

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

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FY 2014 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 12, 2014



U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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

BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under **10.311**.

DATES: Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on June 12, 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 6 months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks your comments about this RFA. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we'll use them to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice to: Policy 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 Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) for fiscal year (FY) 2014 to support the development of educational outreach curricula, workshops, educational teams, training, and technical assistance programs to assist beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States and its territories with entering, establishing, building and managing successful farm and ranch enterprises. This program will also provide a cooperative agreement to an online clearinghouse to make curricula, training materials and programs available to beginning farmers and ranchers and to provide associated support to BFRDP-funded projects and the overall BFRDP program.

Pursuant to H.R. 3547, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, the amount available to support this program in FY 2014 is approximately **\$19.2 million**.

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

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 7405(c) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) (7 U.S.C. 3319f(c)), as amended by section 7410 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246) and section 7409 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-333), requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a competitive grants program for the purpose of providing education, outreach, training and technical assistance to benefit beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States, including programs and services (as appropriate) relating to:

- A. Basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices;
- B. Innovative farm, ranch, and private, nonindustrial forest land transfer strategies;
- C. Entrepreneurship and business training;
- D. Financial and risk management training (including the acquisition and management of agricultural credit);
- E. Natural resource management and planning;
- F. Diversification and marketing strategies;
- G. Curriculum development;
- H. Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
- I. Resources and referral;
- J. Farm financial benchmarking;
- K. Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers;
- L. Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veterans;
- M. Farm safety and awareness; and
- N. Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.

Section 7405(d) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(d)) requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish beginning farmer and rancher education teams to develop curricula and conduct educational programs and workshops for beginning farmers or ranchers in diverse geographical areas of the United States.

Section 7405(e) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(e)) requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish an online clearinghouse that makes available to beginning farmers or ranchers education curricula, training materials and programs, which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.

A stakeholder input meeting was held on October 27, 2008, to develop the BFRDP and the first RFA, which was released in FY 2009. For information regarding the stakeholder meeting, please visit www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/smallfarm_if_bfrcgp.html. Stakeholder comments can be found on Regulations.gov. Additional stakeholder input was received by email and was collected during professional meetings and from webinars held in October 2009. The proceedings of the webinars were recorded and are available at:

www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/beginning_farmers_ranchers_stakeholder.html.

This additional stakeholder input was used to develop the FY 2010 RFA. The stakeholder

comments received on the interim rule for the BFRDP were also considered in the development of the FY 2010 RFA and are available at Regulations.gov. Stakeholder input for developing the FY 2011 RFA was received by emails, as well as comments during professional meetings and from webinars held in August 2010. Not many substantive recommendations for changes in the FY 2011 RFA were received as the program had already addressed stakeholder comments in previous years.

For the FY 2012 RFA, stakeholder input was solicited until April 30, 2011. Stakeholder input was received by emails as well as comments during professional meetings and webinars held in April 2011. The proceedings of these webinars were recorded and are available at: www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp_stakeholder.html. Several stakeholders acknowledged that NIFA has already addressed comments received in previous years. Additional stakeholder input was used in the FY 2012 RFA to: (a) include a new Application Type called ‘Renewal Application’ (Part II – B – 3 of this RFA); (b) clarify Plan for Outcomes Based Reporting (Part IV-B of this RFA); (c) Add new evaluation criteria for educational enhancement team grants (Part V-B); and (d) Add new evaluation criteria for Renewal Applications (Part V-B). Stakeholder input and annual outcomes based reports for FY 2010 were used as a guide to revamp the Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements (Part VI-D of this RFA).

The program was not offered in FY2013 due to lack of funding, but a stakeholder webinar was held on July 24, 2012. The proceedings of this webinar were recorded and are available at: www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html. Many stakeholders stated that they were happy with the program’s direction and recommended continuing focus on diversity including small-scale, urban and specialty crop producers; farmer-to-farmer teaching, mentoring, and networking; include funding for evaluation; value farmer-to-farmer networking and case studies as outcomes; give consideration to states with few community-based or nongovernmental organizations; and encourage Natural Resources Conservation Service involvement. Some commented that the review process should strive to provide clearer feedback, continue to include diverse reviewers, and consider the difficulty of working with certain audiences. Some recommended that the clearinghouse be continued and, in particular, share written guides; and that it might connect better with eXtension, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, and other related programs. These recommendations have been taken into account in this RFA by continuing the directions noted, while conforming to the 2014 Agricultural Act; adding language encouraging the indicated partnerships; and adapting the clearinghouse language from the 2009 RFA’s “start-up” phase to the needs of the program for the next five years.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The primary goal of BFRDP is to enhance food security, community development and sustainability by providing beginning farmer and ranchers (includes beginning managers of private, nonindustrial forest land, hereafter) and their families in the United States and its territories with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations, and enhance their sustainability. The term “farmer” is used in the broadest sense and should be interpreted to include agricultural farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers. **Applications from partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs),**

and school-based agricultural educational organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach will be given priority in funding.

The expected short-term (five year) outcomes of BFRDP are the training and development of more than 60,000 beginning farmers and ranchers through: the operation of an electronic clearinghouse for all beginning farmer and rancher training materials and programs (“clearinghouse”); the development and use of beginning farmer and rancher education curricula and support for programs that address the various needs of different audiences and geographical areas (“educational enhancement” projects); and projects that support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers on topics described further in this RFA (“standard” projects).

1. Target Audience:

The target audience for BFRDP is farmers and ranchers who have not operated a farm or ranch, or have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years. In addition, a portion of BFRDP funding is set aside for projects that address the needs of two subsets of beginning farmers and ranchers:

- Not less than 5 percent (5%) of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and/or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers.
- Not less than 5 percent (5%) of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers who are military veterans. A recipient of such a grant may coordinate with a recipient of a grant from the AgrAbility program (<http://www.agrability.org/>) in addressing the needs of veteran farmers and ranchers with disabilities.

Please note: Not all applications need to address the needs of these two set-aside categories.

