

Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Education Competitive Grants Program (ANNH)

FY 2014 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Friday, March 7, 2014



U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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

ALASKA NATIVE-SERVING AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN-SERVING INSTITUTIONS EDUCATION COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.228.

DATES: Applications must be received electronically by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on March 7, 2014**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C. of this RFA). 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) 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 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 Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Education Competitive Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Education Competitive Grants Program (ANNH) for fiscal year (FY) 2014 to promote and strengthen the ability of Alaska Native-Serving Institutions and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs. NIFA is currently operating under temporary appropriations as part of the Continuing Resolution (CR) providing funds through January 15, 2014. Based on the current CR, NIFA anticipates the amount available for support of this program in FY 2014 is approximately \$3,000,000. Adjustments will be made to program allocations once the FY 2014 appropriations are finalized.

This notice identifies the objectives for ANNH projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an ANNH grant.

Table of Contents

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION 4
A. Legislative Authority and Background..... 4
B. Purpose and Priorities..... 4

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION 12
A. Available Funding 12
B. Types of Applications..... 12
C. Project Types 12
D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research 14

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION..... 16
A. Eligible Applicants 16
B. Cost Sharing or Matching 19

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION 20
A. Electronic Application Package 20
B. Content and Form of Application Submission 21
C. Submission Date and Time 25
D. Funding Restrictions 25
E. Other Submission Requirements 26

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS..... 27
A. General 27
B. Evaluation Criteria 27
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality 28
D. Organizational Management Information 28

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION..... 29
A. General 29
B. Award Notice..... 29
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements..... 30
D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements..... 31

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT 33

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION 34
A. Access to Review Information 34
B. Use of Funds; Changes 34
C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards..... 35
D. Regulatory Information..... 35
E. Definitions..... 35

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

This program is administered under the provisions of section 759 of Public Law 106-78 (7 U.S.C. 3242) which was amended and re-designated as section 1419B of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act (NARETPA) of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3156). As legislatively reauthorized in the Public Law 110-246, the purpose of this program continues to promote and strengthen the ability of eligible Alaska Native-Serving Institutions and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs within a broadly defined area of food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences. In FY 2014, the Secretary will make competitive grant awards to individual eligible institutions or consortia of eligible institutions in Alaska and in Hawaii, with funds awarded equally to each of the states of Alaska and Hawaii.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of this program is to promote and strengthen the ability of Alaska Native-Serving Institutions and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs. NIFA intends the Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Education Competitive Grants Program (ANNH) to address educational needs, as determined by each institution, within a broadly defined area of food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences.

In efforts to carry out education, applied research, and related community developments, the ANNH program aligns its purpose and priorities with recommendations from the following:

- (1) “New Biology for the 21st Century” societal challenges in food, environment, energy, and health. The four broad societal challenges are: (a) Generate food plants to adapt and grow sustainably in changing environments; (b) Understand and sustain ecosystem function and biodiversity in the face of rapid change; (c) Expand sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels; and, (d) Understand individual health.
- (2) 2008 Farm Bill Priority Areas: Plant health and production and plant products; Animal health and production and animal plants; Food safety, nutrition and health; Renewable energy, natural resources, and environment; Agriculture systems and technology; and, Agriculture economics and rural communities.
- (3) USDA Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan (http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_02-2012_2.pdf), and specifically addresses Goal 6 – Education and Science Literacy, by recruiting, cultivating, and developing the next generation of scientists, leaders, and highly-skilled workforce for food, agriculture, natural resources, forestry, environmental systems, and life sciences to out-educate our global competitors.
- (4) The 2009 National Academy of Sciences Report on Agricultural Education, *Transforming Agricultural Education for a Changing World*, recommends that academic institutions with

undergraduate programs in agriculture implement the following nine steps to better meet the needs of students, employers, and the broader society. For information on the full report, refer to http://dels.nas.edu/ag_education/report.shtml and click on recommendations. The list of recommendations follows:

- [Implement Strategic Planning](#)
- [Broaden Treatment of Agriculture in the Overall Curriculum](#)
- [Broaden the Student Experience](#)
- [Prepare Faculty to Teach Effectively](#)
- [Reward Exemplary Teaching](#)
- [Build Stronger Connections among Institutions](#)
- [Start Early K-12 Outreach](#)
- [Build Strategic Partnerships](#)
- [Focus Reviews of Undergraduate Programs in Agriculture](#)

Academic Programs Section of Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) Whitepaper, “Human Capacity Development: The Road to Global Competitiveness and Leadership in Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (FANRRS),” can be found at: <http://www.aplu.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=1639>.

Food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences are defined to include programs in basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, including activities relating to but not limited to the following: (1) Animal health, production, and well-being. (2) Plant health and production. (3) Animal and plant germplasm collection and preservation. (4) Aquaculture. (5) Food safety. (6) Soil and water conservation and improvement. (7) Forestry, horticulture, and range management. (8) Nutritional sciences and promotion. (9) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability. (10) Family and Consumer Sciences. (11) Rural human ecology. (12) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4-H clubs. (13) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis. (14) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture. (15) Agro-biotechnology related to agriculture. (16) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products. (See Part VIII, E. Definitions).

Priority will be given to those projects that: enhance educational equity for under-represented students; strengthen institutional educational capacities; prepare students for careers related to the food, agricultural, and natural resource systems of the United States; and maximize the development and use of resources to improve food, agricultural and human sciences teaching programs.

