:
    - Unique segregating populations;
    - Unique clones selected for advanced testing;
    - New genes accessed;
    - New varieties released, and year;
    - Adoption of new and previous varieties from this program;
    - Income added (or protected) for farmers growing these varieties;
    - New markets accessed;
    - Environmental benefits;
    - Other evidence of outputs, outcomes, and impact.

- Jobs created; and/or
- Contributions to rural prosperity

2. Introduction: **BRIEFLY** describe the regional and national importance of potatoes. A clear statement of the long-term goals and supporting objectives of the proposed activities should be included. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project should be included.

   In addition, this section should include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

   i. Specific current issues, challenges and opportunities and their importance.
   - Estimates of the magnitude of the issues.
   - Their relevance to stakeholders, including growers, processors, buyers, and consumers.
   - Their relevance to ongoing state-federal food and agricultural research.
   - What is the impact of this research on producers and other stakeholders?
   - Proposals should focus on a few major problems, or **CLEARLY** describe and justify the need to spread effort over multiple traits and issues.
   - When describing potato quality traits, state and describe:
     - What an ideal variety would be for this quality trait;
     - What is involved in breeding to improve the trait;
     - Existing progress toward the desired trait made to date; and
     - Why continued work is necessary.

   ii. Reasons for having the work performed at the proposing institution.

3. Objectives: Clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged statements of specific aims of the proposed effort must be included in all applications.

4. Methods: The procedures or methodology to be applied to the proposed effort should be explicitly stated. This section should include but not necessarily be limited to:

   i. A description of stakeholder involvement in problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation, including documentation of participation, or reference to documentation, where appropriate;

   ii. A description of the proposed project activities in the sequence in which they will be carried out;

   iii. Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and the rationale for their use in this project;

iv. Kinds of results (outputs, outcomes, and impacts) expected;

v. Means by which data will be analyzed or interpreted;

vi. Pitfalls that might be encountered;

vii. Limitations to proposed procedures; and

viii. Plans to commercialize the results, if within this project, or anticipated steps and outlook for commercialization, if beyond the scope of this project.

In proposals involving intellectual property not in the public domain, proposing organizations must indicate whether there is freedom to operate (FtO) and/or any obstacles that might be encountered. Indicate whether cooperators have discussed benefit of sharing expected products of the research.

5. Cooperation and Institutional Units Involved: Cooperative, multi-institutional and multi disciplinary applications are encouraged.

   i. Identify each institutional unit contributing to the project and designate the lead institution or institutional unit.
   ii. When appropriate, the project should be coordinated with the efforts of other state and/or national programs.
   iii. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each institutional partner of the project team. Include a realistic project management plan and timeline that will ensure efficient functioning of the multi-state, multi-institutional team.
   iv. Include brief descriptions of:
      - How the project will be governed,
      - How decisions will be made,
      - Expectations for each project member,
      - Short-, medium- and long-term metrics to be evaluated,
      - A mechanism whereby progress can be evaluated for accountability for federal funds, and
      - How the project will complement and/or link to existing programs or projects.
   v. Project Timetable: The application should outline all important phases as a function of time, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant funding period.

c. Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources. All facilities that are available for use or assignment to the project during the requested period of support should be reported and described briefly.

d. Field 11. Equipment. All items of major equipment or instrumentation available for use or assignment to the proposed project should be itemized. In addition, items of nonexpendable equipment needed to conduct and bring the project to a successful conclusion should be listed, including dollar amounts and, if funds are requested for their acquisition, justified.

e. Field 12. Other Attachments.

(1) Appendices to Project Narrative. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

(2) Collaborative Arrangements. If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultants or collaborators are known at the time of application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., signed letter of support) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. Letters of collaboration must be signed by the respective ARs for both the applicant and the collaborator. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application, such as rate of pay.

(3) Scientific Peer Review Certification Documentation. Notice that the scientific peer review has been completed should be included in the application (see Part II, D. item 2.)

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide includes information about the individuals for which a Senior/Key Person Profile must be completed, and details about the Biographical Sketch and the Current and Pending Support including a link to a suggested template for the Current and Pending Support.

5. R&R Personal Data – As noted in Part V, 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award.

6. R&R Budget
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

7. 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.

a. Field 2. Program to which you are applying. Enter the program code name (i.e., enter "**Potato Breeding Research**") and the program code (i.e., enter "**AN**").

b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

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 COB on **June 25, 2013** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Applicants who have problems with the submission of an application to Grants.gov are encouraged to 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.