For your application to be considered under either set-aside audience category, you must:

- a. Identify the target audience of any of the groups identified above and state what percentage of your project will be allocated to serving these group(s);
- b. Explain how the beginning farmers and ranchers in the identified target audience will be recruited and provided with appropriate training, education, outreach and/or mentoring; and
- c. Provide evidence of your ability to serve the needs of the identified audience, e.g., a strong track record of having previously done so.

2. Priority Topics for FY 2014:

To achieve program goals, BFRDP projects will be expected to conduct training and assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers on one or more of the topics listed below, making use of

existing curriculum (whether USDA funded or not) or developing new curriculum where needed. Applicants should carefully consider the topics that will be addressed by the proposed project and clearly identify the topics that will be addressed in the project narrative, and why those topics are the most appropriate for the project's audience. The priority topics are:

- A. Basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices;
- B. Innovative farm, ranch, and private, nonindustrial forest land transfer strategies;
- C. Entrepreneurship and business training;
- D. Financial and risk management training (including the acquisition and management of agricultural credit);
- E. Natural resource management and planning;
- F. Diversification and marketing strategies;
- G. Curriculum development;
- H. Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
- I. Resources and referral;
- J. Farm financial benchmarking;
- K. Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers;
- L. Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veterans;
- M. Farm safety and awareness; and
- N. Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.

NIFA is soliciting applications for the BFRDP under the following areas:

- (1) Standard Grants
- (2) Educational Enhancement Teams
- (3) Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse

C. Program Area Description

(1) Standard Grant

Program Code: BFRDA

Program Code Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Standard

Maximum Award: \$250,000 per year for up to three (3) years

Standard BFRDP projects support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers, on the priority topics listed above. Most of the funding in the BFRDP goes to Standard Grants. The primary goal of Standard Grants is to increase the number of beginning farmers and ranchers and enhance their sustainability by providing them and their families the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions. Priority is given to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), or school-based agricultural educational organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in beginning agricultural producer training and outreach. Standard Grant applications are expected to identify the audience of beginning

farmers and ranchers that they aim to serve, describe their characteristics and needs, demonstrate knowledge and experience in educational and assistance methods that are appropriate and effective in engaging the audience and meeting their needs, and propose an ambitious yet achievable plan of work that will accomplish meaningful and measurable success in enhancing the number and success of beginning farmers and ranchers. Most successful standard grants provide training and assistance on a range of topics, including financial, production and marketing topics from the priority list above.

(2) Educational Enhancement Team

Program Code: BFRDB

Program Code Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Enhancement

Maximum Award: \$250,000 per year for up to three (3) years

The purpose of an Educational Enhancement Team (EET) grant is to assemble a team of experts to review beginning farmer and rancher curricula and programs (including review and evaluation of previously-funded BFRDP projects), identify gaps, and develop, disseminate and facilitate the use of materials and tools to address these gaps. Educational Enhancement Teams are not designed to train beginning farmers and ranchers directly, but rather to train-the-trainers and help enhance funded and non-funded beginning farmer and rancher education programs in the nation. Applicants interested in applying for an EET grant are strongly encouraged to contact the programmatic contacts listed in Part VII to discuss the suitability of the topic prior to submitting an application. We are particularly interested in EETs that evaluate clusters of related projects previously funded by BFRDP, in order to determine lessons learned and best practices, along with curriculum and tools for future use. We are also interested in EETs that complement or leverage rather than duplicate work completed by previously-funded EETs, which have addressed environmental management and leadership, regional networks, farmer-to-farmer curricula, financial management, individual development accounts, and farm safety.

To achieve program goals, EET proposals will be expected to demonstrate the ability to complete **all** of the following:

- 1) Assess and Identify Existing Curricula and Gaps in the Education, Training and Mentoring of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers:
 - a) Establish educational teams that encompass broad geographic, product, topic and/or other appropriate scale. Educational teams should include, if possible, specialists (including Extension, Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO), Community-based Organizations (CBO), School-based Agricultural Education organizations (SAEO), and Federal and State Government employees and other eligible partners) with knowledge and expertise in relevant subjects and programs serving beginning farmers or ranchers. The team should, if possible, use the expertise of officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture (excluding NIFA) with direct experience in programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that may be taught as part of the curriculum for the program or workshop, including (but not limited to) Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Employees of other

federal agencies may also be appropriate for inclusion on Educational Enhancement Teams. Applicants are also encouraged to coordinate with their StrikeForce area coordinators and/or partnering entities. USDA's StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity Initiative is part of our commitment to growing economies, increasing investments and creating opportunities in poverty-stricken rural communities. See www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=STRIKE_FORCE for more information.

- b) Collect and synthesize information about the available beginning farmer and rancher education, training, outreach and mentoring curricula (including but not exclusive of curricula funded by USDA) and different audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers based on crop/livestock/product or regional diversity; including access to and suitability of programs to veterans and to limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers, and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. Identify gaps in the existing education, training, outreach and mentoring curricula to address the needs of the different audiences.
- c) Evaluate the beginning farmer and rancher education, training, outreach and mentoring programs (including but not exclusively USDA funded) nationwide to identify what is and what is not successful regarding programs and services offered. Depending on the project, success can be measured in different ways, including numbers of participants who completed training, began to farm, continued to farm, adopted different production, marketing and/or business practices, etc. Incorporate these findings to guide curriculum and program development in future years.

2) Develop Curricula and Train-the-Trainer Programs to Fill Identified Gaps:

- a) Develop curriculum to address the gaps in existing education, training, outreach and mentoring programs. The Educational Enhancement Teams should ensure that the new curriculum includes modules designed for specific audiences of beginning farmers or ranchers based on their crop/livestock/product (or potential crop/livestock/product/market), regional diversity, or other characteristics (e.g., military veterans, limited-resource or socially-disadvantaged, or farmworkers).
- b) Support special projects to incorporate the lessons learned from beginning farmer and rancher program evaluation and to address the gaps identified in curriculum evaluation.
- c) Develop and implement train-the-trainer meetings and workshops, both in-person and online, based on the EET-identified and EET-developed curricula, for education, training, outreach and mentoring programs.