Grants shall be used:

- (1) To support the activities of consortia of Alaska Native-Serving or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions to enhance educational equity for under-represented students;

(2) To strengthen institutional education capacities, including libraries, curriculum, faculty, scientific instrumentation, instruction delivery systems, and student recruitment and retention, in order to respond to identified State, regional, national, or international educational needs in the food and agriculture sciences;

(3) To attract and support undergraduate and graduate students from under-represented groups in order to prepare them for careers related to the food, agricultural, and natural resource systems of the United States, beginning with the mentoring of students from K-12, and continuing with the provision of financial support for students through their attainment of a doctoral degree; and

(4) To facilitate cooperative initiatives between at least two or more Alaska Native-Serving or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, which may work in cooperation with one or more other entities including units of State government and private sector organizations, to maximize the development and use of resources, such as faculty, facilities, and equipment, to improve food and agricultural sciences teaching programs.

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications that will result in building linkages with other institutions (including other colleges and universities, units of State government, and private sector entities) having a significant, ongoing commitment to the food and agricultural sciences generally and to the specific Need Area(s) for which a grant is requested (see below). The goals of such joint initiatives should include maximizing the development and use of limited resources (including faculty, facilities, and equipment) by generating a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on a targeted Need Area(s); increasing cost-effectiveness through achieving economies of scale; strengthening the scope and quality of a project's impact; and promoting coalition building likely to transcend the project's lifetime and lead to future ventures.

Priority Need Area:

The FY 2014 ANNH grant opportunity should be aligned with NIFA priorities and encourages the applicant's consideration of the recommendations mentioned above: "New Biology for the 21st Century; 2008 Farm Bill Priority Areas; USDA REE Action Plan; and 2009 National Academy of Sciences Report, and APLU White Paper.

1. NIFA Priorities:

- Food Security and Hunger: NIFA supports new science to boost U.S. agricultural production, improve capacity to meet the growing food demand, and foster innovation in fighting hunger by addressing food security for vulnerable populations.
- Climate Change: NIFA-funded projects create the scientific information needed so producers can plan and make decisions to adapt to changing environments and sustain economic vitality and can take advantage of emerging economic opportunities offered of climate change mitigation technologies.
- Sustainable Energy: NIFA contributes to the President's goal of energy independence with a portfolio of grant programs to convert biomass to bio-fuels, design optimum biomass for bio-energy production, and produce value-added bio-based industrial products.
- Childhood Obesity: NIFA-supported programs ensure that nutritious foods are affordable and available and that individuals and families are able to make informed, science-based decisions about their health and well-being.

- Food Safety: NIFA food safety programs work to reduce the incidence of food-borne illness and provide a safer food supply by addressing and eliminating causes of microbial resistance to contaminants, education consumer and food safety professionals, and developing food processing technologies

These recommendations outline opportunities for NIFA to provide the essential components of improving agricultural education that would lead to a stronger food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences workforce as describe in the following strategic goals:

Strategic Goal 1: Increase supply of trained graduates in the Food and Agricultural Sciences and related sciences: Inspire, Insure Access, and Enhance Academic Capacity of Students from all groups in the United States to excel in the Agricultural and Natural Resources Sciences (K–12, Community College, and Higher Education Systems).

1. Advance Changes in Curriculum and Teaching.
2. Create AG*STEM Programs.
3. Establish a National Young Scholars Program.
4. Develop Youth Leadership programs.
5. Integrate Global Experiences.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance Human Capacity Development: Integrate Research and Extension Engagement into the Undergraduate Experience.

1. Involve Undergraduates in Authentic Research.
2. Strengthen Service Learning through Integration with Extension.
3. Integrate Distance Learning and extension.

Strategic Goal 3: Renew the Academy: Address the Needs for Doctoral-level Professionals in the Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources and Human Sciences.

1. Develop Initiatives to Renew the Academy.
2. Design and Implement Programs to Prepare Future Faculty.
3. Achieve Broader Impacts through Meaningful Promotion, Review and Implementation of Integrated Programs. A paradigm shift is required in the attitudes of program leaders, academic investigators and panel reviewers if true integration of education, research and extension is to be achieved.

Strategic Goal 4: Expand Learning and Engagement: Leverage Information, Communications and Instructional Technology.

1. Develop New Technologies for Learning.
2. Add Capacity to Distance Education Consortia.
3. Increase Funding for Acquisition of New Technology.

The ANNH grants program is soliciting applications that will respond to specific Educational Need Areas and Applied Studies in Discipline and Subject Matter Areas within the mission of USDA.

Eligible institutions may, within the Educational Need and/or Applied Project Areas targeted for support, propose projects in any Discipline(s) or subject matter area(s) of the food and agricultural sciences as noted below:

General Food and Agricultural Sciences; Agribusiness Management and Marketing (includes Agricultural Economics); Agricultural/Biological Engineering; Agricultural Social Sciences (includes Agricultural Education, Agricultural Communications, and Rural Sociology); Animal Sciences; Aquaculture; Conservation and Renewable Energy and Natural Resources (includes Forestry and Ecology/Wetlands); Entomology, Animal and Plant; Environmental Sciences/Management; Food Science/Technology and Manufacturing (including Food Safety); Human Nutrition; Human Sciences/Family and Consumer Sciences (excludes Human Nutrition); International Education/Research (enhancement of U.S. programs); Plant Sciences and Horticulture (including Turf Sciences); Related Biological Sciences (includes General/Basic Biotechnology, Biochemistry, and Microbiology); Soil Sciences; Veterinary Medicine/Science; Water Science/Water Resources; (including Water Quality and Watershed Management); and "other" relevant and subject matter areas. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines that support the disciplines listed above are encouraged.