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be sent using e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged 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 15 days of the established deadline, the AR should contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA to request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited in all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Pursuant to Section 1473 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended, 7 USC 3319, indirect costs or tuition remission are not allowable costs under section 2(c)(1)(B) projects, and no funds will be approved for this purpose. Further, costs that are a part of an institution's indirect cost pool (e.g., administrative or clerical salaries) may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable.

NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

The statutory time limitation for awards issued under this authority is three years. No award may exceed this statutory time limitation. Any costs being charged to this award must be incurred within the project period.

If a project is selected for funding, additional information may be requested from the applicant.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV, section 1.9 in the document entitled "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.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) 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; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

Relevance (20 points)

1. Relevance and importance of proposed research to specific problems or opportunities regarding the purpose of the grant program as described in Part I, A. and B.; (10 points)
2. Value of expected results for the potato industry in states beyond the states represented by the submitting institution and collaborating institutions. (10 points)

Quality (20 points)

1. Overall scientific and technical quality of the application; (10 points)
2. The specific approach proposed; (5 points)
3. Clarity of the proposal. (5 points)

Feasibility (40 points)

1. Performance record of the applicant with reference to the purpose of the grant program as described in Part I, A. and B.; (14 points)
2. Feasibility of attaining objectives; (12 points)
3. Adequacy of training, experience, disciplinary expertise, plant materials/genetic resources for

breeding, facilities, and equipment. (14 points)

Participation (20 points)

1. More than one state listed as recipient of funds; (5 points)
2. Evidence of cooperation or involvement of multiple institutions; (5 points)
3. Evidence of stakeholder participation, including growers, in developing project objectives; (5 points)
4. Plans to involve stakeholders in project implementation or monitoring. (5 points)

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 1801 Robert Fulton Drive, Suite 340, Reston, Virginia 20191. Phone: (888) 349-7715. Web site: www.hepinc.com.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

D. 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, as 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. NIFA will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which 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 awarding official of NIFA shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of NIFA as the effective date of the grant shall 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. It should be noted that 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 shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR), and the NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions at 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E.

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;

(2) Title of project;

(3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PD's chosen to direct and control approved activities;

(4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;

(5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;

(6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;

(7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;

(8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;

(9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

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 include, but are not limited to:

2 CFR Part 220 – Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (OMB Circular A-21).

2 CFR Part 225 – Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Cirulcar A-87).

2 CFR Part 230 – Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122).

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21, A-87, and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225 and 230), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224)), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3016 – USDA Implementation of Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR Part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—USDA Implementation of Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3022 —Research Institutions Conducting USDA-Funded Extramural Research; Research Misconduct.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—USDA procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

7 CFR 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to NIFA' s electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions. Details of annual and final technical reporting requirements also are included in the award terms and conditions.

It is expected that program outputs will conform to the purpose of the Potato Breeding Research grants program. The principal outputs will consist of varietal development and testing using classical methods, or, when appropriate, combinations of new and classical methods; and the development of new potato varieties.

When appropriate to the problems addressed, ancillary or supplemental outputs may include, but are not limited to, improved classical methods, or integrated classical and molecular/biotechnology, for the component steps in variety development and testing; or, improvements in aspects of efficient provision of desired new varieties to growers.

For informational purposes, the "Federal Financial Report," Form SF-425, consolidates into a single report the former Financial Status Report (SF-269 and SF-269A) and the Federal Cash Transactions Report (SF-272 and SF-272A). The NIFA Agency-specific Terms and Conditions include the requirement that Form SF-425 is due on an **annual basis no later than 90 days following the award's anniversary date *(i.e.*, one year following the month and day of which the project period begins and each year thereafter up until a final report is required). A final "Federal Financial Report," Form SF-425, is due 90 days after the expiration date of this award.**

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:
Dr. Ann Marie Thro
Title: National Program Leader
Institute of Food Production and Sustainability
Location: 3442 Waterfront Centre
Full Address and Directions
Phone: (202) 401-6702
Fax: (202) 401-1782
Email: athro@nifa.usda.gov.

Alternate contact:
Ms. Pushpa Kathir
Title: Program Specialist
Institute of Food Production and Sustainability
Location: 3424 Waterfront Centre
Full Address and Directions
Phone: (202) 401-5015
Fax: (202) 401 – 6488
Email: pkathir@nifa.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee 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.

2. Changes in Project Plans

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the NIFA Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by NIFA without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed any applicable statutory limit or expiring appropriation limitation. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the

ADO prior to instituting such changes, if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the 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.

E. Definitions

Please refer to 7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions, for applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.