Note: The development of both curriculum and train-the-trainer programs should include collaboration with intended audiences (including education/training programs and the ultimate audiences for those programs, that is, beginning farmers and ranchers), pilot testing and formative evaluation, and refinement based on the results of the evaluation.

- 3) Assist Beginning Farmer and Rancher Training Programs by Collaborating with the Clearinghouse and Beginning Farmer and Rancher Education Providers:
 - a) Collaborate with the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse to incorporate curricula identified and/or developed by the EET into the Clearinghouse and to facilitate its sharing with education, training, outreach and mentoring programs.
 - b) Facilitate communication and collaboration among all of the beginning farmer and rancher training, education, mentoring and outreach programs, and with the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse, to enhance successful use of the EET curricula and training in education, training, outreach and mentoring programs.

Educational Enhancement Teams should identify the Project Director (PD) or Co-PD who will be responsible for coordination with the Clearinghouse and with the other funded programs. The submitted budget should reflect the required time and resources (e.g., monthly conference calls, annual in-person meetings) for this coordination.

(3) Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse

Program Code: BFRDC

Program Code Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Clearinghouse

Maximum Award: \$200,000 per year for up to five (5) years

The general purpose of the online Clearinghouse is to make available to beginning farmers or ranchers educational curricula and training materials and programs, which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers. It does so in large part by collaborating and facilitating coordination and sharing across all BFRDP programs (both standard and EET projects) and other collaborators.

Duties of the Clearinghouse are as follows:

- 1) Maintain and enhance an online accessible library for beginning Farmer and Rancher education, training, mentoring and outreach materials produced from projects funded through the BFRDP program and through other sources:

Maintain a national “one-stop” source of beginning farmer and rancher education and training materials and information that can be accessed online. The online database needs to provide access or linkages to beginning farmer and rancher education and training materials developed by projects funded by BFRDP and those developed through other funding sources. These materials could have been developed by Extension and land-grant universities, Community Based Organizations, nongovernmental organizations, other Federal and state agencies, and/or Federally funded activities [such as the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Learning Center, National Agricultural Library, Ag Risk & Farm Management Library, and/or eXtension CoP (existing or new Communities of Practice)] containing content useful to beginning farmers and ranchers and organizations that work with them.

2) Facilitate Sharing, Collaboration and Use of Curricula and Information:

- a) Collaborate with all funded Educational Enhancement Team projects and Standard projects in identifying content for the Online Clearinghouse, knowledge gaps, needs, and other appropriate issues;
- b) Provide training and assistance to funded EET and Standard grantees in providing their curricula, tools, success stories and other information to the Clearinghouse, and in accessing the information and materials provided by others;
- c) Provide regular opportunities for sharing and collaborative learning among EET and Standard projects, such as topical webinars (at least monthly); and
- d) Enhance communication among BFRDP projects through regular communications such as a monthly e-newsletter.

3) Assist in Enhancing Outcome-Based Reporting:

- a) Collaborate with NIFA and all BFRDP grantees to assist in identifying and improving ways to collect data needed to document outcomes of funded projects;
- b) Operate the electronic tool that helps grantees organize and document the results of BFRDP projects. This system provides public access to outcome data and accomplishments of BFRDP and helps grantees organize their data for their annual reports to NIFA. The system allows Educational Enhancement Teams, Standard BFRDP projects, and other interested parties to learn from existing projects and build upon successful programs and materials; and
- e) Disseminate information on successful BFRDP programs, Educational Enhancement Team activities and other items of interest to the BFRDP national community, working in close coordination with NIFA leadership, all Standard BFRDP projects and Educational Enhancement Team projects.

Other Key Program Information Applicable to Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse:

Proposals should build upon the information and tools available from the Clearinghouse activities funded under the first round of BFRDP grants; this information is available at <http://portal.nifa.usda.gov/web/crisprojectpages/0219667-curriculum-and-training-clearinghouse-for-the-beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program.html>.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for NIFA support of this program in FY 2014 is approximately \$19.2 million. It is anticipated that approximately \$18.2 million will be made available to fund Standard BFRDP Project grants and Educational Enhancement Team Projects and approximately \$1 million for the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse.

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, you may submit applications to the BFRDP 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 BFRDP Program. We will review all new applications 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; they also 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 the 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 BFRDP 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.

(4) Resubmitted renewal application. This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. In addition, this is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to the BFRDP Program but not funded. Therefore, PDs must provide a Progress Report as required under the Project Narrative,

Part IV, and must respond to the previous review panel summary as required under Response to Previous Review, Part IV. Resubmitted renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the areas to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

Applications will be accepted for three (3) project types: (1) Standard BFRDP Projects; (2) Educational Enhancement Team Projects; and (3) Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse.

For Standard BFRDP Projects and Educational Enhancement Team Proposals, applicants must not request more than \$250,000 per year for a maximum grant period of three (3) years. Requests exceeding these budgetary guidelines will not be accepted for review.

In addition, all work must be completed within three (3) years. The Statutory time limitation for this project is three (3) years from the project start date on the Award Face Sheet (Form NIFA-2009). Extensions of time beyond the three (3) years will not be permitted.

1. Standard BFRDP Projects:

(a) Standard Grants:

The long-term goals of the Standard BFRDP projects are to enhance the sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers through education, training, mentoring and outreach programs that enhance self-employment in farming, ranching and forestry opportunities. Applications that seek to develop coursework for credit at Colleges and Universities offering four-year degree programs are not appropriate for this program and will not be accepted for review. Applications that seek to educate students for careers in agriculture other than as farmers or ranchers will not be accepted for review. Priority topics are the fourteen topics listed as A. through N. in the Legislative Background (Part I.A of this RFA) and again under Priority Topics for Standard BFRDP Projects (Part I.B.2.a of this RFA).