A proposed project may address a single Need Area or multiple Need Areas, may focus on one or multiple levels of study, and may focus on a single discipline or subject matter area or multiple disciplines or subject matter areas, in any combination.

ANNH encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through the Cooperative Extension System's eXtension Initiative. Funds may be used to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (COPs) or form new COPs that focus on **Stakeholder /Land Grant Institutions Partnership: Integrated Research, Extension and Education**. Projects must align with the eXtension vision, mission, and values. A letter of acknowledgement from eXtension is required, and a letter of support may be required from one or more of the Communities of Practice.

For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057>.

1. Educational Need Areas

ANNH projects should focus on one or more of the Need Areas listed below. Please note that at least one of these Need Areas must be indicated on the Project Summary (See Part IV, B.3). Need Areas for FY 2014 are defined below:

a. Curricula Design, Materials Development, and Library Resources.

The purpose of this initiative is: to promote the development of courses of study and degree programs, new and improved curricula, and instructional materials and technology; to promote the acquisition of library resources including books and journals relating to the food and agricultural sciences; and to stimulate the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects, new research on teaching and learning theory, and new applications of knowledge. The overall objective is to increase the quality of, and continuously renew, the academic programs of Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions in the food and agricultural sciences.

b. Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching.

The purpose of this initiative is to advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications in a field; expanding competence in innovative technologies and new methods of instruction delivery; developing new skills in a field of science or education including student advising skills; or pursuing graduate-level study in a field related to the food and agricultural sciences.

Each faculty recipient of support for developmental activities must be an “eligible participant” as defined in Part VIII, E. Definitions

c. Instruction Delivery Systems.

The purpose of this initiative is to encourage the use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: incorporating alternative instructional methodologies that respond to differences in student learning styles; inter-institutional collaborations that deliver instruction in ways that maximize program quality and reduce unnecessary duplication; and consideration and implementation of innovative instructional techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems in response to advances in knowledge and technology.

d. Scientific Instrumentation for Teaching and Research.

The purpose of this initiative is to provide students and faculty in science-oriented courses with suitable, up-to-date equipment in order to involve them in work central to scientific understanding and progress. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional, laboratory, classroom, and research scientific equipment to help assure the achievement and maintenance of outstanding food and agricultural sciences education programs, upgrading existing equipment, or replacing non-functional or clearly obsolete equipment.

e. Student Experiential Learning.

The purpose of this initiative is to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs that provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: preparing future graduates to advance knowledge and technology, enhancing quality of life, conserve resources, and addressing community and economic development issues. Projects should focus on advancing student decision-making and communication skills, and improving real-life technological expertise. Activities may include, but are not limited to, internships, practicum experiences, study abroad opportunities, and participation with faculty on applied research and related community development projects.

f. Student Recruitment, Retention, and Educational Equity (including the provision of student financial assistance).

The purpose of this initiative is to enhance educational equity for under-represented students, and to strengthen student recruitment and retention programs in order to promote the future strength of the Nation's scientific, professional, and technical work force in the food and agricultural sciences. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: initiating new projects or supplementing current efforts to attract increased numbers of students from under-represented groups to attend college in order to prepare them for careers as food and agricultural scientists, professionals, and technicians; promoting opportunities for students from under-represented groups, their families, and communities to engage in a robust exchange of ideas on more effective use of the full breadth of the Nation's intellectual resources; agricultural and science literacy programs at the high school level to attract students to college and careers in the food and agricultural sciences; mentoring programs and other initiatives for student retention; and the provision of student financial support to attend college.

Each student recipient of monetary support for education costs or developmental purposes must be enrolled at an eligible institution and meet the requirement of an "eligible participant" as defined in Part VIII, E., Definitions.

2. Applied Projects

In addition to the Educational Need Areas, applications may choose to develop studies that have relevancy and application within the communities that these institutions serve.

a. Applied Studies in the Food and Agricultural Sciences.

The purpose of this initiative is to apply the body of knowledge in those natural and social sciences that comprise the food and agricultural sciences to address real-world problems, including applied research activities focusing on community and economic development issues related to food, nutrition, conservation, and renewable natural resources. Illustrative examples include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Conduct plant or animal breeding programs to develop better crops, forests, or livestock (e.g., more disease resistant, more productive, yielding higher quality products);
- (ii) Conceive, design, and evaluate new bio-processing techniques for eliminating undesirable constituents from or adding desirable ones to food products;
- (iii) Propose and evaluate ways to enhance utilization of the capabilities and resources of ANNH institutions to promote rural development (e.g., exploitation of new technologies by small rural businesses);
- (iv) Identify control factors influencing consumer demand for agricultural products;
- (v) Analyze social, economic, and physiological aspects of nutrition, housing, and life-style choices, and of community strategies for meeting the changing needs of different population groups; and
- (vi) Study other identified State, regional, community, national and global problems such as human nutrition, sustainable agriculture, bio-energy, climate change, food safety, food security,

biotechnology, agribusiness management and marketing, and aquaculture (see Part I. B on areas of priorities).

b. Applied Research Support Systems.