(b) Development Grants:

Development Grants are intended to assist organizations: (1) to sustain and enhance important collaborations and innovative activities relevant to beginning farmer and rancher programs; and (2) to initiate and develop beginning farmer and rancher project ideas to lead to future program success or success in obtaining other grants for beginning farmer and rancher education. Development grants are only available to organizations that have not previously been successful in obtaining competitive Standard Grants from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture [or its predecessor the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)].

In FY 2014, a Standard BFRDP Project application that is considered meritorious but ranks below the funding line during the peer review process will be considered for a

Development Grant. **Applicants may not apply directly for Development Grants.** In FY 2014, a limited number of Development Grants will be awarded. Applicants should indicate in the first line of the abstract whether the organization would want the application to also be considered for a Development Grant. If consideration for a Development Grant is desired, the application must include a letter from the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) stating that the organization has never received a competitive award from NIFA (or its predecessor CSREES).

In addition, all work must be completed within three (3) years. The Statutory time limitation for this project is three (3) years from the project start date on the Award Face Sheet (Form NIFA-2009). Extensions of time beyond the three (3) years will not be permitted.

2. Educational Enhancement Team Projects:

The long-term goals of the Educational Enhancement Team projects are to identify gaps in beginning farmer and rancher training by evaluating all existing programs, and to develop and conduct train-the-trainer projects to address these gaps. The Educational Enhancement Teams will periodically collect and analyze information on the impacts of the beginning farmer and rancher programs on specific audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers based on crop or regional diversity, including access and suitability of programs to veteran farmers and ranchers and to limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. The Team also may support special projects for training, coordination, and communication networks, including outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged and/or underserved customers and other clientele groups with particular beginning farmer and rancher education and training needs. To maintain regional balance, priority will be given to applications serving beginning farmer and rancher audiences not served by previously funded Educational Enhancement Teams.

In addition, all work must be completed within five (5) years. The Statutory time limitation for this project is five (5) years from the project start date on the Award Face Sheet (Form NIFA-2009). Extensions of time beyond the five (5) years will not be permitted.

3. Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse:

The purpose of the Online Clearinghouse is to serve as an online platform and library for curricula, training materials, technical assistance materials and any other appropriate information for beginning farmers and ranchers. The Online Clearinghouse assists NIFA leadership in operating an outcome based results verification system appropriate for use by the BFRDP program, provides archival support for all materials and curricula on beginning farmer education and training, organizes appropriate meetings (in-person,

webinars, and conference calls) under the direction of NIFA leadership and collaborates with BFRDP grantees as needed.

In addition, all work must be completed within five (5) years. The Statutory time limitation for this project is five (5) years from the project start date on the Award Face Sheet (Form NIFA-2009). Extensions of time beyond the five (5) years will not be permitted.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of qualified public and/or private entities. These collaborations may include the following entities: State Cooperative Extension Services; Federal, State, or tribal agencies; community based organizations; nongovernmental organizations; junior and four-year colleges or universities or foundations maintained by a college or university; private for-profit organizations; and other appropriate partners. Inclusion of beginning and/or non-beginning farmers and ranchers as part of the collaborative group is strongly encouraged.

Applications submitted by individuals are not eligible for consideration under any category applicable to the BFRDP.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Pursuant to the authorizing legislation for the BFRDP, NIFA requires that in order to receive an award under this program, the recipient must provide a match in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to 25 percent (25%) of the federal funds provided by the award. The matching funds must be from non-Federal sources except when authorized by statute. An award will not be issued unless all matching funds over the life of the grant are secured with letters of commitment. For third party cash or in-kind support, letters of commitment must be submitted on donor organization letterhead, must include the signature of the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR), must identify the project, by name and purpose, what the funds will support, and must state the exact amount of the matching funds or value of the in-kind support that will be contributed.

There can be no stipulations on the matching amount.

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 determine 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-BFR-004518** 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 a.m. - 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 RFA. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

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

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

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

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

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

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

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of BFRDP. See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed twelve (12) pages of written text, regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced. This total includes pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum of twelve (12) pages to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following, in the sequence as specified below:

- 1) **Introduction.** The introduction should include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Justify the need for the program by identifying the target audience and explaining their needs (size, region, value of sales, structure of the industry (the number of small, medium and large farms), critical barriers, etc.); and by briefly summarizing all the other similar beginning farmer and rancher education and training programs that are available for the identified target audience. If necessary provide a map of the region. Show evidence that beginning farmers and ranchers were involved in conceptualizing the project and designing the activities. If the project type is Educational Enhancement Team, present the rationale for the geographic, product or other appropriate focus of the Team and the Team's composition. If this application is for the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse, briefly describe the technology that will be used to operate the online library and the applicant's experience in developing and maintaining such a system. All works cited should be referenced (see item (d) Bibliography & References Cited in this section).
- 2) **Objectives and Outcomes.** Concisely present the goals and objectives and expected outputs and outcomes of the project in relation to the needs identified in the introduction. Explain the specific relationship of the project's objectives to the selected Project Type and its topic(s); and discuss the potential long-range outcomes of the project on the sustainability of U.S. beginning farmers and ranchers. Provide numbers of additional beginning farmers and ranchers that will be served, the value of their enterprises, and the

impacts on the structure of farming. Discuss whether and how this program can be adapted to other regions, communities and/or agricultural systems.