The purpose of this initiative is to establish centralized support systems to meet State, regional, or community needs, or serve clientele that cannot otherwise afford or do not have ready access to the support in question, or to provide such support more economically thereby freeing up resources for other applied research uses. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Storage, maintenance, characterization, evaluation, and enhancement of germplasm for use by animal and plant breeders (including those using the techniques of biotechnology);
- (ii) Computerized data banks of important scientific information (e.g., epidemiological, demographic, nutrition, weather, economic, crop yields, animal migration patterns); and
- (iii) Expert service centers for sophisticated and highly specialized methodologies (e.g., evaluation of nutritional quality of foods, toxicology, taxonomic identifications, consumer preferences and demographics).

c. Technology-based Information Delivery Systems.

The purpose of this initiative is to promote innovations and improvements in the delivery of benefits of food and agricultural sciences to producers and consumers, particularly those who are currently disproportionately low in receipt of such benefits. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- (i) Computer-based decision support systems to assist small-scale farmers, ranchers, headers, or fishermen to take advantage of relevant technologies, programs, policies, etc.; and
- (ii) Efficacious delivery systems for nutrition information or for resource management assistance for low-income families and individuals.

d. Other Applied Research and Community Development Applications.

The purpose of this initiative is to encourage other creative projects, outside the areas previously outlined, that are designed to provide needed enhancement to the capacity of ANNH institutions to conduct applied research and related community development projects.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

NIFA is currently operating under temporary appropriations as part of the Continuing Resolution (CR) providing funds through January 15, 2014. Based on the current CR, NIFA anticipates the amount available for support of this program in FY 2014 will be approximately \$3,000,000.

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

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 2014, applications may be submitted to the ANNH Program as one of the following types of requests:

(1) New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the ANNH 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.

(3) Resubmitted application. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the ANNH Program but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). Resubmitted 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

1. Regular Grant

An eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system may submit a Regular 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.

2. Consortium Grant

To facilitate inter-institutional cooperation and collaborative initiatives, two or more eligible, individual institutions, independent branch campuses, or branch institutions of a State system within a State may form a consortium, or use an existing consortium of which they are members, and submit a Consortium Grant application under a consortium agreement. In such cases, one institution or fiscal agent is to be designated as the “lead institution”. The designated lead institution, fiscal agent, and PD, will receive the award on behalf of all the consortium members, will be responsible for managing the grant, and may allocate awarded funds among the consortia members. Eligible consortium members may be sub-grantees of the primary award. Other entities not eligible to receive an award directly from NIFA under this program may also participate in fulfilling grant objectives and receive a sub-grant via the designated lead institution.

A Consortium Grant application must contain a separate plan of work and a separate budget for each consortium member receiving funds as a sub-grantee, as well as an overall project plan of work and overall budget from the lead institution. Sub-grantees may not normally receive less than 10 percent of total grant funds. Applications proposing that sub-grantees receive less than 10 percent of total grant funds must be fully justified. Only in exceptional instances will NIFA approve involvement by sub-grantees at a lower level.

Sub-grantee arrangements by the lead institution with consortium members and others must be approved in advance by NIFA. The cumulative amounts of any such arrangements may not be for more than 70 percent of total grant funds.

3. Project Duration

A project application may request funding for a project period from 12 months to 36 months duration (from one to three years). Statutory limit on awards is 5 years.

4. Number and Size of Grant Awards

The number of grants awarded in FY 2014 will depend on the number of applications recommended for funding in response to this notice.

NIFA estimates that awards for Regular Grant applications will be in the range of \$150,000 to \$450,000 each. Budget forms submitted with grant applications should reflect this estimate.

NIFA estimates that awards for Consortium Grant applications will be in the range of \$300,000 to \$1,500,000. Note that the amount of grant funds going to eligible consortium members as sub-grantees does **NOT** have to be the same for each sub-grantee; however, a sub-grantee will not normally receive less than 10 percent and the applicant institution submitting an application must retain at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the awarded funds. Requests for deviations from these restrictions must be fully justified for review and approval by the panel of reviewers and NIFA before a final decision is made on the application. Such approval will be made only under the most exceptional circumstances.

Note that actual amounts awarded by NIFA under the ANNH grants program may differ from the amounts requested in an application submitted to the program, and that revised budgets and revised plans of work may be required by NIFA before an award is made.

5. Proposal Submission Limitations

Each eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, and branch institution of a State system may submit, or be a party to, a maximum of two applications for funding. An institution (or its fiscal agent) may submit one application as an individual institution (see Part II, C.1., Regular Grant) and also may be a party to one other application as part of a consortium arrangement (see Part II, C.2., Consortium Grant). Institutions may not apply as part of more than one consortium arrangement.

6. Grant Limitations per Institution

For the FY 2014 program, each eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, and branch institution of a State system may receive, or be a party to, a maximum of two grant awards – one Regular Grant and one Consortium Grant – under the ANNH program. This ceiling includes sub-grant awards made under a consortium arrangement (i.e., an institution may participate as the lead institution or as a sub-grantee on a Consortium Grant, and also receive one Regular Grant on its own). USDA may fund an institution simultaneously under both applications. Institutions that received a grant under this program in a prior year are still eligible to receive a grant this year.