- 3) **Approach.** The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:
- a) A description of the activities proposed for each objective;
 - b) A timeline of the proposed project, including activities and expected measurable outputs and outcomes for each year of the project (for Standard BFRDP grants, where appropriate, include estimates of numbers of beginning farmers served, how many beginning farmers and ranchers purchase land, enter into land leases, begin farming/ranching, change behavior to enter new markets, or make other appropriate changes in their behavior linked to the project);
 - c) Discuss how and where the activities will be provided and the appropriateness of the approach for the target audience;
 - d) For Standard BFRDP Projects: how will the beginning farmers and ranchers be recruited for this training?;
 - e) For Education Enhancement Teams Projects, how will beginning farmer and rancher curricula and programs be evaluated? How will you help guide curriculum and program development and delivery in future years?;
 - f) How will the project be sustained beyond the life of the grant?;
 - g) How will the partnerships and collaborations established be sustained beyond the life of the grant?;
 - h) Any novel ideas or contributions of the proposed project;
 - i) Pitfalls that may be encountered and limitations to proposed procedures; and
 - j) An evaluation plan, including means by which the outcomes will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted each year and at the end of the project.
- 4) **Target Audiences:** Not less than 5 percent (5%) of the program funds each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers who are military veterans, and not less than 5 percent (5%) of the program funds each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and /or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers. Please note that not all applications need to address a target audience but can be open to all beginning farmers and ranchers. However, if you want the application to be considered under either of the set-aside categories, identify any prior experience the applicants have in addressing the needs of the target audience, the applicant's ability to provide the appropriate (e.g., socio-economic and culturally sensitive) education, training, outreach and mentoring programs for the target audience, and state what percentage of your budget will be allocated to serving the target group(s).
- 5) **Personnel and Resources:** Describe in detail the key project personnel's experience in serving the identified or other audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project. Include preliminary data/information and clearly describe the impacts of the ongoing or recently

completed activities. This information may include the years and locations of prior activities, number of training assistance or education activities previously carried out, number of participants and graduates from the program, success rate in completing the program, percentage of graduates who are still in farming, etc. In addition, explain how Federal funds will be used to expand or enhance the current or previous projects.

c. Field 12. Other Attachments

- 1) **Plan for Outcome Based Reporting. PDF Attachment. Three (3) page limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Plan for Outcome Based Reporting’ in the document header and save file as ‘PlanforOutcomeBasedReporting’. Clearly identify a minimum of two expected impacts of the project within a five (5) year planning horizon, and how you plan to document and evaluate them. Third-party evaluators are encouraged but not required. All projects should describe methods and resources for documenting and evaluating outcomes. Because of the diversity in the types of BFRDP projects funded, it is not possible to require all applicants to report on two identical measurable impacts. However, all Standard BFRDP applicants are strongly recommended to consider using the expected number of new farm startups that would result from their project as one of the impacts, and the expected number of new farmers who will benefit from the project. The identified outcomes must be measurable as a total number, percentage of participation, or percentage change (e.g., percentage increase in the value of sales of beginning farmers and ranchers, or percentage of participants who improve their business or production practices). Taking baseline measurements before the work of a project or each measured event is recommended. Additionally, total numbers used to develop percentage should be captured for each measurement. All Educational Enhancement Team applicants are strongly recommended to consider using the expected number of information products created as a result of their Educational Enhancement Team activities as one of their metrics. Because many expected outcomes occur only beyond the grant period, also identify measurable outputs for each of the expected outcomes. Outputs for Standard BFRDP Projects may include: (a) Number of beginning farmers and ranchers to receive significant training or assistance, (b) number of courses developed, etc. For each of the performance goals, identify important milestones and annual performance targets. Outputs for Educational Enhancement Teams may include: (a) number of trainers trained; (b) number of training programs offered; (c) number of BFR organizations assisted; etc. See the “Outcomes Guide for BFRDP Grants” and “Webinar #3 – Outcomes Reporting” at www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html for more information. **An applicant’s failure to provide the requested information in the Plan for Outcomes Based Reporting would impact the peer review process. Applications without a Plan for Outcome Based Reporting or with a Plan for Outcome Based Reporting that exceeds the applicable page limitation will not be reviewed.** All grantees are required to submit outcome based reports annually, discussed in more detail in Part VI, D of this RFA.
- 2) **Management Plan – PDF Attachment. Three (3) page limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Management Plan’ and save file as ‘ManagementPlan’. Because of the complexity of the

BFRDP projects, it is important to have a clearly articulated management plan that describes the roles and functions of all partners (e.g., Project Directors and Co-Project Directors) and their organizations. Include time allocated by each partner for attainment of objectives; plan for participatory evaluation of project activities, outcome based reporting and communication; and plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance and partnerships. Relate the experience your organization and key staff have in designing and operating activities similar to those described in this application. In addition, evidence (e.g., letters of commitment signed by the AR of the partnering organization) that the partners involved have agreed to abide by the **Management Plan** should be provided. **Describe the commitment of your organization and your partners to this project and how the project will be sustained beyond the period of the award.** Include a strategy to enhance coordination, communication, data sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. An applicant's failure to provide the requested information in the Management Plan may preclude NIFA from making an award. **Applications without a Management Plan or with a Management Plan that exceeds the applicable page limitation will not be reviewed.**

- 3) **Collaborative Arrangements – PDF Attachment. No page limit.** Title the attachment as 'Collaborative Arrangements' in the document header and save file as 'CollaborativeArrangements'. If it is necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, i.e., those who provide specialized expertise not available in the project team but who are not involved in project management, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of the application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support signed by the AR of the consultant/collaborating organization) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application. An applicant's failure to provide the requested information may preclude NIFA from making an award. **Applications without a Collaborative Arrangements attachment will not be reviewed.**

- 4) **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'.

Appendices are strictly limited to two (2) examples of materials from previous projects similar to those proposed in this project. These may include:

- Reprints (papers that have been published in journals or periodicals);
- Preprints (manuscripts in press for journals or periodicals);
- Examples of curricula or training products (limited to 10 pages each, truncate if necessary); or
- Media articles describing training projects and their outcomes.

Each Project Narrative is expected to be complete; however, additions to the Project Narrative (appendices) are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Information may not be appended to an application to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the Project Narrative. Extraneous materials will not be used during the peer review process.

- 5) **Matching Funds Documentation.** As stated in Part III, B of this RFA, this program requires applicants to provide, from non-Federal sources, cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the Federal funds requested. Signed letters from each source of matching funds indicating the amount of funds committed to this project in the content of the letter are required. Title the attachment(s) as ‘Letter of Commitment – Organization Name’ in the document header and save file as ‘LetterofCommitment_OrganizationName’. Recommended contents of these letters are described below in item 6, R&R Budget Federal and Non-Federal.
- 6) **Response to Previous Review - PDF Attachment. One (1) page limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Response to Previous Review’ in the document header and save file as ‘ResponsetoPreviousReview’. This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II, B of this RFA, “Types of Applications”. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on **no more than one page**. If desired, additional comments relating to the prior submissions panel summary may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.
- 7) **Development Grants – PDF Attachment. One (1) Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Development Grants’ in the document header and save file as ‘DevelopmentGrants’. If the applicant wishes to be considered for a Development Grant, the application must include a letter from the AR of the applicant institution stating that the organization has never received a competitive award from NIFA or its predecessor, CSREES (see Part II, C, 1,(b) of this RFA).
- 8) **Accomplishment-Based Renewal – PDF attachment. Three (3) page limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Accomplishment-Based Renewal’ in the document header and save the file as ‘AccomplishmentBasedRenewal’. This requirement only applies to “Renewal Applications” as described under Part II, B of this RFA, “Types of Applications”. It should include a description of what was learned from the past project, what can be improved upon, and how those lessons and improvements are being incorporated into the renewal application to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting program goals.
- 9) **Past Performance – PDF attachment. No page limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Past Performance’ in the document and save the file as ‘PastPerformance’. This requirement only applies to “Renewal Applications” as described under Part II, B of this RFA, “Types of Applications,” and should include the most current CRIS report with the annual or final outcomes and impacts for each objective of the previous BFRDP grant. The CRIS reports for all BFRDP projects can be accessed at: <http://cris.csrees.usda.gov/>

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 Federal and Non-Federal - This form (accompanied by the required Budget Justification attachment) contains the itemized listing and description of your project's budget. Complete all applicable fields. Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

- a. Complete one R&R Budget Form for each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget for the entire project. There should be reasonable costs in each Educational Enhancement Team Project budget that reflect the cost of monthly conference calls to facilitate the activities of the Clearinghouse.
- b. Field A. **Senior/Key Person.** This section identifies names of senior/key personnel. Each person identified in the senior/key person profile who is an employee of the applying organization must be listed in this section if funds are requested. Base salary/wages, base months (calendar or academic) and fringe benefit information must be included.
- c. Field D. **Travel.** There should be reasonable costs in each Education Enhancement Team Project budget to attend one meeting during the three year project period to facilitate the activities of the Clearinghouse. In addition, the budgets for both Standard BFRDP and Education Enhancement Team projects should include the travel costs for the Project Director and any other key staff member(s) to attend the annual Project Director meeting beginning in the first year of funding and during each year of their project.
- d. Field H. **Indirect Costs** – Refer to Part IV, D of this RFA for a discussion of the limitations on claiming indirect costs.
- e. Field K. **Budget Justification – PDF Attachment. No page limit.** Title the attachment as 'Budget Justification' in the document header and save the file as 'BudgetJustification.'
 - 1) All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and linked to the different activities in the work plan. If consulting, collaborative, or sub contractual arrangements are included in the application, these arrangements should be fully explained and justified. The rate of pay for any consultant must be included, if known at the time of application. Please include a cost breakdown for the consultant, including the letter of commitment, curriculum vita, number of days in service, travel, and per diem, as well as the rate of pay.

- 2) **To receive priority for partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) with expertise in beginning agricultural producer and training outreach, applicants need to identify in the budget justification which budget items are being allocated out of Federal funds to the NGO(s) and/or CBO(s).**
- f. **Matching:** As stated in Part III, B of this RFA, all applicants are required to provide from non-Federal sources (unless otherwise specified by law) cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the Federal funds requested. All matching contributions must be specifically for the project objectives as proposed. **The sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant organization should be summarized on a separate page and placed in Field 12 ‘Other Attachments’ of the R & R Other Project Information form.** Title the attachment ‘Summary of Matching Support’ in the document header and save the file as “SummaryofMatchingSupport”. Include the matching amount, the budget category for the match, and detail how the matching support, from each source, will be used (e.g., salary and position supported). A separate budget justification with the same level of details required for Federal funds should be included. This document should explain how non-Federal funds will be used in the project. See instructions in Field H on the R&R Budget Form for restrictions on the use of indirect costs as matching contributions.
- 1) **Cash and non-cash contributions from the institution and any third parties should be identified.**
 - 2) **Each source of non-Federal matching funds must be accompanied by written verification of commitments of matching support** (i.e., a signed letter from the AR of the source of matching funds; including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Include each of these signed letters of commitment in pdf format as attachments in Field 12 of the R & R Other Project Information form (see Part V, 4 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide).
Written verification means:

For any third party cash contributions, a separate letter of commitment for each donation submitted on donor organization letterhead and signed by the AR of the donor organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation; and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

b) For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate letter of commitment for each contribution submitted on donor organization letterhead and signed by the AR of the donor organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in-kind contribution (please provide the

basis for the good faith effort (i.e., duties and position being paid)); and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period. In-kind donations of salaries or equipment use should provide details of how the rate charged was determined. Donations of labor should be charged at the person's hourly rate of pay for similar work or for the rate that is customary for that type of work in the area.

c) In-kind salary contributions should include the name and position of the employee, the normal hourly rate of pay for this position, the number of hours the employee will be donating toward the project, and a brief description of the job this person will be performing for the project.

d) If the contribution is to be split between cash and in-kind, the exact dollar amount for each category must be clearly stated. The letter should also clearly state the budget categories that the contributed dollars should be applied to and clearly state the individual items of in-kind contributions. All pledge agreements must be placed in the application immediately following the summary of matching support. Any cost sharing commitments specified in the application will be referenced and included as a condition of an award resulting from this announcement. All pledged amounts must be specific and certain, not estimated.

- 3) The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local, and Tribal Governments, A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations, and the cost principles in the Federal Acquisition Regulation at 48 CFR 31.2 for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

7. R & R Budget Subaward Federal and Non-Federal Attachment(s) Form

If a formal subcontract agreement is needed with another organization(s), annual and cumulative budgets and a budget justification will be required for each subcontract agreement. Refer to Part V, 8. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions on completing this form.