7. Funding Limitations per Institution

For FY 2014, there are no limits on the total funds that may be awarded to any one institution. However, applicants should take note of the proposal submission limitations (see C. 5.) and anticipated range of awards (see C.4.)

D. 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, we consider education in RCR essential to the preparation of future scientists. In accordance with sections 2, 3, and 8 of 7 CFR Part 3022, 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. Per award terms and conditions, grant recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and 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 will, at a minimum, 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 (<https://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

1. Individual Institutions

Individual public or private, nonprofit Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions of higher education that meet the definitions of Alaska Native-Serving Institution or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution established in Title III, Part A of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1059d.) are eligible institutions under this program.

2. Branch Institutions of a State System

For the purposes of this program, the individual branches of a State university system or public system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree granting institutions are treated as separate, individual institutions eligible to apply for and receive awards, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of Alaska Native-Serving Institution or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution as specified above.

3. Independent Branch Campuses

Independent branch campuses of individual institutions may apply for and receive grant awards under this program, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of Alaska Native-Serving Institution or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution as specified above. An “independent branch campus” means a unit of a 2-year or 4-year institution of higher education that is geographically apart from the main campus, is permanent in nature, offers courses for credit and programs leading to an associate or bachelor’s degree, and is autonomous to the extent that it has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization and its own budgetary and hiring authority.

4. Consortium Arrangements

Two or more eligible, individual institutions, independent branch campuses, or branch institutions of a State system may form a consortium to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs in the food and agricultural sciences as allowed under this program. In addition to the individual eligible institutions (or independent branch campuses, etc.), such a consortium also may include units of State government and private sector entities. A consortium established for such purposes may apply for and receive a consortium grant under the ANNH grants program.

An existing consortium consisting of at least two or more eligible, individual institutions, independent branch campuses, or branch institutions of a State system, which demonstrates its ability to carry out allowed activities and its commitment to the goals of the ANNH grants program, also may apply for and receive a Consortium Grant under the ANNH grants program. Such a consortium also may include units of State government and private sector entities.

5. Demonstration or Certification of Eligibility

At the time of application, each primary applicant will be required to demonstrate or certify that it is an eligible institution under the ANNH program. If the applicant is a new or existing consortium, each member of the consortium must demonstrate or certify that they are eligible, individual institutions, independent branch campuses, or branch institutions of a State system as defined in paragraphs 1-3 above.

If an institution has received a “Designation as an Eligible Institution” letter for FY 2014 funding under the Title III, Part A, Alaska Native-Serving Institutions Program or the Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions Program from the U.S. Department of Education, the institution shall submit a copy of the letter along with its application to satisfy the demonstration of eligibility requirement.

If an institution currently has a Title III, Part A grant from the U.S. Department of Education that does not end prior to September 30, 2014, the institution shall submit a copy of the “Notice of Award” letter for that grant along with its application to satisfy the demonstration of eligibility requirement.

Otherwise, an institution must submit a letter, signed by the institution’s Authorized Representative (AR) certifying that it meets the requirements of an Alaska Native-Serving Institution or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution as defined in paragraph 1 above. The AR must certify that:

- a. The institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus, is legally authorized by the State in which it is located to provide an educational program for which it awards an associate’s or bachelor’s degree, or that it is a junior or community college;
- b. The institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus, is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered, or making reasonable progress toward such accreditation;
- c. At least 50 percent of enrolled degree students are receiving need-based assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, or that a substantial percentage of students are receiving Pell Grants in comparison with the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants at all similar institutions (institution of higher education, or junior or community college);
- d. Unless waived by the Secretary of Education, the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student are low in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent student at institutions that offer similar instruction; and
- e. For an Alaska Native-Serving Institution, at the time of application, it has an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 20 percent Alaska Native students (where the term “Alaska Native” has the meaning given the term in section 7306 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [20 U.S.C. 7546]); or
- f. For a Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution, at the time of application, it has an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 10 percent Native Hawaiian students (where the term

“Native Hawaiian” has the meaning given the term in section 7207 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [20 U.S.C. 7517]).

Eligibility documentation must be submitted with the application. See Part III, A5.

6. Fiscal Agent

If an institution cannot accept Federal funds directly, it must submit a letter stating that it will accept the award, but that funds must be administered through a fiscal agent. This agent must be identified in the letter from the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by a representative of the fiscal agent organization. The letter should include the fiscal agent’s point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. Both the fiscal agent and the applicant institution must submit complete management information (see Part V, D.). Nevertheless, the legal recipient of the award must be an eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system, or a consortium of eligible institutions. (Submission of fiscal agent information (above) is not requested now, but will be required, before an award is made).

Please note that consortia may designate fiscal agents for the members of the consortia and allocate funds among the consortia members.

Examples of fiscal agent arrangements include, but are not limited to, the following scenarios:

- a. A State university system or a public system of higher education may apply on behalf of an eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution in its State. In such cases, the State system will act as fiscal agent for the eligible institution under a Regular Grant award to advance the purposes of the ANNH grants program.
- b. A research foundation or other, similar foundation established and maintained by an eligible, individual institution to facilitate the application and management of externally funded grant awards may apply on behalf of its eligible, parent institution. In such cases, the foundation will act as fiscal agent for the eligible, individual institution under a Regular Grant award to advance the purposes of the ANNH grants program.
- c. A State university system or a public system of higher education may apply on behalf of two or more eligible, individual institutions, independent branch campuses, or branch institutions in its State under a consortium arrangement. In such cases, the State system will act as fiscal agent for the eligible institutions under a Consortium Grant award to advance the purposes of the ANNH grants program.
- d. A research foundation, or other similar foundation, established and maintained by an eligible, individual institution to facilitate the application and management of externally-funded grant awards, may apply on behalf of its parent institution and at least one additional eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system under a consortium arrangement. In such cases, the foundation will act as fiscal agent for the eligible institutions under a Consortium Grant award to advance the purposes of the ANNH grants program.