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 appropriate program code name and the code as follows:

Proposal Type	Program Code Name	Program Code
Standard Grant	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Standard	BFRDA
Educational Enhancement Team	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Enhancement	BFRDB
Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Clearinghouse	BFRDC

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

C. Submission Dates and Times

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on **June 12, 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 correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact the Agency Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being 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 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 amended the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs for grants to 22 percent (22%) of the total Federal funds provided under each award. However, Section 7409 of the Agriculture Act of 2014 limits indirect costs for Standard Grants to 10 percent (10%) of the total Federal funds provided under each Standard Grant award.

Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to 10 percent (10%) of the total funds requested for a Standard Grant proposal and otherwise (i.e., if an EET or Clearinghouse proposal), to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent (22%) of total Federal funds awarded.

Claiming of indirect costs. The maximum allowed indirect costs may be claimed under the Federal portion of the award budget or, alternatively, the maximum allowed indirect costs may be claimed as a matching contribution (if no indirect costs are requested on the Federal portion of the budget). However, the maximum allowed indirect costs may not be claimed on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution, unless the total claimed on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution does not exceed the maximum allowed indirect costs. An awardee may split the allocation between the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget only if the total percentage of indirect costs under the project does not exceed the maximum allowed indirect costs. For example, for a standard grant, indirect costs are capped at 10 percent (10%), so the grantee may request 5 percent (5%) of the indirect costs on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution. Or, the grantee may request any other, similar percentage combination that, when combined, does not exceed the maximum indirect cost rate for the type of grant requested.

An award made under this program may not be used for planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility. Program funds may not be used to buy land, match Individual Development Account funds, or purchase equipment for starting farm or ranch businesses. Program funds may not be used for research activities. Program funds may only be used for education, training, outreach and mentoring of beginning farmers and ranchers.

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

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

Partnerships and Collaborations: Priority will be given to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include NGOs, CBOs or SAEOs with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach. Only applications with a minimum of 25 percent (25%) of the Federal budget allocated to these partner organizations (i.e., NGOs, CBOs and SAEOs) will be given this priority. In addition, these partner organizations must have been involved and played an important role in the project design and development. Projects must also employ an equitable and appropriate decision-making and oversight process that includes all partners to be given this priority.

Target Audience: Not less than 5 percent (5%) of the program funds each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers who are military veterans, and not less than 5 percent (5%) of the program funds each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers, immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and /or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers. Please note that not all applications need to address a target audience but can be open to all beginning farmers and ranchers. However, if you want the application to be considered under this category, identify any prior experience the applicants have in addressing the needs of the target audience, the

applicants' ability to provide the appropriate (example, socio-economic and culturally sensitive) education, training, outreach and mentoring programs for the target audience, and state what percentage of your budget will be allocated to serving these group(s). Projects that focus the majority of their effort and budget on the target audience(s) are most likely to be successful in meeting their needs.

Legislated Criteria: All project applications submitted for funding shall be evaluated using the following criteria as provided by section 7405(c)(5) of FSRIA (7 U.S.C. 3319(c)(5)), specifically:

- **Relevancy** – Explanation and documentation that the project is directed toward specific topic areas identified in Part I, B in this RFA. These topics are designed to yield improvements in and sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers as defined in the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79). Relevancy also includes explanation of how the project addresses critical barriers faced by beginning farmers and ranchers. A successful multi-year track record of working with beginning farmers and ranchers and a description of how this project will enhance current or prior programs can be used to evaluate the relevance of the project. In addition, the relevancy can be evaluated by the description of the necessity of the project based on the needs identified for the target audience, the inclusion of beginning farmers and ranchers in the conceptualization and development of project activities and the demonstrated awareness of previous and alternative training, outreach, mentoring and education programs that address these needs.
- **Technical merit** – will be evaluated on the basis of:

For all applicants:

- (a) Clarity and delineation of objectives, activities and outcomes;
- (b) Conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the targeted audience including suitability and feasibility of the approach (e.g., social, economic and cultural relevance, distance based versus face-to-face);
- (c) Innovation and originality of objectives and activities;
- (d) Successful multi-year experience with new agricultural producer training and outreach;
- (e) Expected outcomes and the performance targets as indicated in the Plan for Outcomes Based Reporting;
- (f) Adaptability at other locations, communities, and/or agricultural products and technologies;
- (g) Sustainability beyond the life of the grant; and
- (h) Reasonableness of the budget for planned activities. (While the size of the budget is not an evaluation criterion, the reviewers will be asked to comment whether it matches logically with the program described in the narrative.)

For Educational Enhancement Team applicants only:

- (i) Adequacy of dissemination plans for evaluation reports. Includes number and description of activities planned for disseminating evaluation reports, and new curricula.
- **Achievability** - Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality, target audience and budget for each activity. Importance will be given to the description of how the success of the project will be measured and reported every year (i.e., Plan for Outcome Based Reporting) and how potential pitfalls are addressed. There should be sufficient time commitment of project directors and co-directors for project activities including management.
 - **Expertise and track record of one (1) or more applicants** – Importance will be given to the demonstration of expertise through successful multi-year experience in education, outreach, mentoring and/or training beginning farmers and ranchers. The successful multi-year experience can be demonstrated by the number of training, assistance, or education activities previously carried out; number of participants or graduates of the program, success rate and their current occupation; the number of years a program or activity has been offered. Also important are qualifications of applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project activities and in evaluating project outcomes; and demonstrable institutional experience and competence in serving the needs of the identified target audience.
 - **Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation.** Includes the expertise of consultants and collaborators, sufficiency of the educational facilities and equipment for the proposed education and outreach methods.
 - **Adequacy of plans for the participatory evaluation process, outcomes-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results beyond the immediate target audience.** Includes number and expertise of evaluation team members who have agreed to serve or who have been identified.