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 shall 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. 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 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 not (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 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-AHSI-004422** 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.” 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 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 you are applying to
- Specific area of concern

See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

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 close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

Grants.gov provides online tools to assist if you do not own PDF-generating software. You will find PDF conversion software at <http://test.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/pdf-conversion-software.html>.

For any questions related to the preparation of an application, 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 am – 5 pm ET, 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. 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. Briefly summarize the project objectives and include all measurable project outcomes. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of ANNH, and state which Need Areas and subject Disciplines the project addresses (See Part V.4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

Include the following underlined text along with your responses:

- List the Project Title;
- List the Project Director (and any) Co-Project Director(s) (include institutional affiliation for each);
- List your project's Degree Level: (i.e. associates of science, Bachelors of Science, masters of science, etc.);
- List your project's Priority Need Area: (Part I, B.);
- List your project's Educational Need and/or Applied Project Area: (Part I, B.1., B.2.);
- List your project's primary Discipline/Subject Matter: (the academic major where the project's primary focus will occur; e.g., forestry, animal sciences, food safety, human nutrition, etc.) (see Part I, B.);
- Consortium Grant: Yes or No? (Do you plan to share Federal grant funds with other partners? See 'Definitions', Part VIII. E.);
- Partners: If Consortium Grant, list all partner institutions/organizations that will share grant funding (Note: Each Partner so identified needs to have their budget information submitted on a separate Subaward Budget Attachment). If not a Consortium Grant, enter: 'N.A.'; and
- Total Funds Requested: (List total Federal funds requested for this application. If this project is a Consortium Grant, also list each partner's total funds requested next to the institution's name);
- Summary Text - Provide a very concise (approx. 250 word) summary of your project to include:
 - Purpose: What is the major problem your project will address?
 - Audience: Who are the intended beneficiaries? Who will be impacted?
 - Products: What will be produced?
 - Outcome/Impact: What is the intended result (consequence) of your project? Describe the primary benefits to your audience. Note: outcomes/impacts should be measurable, and should be included in your project's assessment/evaluation plan to demonstrate you will assess whether or not these benefits were achieved (See explanation of terms in Part VIII, E.).

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

NOTE: The Project Narrative for a Regular Grant application shall not exceed 20 double-spaced pages of written text and up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (25 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition.

The Project Narrative for a Consortium Grant application must contain an overall plan of work limited to 10 double-spaced pages of written text for the lead institution. A Project Narrative, limited to 10 double-spaced pages for each consortium member receiving funds as a sub-grantee should also be submitted. Up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables are allowed for each consortium member receiving funds (lead institution and sub-grantees).

The Project Narrative for both a Regular Grant and a Consortium Grant (required for both the lead institution and consortium institutional partners) must include all of the following:

- (1) A general statement of the **institution's long-range goals** and how the proposed project supports those goals including statements on: the institution's commitment to the project; **plans for continuation or expansion** of the project or program beyond the current level and period of support being requested; and, institutional resources or support available to carry out the project and a statement regarding their adequacy;
- (2) A statement detailing the **educational, applied research, and/or related community development needs** the project will address;
- (3) Clear, concise, complete **objectives** of the proposed project;
- (4) A **justification** for the project explaining how the proposed project will help the institution enhance its academic programs, enhance educational equity for under-represented students, and promote and strengthen its abilities to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs in the food and agricultural sciences as outlined in this notice;
- (5) A **detailed plan of operation** giving an explanation of the methodologies and procedures that will be used to achieve the project objectives;
- (6) A **description of the personnel** who will conduct the project, including an outline of who will be responsible for each activity;
- (7) A detailed **timeline** showing the schedule for conducting the project;
- (8) **Criteria and procedures to be used for tracking the progress and accomplishments** of the project, including any data and methodologies that will be used to analyze the extent to which project objectives were met;
- (9) A **list of expected products and outcomes**, including partnerships and any plans for continuing the project beyond the period of USDA support; and
- (10) **Plans for disseminating anticipated products and outcomes** resulting from the project including publications, presentations, compact diskettes, web pages, workshops, etc.

c. Field 12 Other Attachments.

(1) Documentation on Certification of Eligibility, e.g. “Designation as an Eligible Institution”, “Notice of Award Letter” or AR certification that organization is eligible. Part III, A.5., Demonstration or Certification of Eligibility requires each primary applicant to demonstrate or certify that it is an eligible institution under the ANNH program (see Part III, A.5.)

(2) Response to Previous Review (One-page limit). Part II, B., Types of Applications identifies the type of application(s) that may be submitted in response to this request for applications. For resubmitted applications, PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page titled "RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW". If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.

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. This section of the Guide includes information about the people who require a Senior/Key Person Profile, 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.

(a) Budgets for each project year do NOT have to be the same from year to year. However, detailed budget information (budget and narrative) must be submitted for each year of the proposed project and, in the case of a Consortium Grant application, yearly budgets and narratives must be supplied for each institution in accordance with the instructions.

(b) During the tenure of a grant, PDs must attend at least one National Project Directors’ meeting, if offered, in Washington, DC, or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, future directions for education reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results of the projects. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in the application’s budget under travel expenses.

7. R&R Sub-award Budget Attachment (Only required if submitting a Collaboration Project Proposal or sub-awarding to another organization) All sub-awards’ budgets must be included in the R&R Sub-award Budget Attachment and a Budget Justification which includes an explanation for each budget item for each year.

8. 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., “Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Inst.”) and the program code (i.e., “RD”).

b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest. A conflict of interest list is required under this program. See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

C. Submission Date and Time

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 **March 7, 2014** (5 p.m. Eastern Time). 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, 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 a confirmation message from NIFA 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 considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Section 718 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (Pub. L. 113-6) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Similar language may be included in the FY 2014 appropriation, therefore, when preparing budgets, you should limit your request for the recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of your institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

If your institution does not have, or cannot obtain, a negotiated rate, you must calculate an indirect cost rate in order to request indirect costs. You should calculate an indirect cost rate based on actual costs for the entire organization from the most recently completed accounting year. If no prior cost history exists, you should use budgeted costs for the entire organization. You should follow the example(s) found at: http://nifa.usda.gov/business/indirect_cost_process.html for information regarding this process. You may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be written in this space.

Grant funds may not be used for endowment investing.

E. Other Submission Requirements

You 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

We evaluate each application in a 2-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, a review panel will technically evaluate applications that meet these requirements.

We select reviewers based upon their 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, and 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

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Potential for Advancing Education and/or Applied Research – 35 Points

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences education, applied research, and related community development by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals, identification of the problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, the degree to which it builds institutional capacity, is innovative, advances educational equity, has a multidisciplinary focus and adds to the current knowledge in the area.

2. Proposed Approach – 30 Points

This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results (including measurable outcomes), evaluation plans, dissemination plans, and partnerships and collaborative efforts. Emphasis is placed on the quality, innovation, and creativity of educational and/or research support provided to the applicant institution through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives.

3. Key Personnel – 20 Points

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications/expertise of the key persons who will carry out the project.

4. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness – 15 Points

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately 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, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on targeted areas.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, we take extreme care 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: <http://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. 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 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 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 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 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. 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 (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR), and 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 which 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 PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the NIFA;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time NIFA intends to support the project without requiring re-competition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of financial assistance approved for the award;
- (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 Circular 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 Federal Assistance Programs-- General Award 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

Project Director's Meeting

During the tenure of a grant, PDs must attend at least one National Project Directors' meeting, if offered, in Washington, DC, or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, future directions for education reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results of the projects. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in the application's budget under travel expenses.

Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual 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.

Reporting Requirements

Annual project reports (accomplishments and final technical) must contain data to document the outputs and outcomes and will need to be collected by the grantee. A specific format for these reports will be provided on an annual basis by NIFA. Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual summary reports to NIFA's new singular grant and formula project reporting web-based REEport 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.

Approximately 1-2 months before the annual accomplishment report/final technical report is due, program staff will send out a list of suggested output and outcome measures that PDs can report on each year.

Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the terms and conditions of the award (see Part VI, B.9. for a link to view the NIFA award terms and conditions).

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Dr. Saleia Afele-Faamuli, National Program Leader; Institute of Youth, Family and Community Division of Community and Education; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; STOP 2251 Washington, DC 20250-2251; Telephone: (202) 720-0384; Fax: (202) 720-4924; E-mail: sfaamuli@nifa.usda.gov.

Administrative/Business Contacts –

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PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

We will send copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments 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 Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all changes in approved goals or objectives prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests be approved for changes that are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel, prior to effecting such changes.

d. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all 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, prior to instituting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) 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. The terms and conditions of award include information about no-cost extensions of the award and when ADO's prior approval is necessary.

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. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. 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 Grant Programs-- General Grant Administrative Provisions](#), for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

Alaska Native means a citizen of the United States who is a person of one-fourth degree or more Alaska Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut blood, or combination thereof. It also includes any citizen of the United States who is regarded as an Alaska Native by the Native village or Native group and whose father or mother is (or, if deceased, was) regarded as Native by any village or group.

Alaska Native-Serving Institution or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution means an institution of higher education where:

- (1) the institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus, is legally authorized by the State in which it is located to provide an educational program for which it awards an associate's or bachelor's degree, or where it is a junior or community college;
- (2) the institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus, is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered, or making reasonable progress toward such accreditation;
- (3) at least 50 percent of enrolled degree students are receiving need-based assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, or where a substantial percentage of students are receiving Pell Grants in comparison with the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants at all similar institutions (institution of higher education, or junior or community college);

(4) unless waived by the Secretary of Education, the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student are low in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent student at institutions that offer similar instruction; and

(5) for an Alaska Native-Serving Institution, at the time of application, it has an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 20 percent Alaska Native students (where the term “Alaska Native” has the meaning given the term in this solicitation as described below, or in section 7306 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [20 U.S.C. 7546]); or

(6) for a Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution, at the time of application, it has an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 10 percent Native Hawaiian students (where the term “Native Hawaiian” has the meaning given the term in this solicitation as described below, or in section 7207 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 [20 U.S.C. 7517]).

Consortium of Alaska Native-Serving or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions means two or more Alaska Native-serving or Native Hawaiian-serving institutions that have entered into a cooperative arrangement for the purpose of carrying out a common objective, and which demonstrates its ability to carry out allowed activities and its commitment to the goals of this grants program. The term also applies to a public or private nonprofit agency, organization, or institution designated or created by two or more Alaska Native-serving or Native Hawaiian-serving institutions for the purpose of carrying out a common objective on the group’s behalf, and which demonstrates its ability to carry out allowed activities and its commitment to the goals of this grants program.

Consortium project application means an application for a project: (1) which will involve a consortium of at least two or more Alaska Native-Serving or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, which may work in cooperation with one or more other entities including units of State government and private sector organizations; and (2) where the applicant institution and each cooperating entity receiving grant funds will assume a significant role in the conduct of the proposed project. To demonstrate substantial involvement with the project, the applicant consortium institution submitting an application must retain at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the awarded funds, and no eligible ANNH institution receiving funds as a sub-grantee may receive less than 10 percent of awarded funds. Only the consortium members receiving funds as eligible sub-grantees must meet the definition of an Alaska Native-Serving or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution as specified in this section; other institution(s) participating in a consortium project application under subcontracts are not required to meet the definition of an Alaska Native-Serving or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution.

Educational and general expenditures means the total amount expended by an institution for instruction, research, public service, academic support (including library expenditures), student services, institutional support, scholarships and fellowships, operation and maintenance expenditures for the physical plant, and any mandatory transfers that the institution is required to pay by law.

Eligible institution means individual public or private, nonprofit Alaska Native-serving and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions as defined in this section. Institutions of higher education that meet the definitions of Alaska Native-Serving Institution or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution established in Title III, Part A of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. section

1059d.) are eligible institutions under this program. The term eligible institution also applies to any branch of any institution of higher education that by itself satisfies the requirements contained in the definition of an Alaska-Native-serving or Native Hawaiian-serving institution, including:

- (1) the individual branches of a State university system or public system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree granting institutions, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of Alaska Native-Serving Institution or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution;
- (2) independent branch campuses of individual institutions, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of Alaska Native-Serving Institution or Native Hawaiian-Serving Institution as specified above; or
- (3) a consortium of two or more eligible, individual institutions.

Eligible participant means an individual who is a citizen or national of the U.S. as defined in this section.

Enrollment of needy students means an enrollment at an institution with respect to which:

- (1) at least 50 percent of the degree students so enrolled are receiving need-based assistance under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 et seq.) in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made (other than loans for which an interest subsidy is paid); or
- (2) a substantial percentage of the students so enrolled are receiving Federal Pell Grants in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which determination is made, compared to the percentage of students receiving Federal Pell Grants at all such institutions in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made.

Full-time equivalent students means the sum of the number of students enrolled full time at an institution, plus the full-time equivalent of the number of students enrolled part time (determined on the basis of the quotient of the sum of the credit hours of all part-time students divided by 12) at such institution.

Independent branch campus means a unit of a 2-year or 4-year institution of higher education that is geographically apart from the main campus, is permanent in nature, offers courses for credit and programs leading to an associate or bachelor's degree, and is autonomous to the extent that it has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization and its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Institution of higher education means an educational institution in any State that:

- (1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing a secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- (3) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;

(4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and

(5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary of Education has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

Junior or community college means an institution of higher education that:

(1) Admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located and who have the ability to benefit from the training offered by the institution;

(2) Does not provide an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree (or an equivalent degree); and

(3) Provides an educational program of not less than 2 years in duration that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; or offers a 2-year program in engineering, mathematics, or the physical or biological sciences, designed to prepare a student to work as a technician or at the semiprofessional level in engineering, scientific, or other technological fields requiring the understanding and application of basic engineering, scientific, or mathematical principles of knowledge.

Low-income individual means an individual from a family whose taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census.

Native Hawaiian means any individual who is a citizen of the United States; and is a descendant of the aboriginal people, who prior to 1778, occupied and exercised sovereignty in the area that now comprises the State of Hawaii, as evidenced by genealogical records, Kapuna (elders) or Kama'aina (long-term community residents) verification, or certified birth records.

Need Area means the specific area(s) of educational, applied research, or community development activities identified in the solicitation for applications and addressed by the applicant's application. Need Areas are derived from statutory language authorizing the grants program and specific Need Areas are targeted for funding support in the solicitation for applications.

Outcomes means specific, measurable project results and benefits that, when assessed and reported; indicate the project's plan of operation has been achieved.

Measurable outcomes include:

Results are intended or unintended consequences of the project, e.g., "...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours";

Products may be actual items or services acquired with funds, e.g., "...mechanisms and content to transition existing course(s) or elements of course(s) for Web-based access" or "created new and innovative prevention and intervention initiatives"; and

Impacts are a measure of the results by comparing what might have happened in the absence of the funded project.

Plan of work means a detailed, step-by-step description of how the applicant intends to accomplish the project's objectives. At a minimum, the Plan of Work should include a time line of major activities to be undertaken, descriptions of protocols and procedures to be followed, an explanation of how resources will be acquired and used, and an outline of the qualifications and responsibilities of all key project personnel.