For Educational Enhancement Teams, this includes:

Adequacy of Plans for Management and Collaborative Arrangements of the proposed project. Includes time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; plan for participatory evaluation of project activities, outcome-based reporting, and communication; and plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, and collaborative efforts.

Applications for Online Clearinghouse funding shall be evaluated using the following additional criteria:

- **Organizational Effectiveness in Operating an Electronic Library of Beginning Farmer and Rancher Education Programs and Materials**
 - (a) Ability to gather, organize, and make available educational curricula, materials and information relevant and useful to beginning farmer and rancher development programs and issues;
 - (b) Management and organizational capacity to provide support to Educational Enhancement and Standard BFRDP projects;
 - (c) Knowledge and expertise to compile, analyze, and continuously improve outcomes-based measures and reporting; and
 - (d) Capacity to provide communications materials and support to enhance the impacts of BFRDP projects.

Resubmitted and Renewal Applications: Priority may be given to resubmitted or renewal applications that clearly demonstrate the potential to have significant impacts on beginning farmer and rancher development. Only resubmitted applications that clearly indicate successful performance during the development grant and/or include the one additional page response previous review panel summary will be given priority. Renewal applications should not only have shown excellent performance but also have a strong plan for continuous improvement to be given priority consideration.

Additional evaluation criteria for Resubmitted Applications:

- **Responsiveness to previous comments and recommendations by reviewers and/or performance during the development grant.** Includes the response to the previous review panel summary and/or other pertinent information regarding performance during the development grant.

Additional evaluation criteria for Renewal Applications are:

- **Performance During the Previous BFRDP grant(s)** as indicated in the annual report submitted to the Agency and attached to the application (NIFA currently uses CRIS reports, submitted via REEport.)
- **Adequacy of Plans for Continuous Improvement:** includes what was learned from the past project, what can be improved upon, and how those lessons and improvements are being **incorporated into this application to** make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting program goals.

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, we determine the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications,

Inc., 1801 Robert Fulton Drive, Suite 555, Reston, VA, 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, are 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, to the extent permitted by law; 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:

- (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 NIFA;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time NIFA intends to support the project without requiring recompetition 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 Financial 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

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

Upon the award of a grant, applicants will be requested to finalize annual goals and objectives against which progress will be measured on an annual basis. Grantees must submit an annual report narrative and budget summary detailing outcomes and expenditures on the project. Annual project reports must contain data to document the outputs and outcomes and will need to be collected by the grantee. Cost of data collection may be included in the budget. For additional information regarding output and outcome data that is needed, see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html>. A format for these reports will be provided on an annual basis by NIFA.

If a project is funded, beginning in the first year of funding, the Project Director and any other key staff member(s) will be required to attend annual project director meetings. Reasonable travel expenses should be included as part of the project budget.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Dr. Jill Auburn, National Program Leader, Division of Agricultural Systems, Institute of Food Production and Sustainability, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2240; Telephone: 202-720-2635 or Fax: 202-401-6070; E-mail: jauburn@nifa.usda.gov.

Or

Dr. Denis Ebodaghe, National Program Leader, Division of Agricultural Systems, Institute of Food Production and Sustainability, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2240; Telephone: 202-401-4385 or Fax: 202-401-6070; E-mail: debodaghe@nifa.usda.gov.

Administrative/Business Contact –

Adriene Woodin, Chief, Branch II, Awards Management Division, Office of Grants and Financial Management, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2240; Telephone: 202-401-4320 or Fax: 202-401-1804; E-mail: awoodin@nifa.usda.gov

Or

Susan Bowman, Chief, Branch I, Awards Management Division, Office of Grants and Financial Management, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2240; Telephone: 202-401-4324 or Fax: 202-401-6271; E-mail: sbowman@nifa.usda.gov

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, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

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 Financial Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions](#), for applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program. Subpart J under 7 CFR 3430 contains program-specific regulations for BFRDP. In addition, the following definitions apply:

Collaborator means the person or an organization that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project but is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs) means private, non-profit organizations that are representative of a community or a significant segment of a community and that provide services to that local community.

Education means an act or process that delivers knowledge and informal educational programs to beginning farmers and ranchers, enabling them to make practical decisions.

Military Veteran means a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Nongovernmental organization (NGO) means a legally constituted, non-governmental organization created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government and serving one or more communities.

Partnership means a relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.

Performance target means a specific, verifiable change in people's actions or conditions. It defines how many people will change and what degree of change constitutes success.

Producer means individuals, families, or other entities in the U.S. engaged in the business of agriculture, crop, livestock, forestry, and range production, management and marketing.

Qualified Public and Private Entities means public or private groups, organizations, or institutions that have established and demonstrated capacities to conduct projects that accomplish the purposes of the program as designated in these guidelines.

Regions means (1) the Northeast region consisting of the 12 Northeast States and the District of Columbia (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia); (2) the Southern Region consisting of 13 States plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma); the North Central Region consisting of 12 States (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota); and the Western Region consisting of 12 States and the American Territories in the Pacific (Hawaii, Alaska, Washington State, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Micronesia).

Rural areas means all counties with a population under 50,000.

School-based agricultural educational organization means an organization that delivers career and/or technical education in agriculture, which may include classroom and/or experiential learning, for example, FFA (formerly known as the Future Farmers of America), National Young Farmer Educational Organization, or other similar organizations.

Socially disadvantaged beginning farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group (i.e., a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) (7 U.S.C. 2003(e)).

Sustainable agriculture means a system of plant and/or animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term: satisfy human food and fiber needs; enhance environmental quality and natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends; make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate

where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

Veteran farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable. (See 7 U.S.C. 2279(e) for further details.)

Appendix: Application Submission Checklist

The following checklist contains suggested guidelines to verify prior to application submission:

- Have all attachments been submitted in the portable document format (PDF)? See Part III of the NIFA Application Guide.
 - Do all submitted PDF documents have one-inch margins and are typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point regardless of line spacing? Are all PDF documents numbered sequentially on each page of the attachment? Are all page limitations for a given attachment followed? Submitted applications that do not meet these requirements for PDF attachments will be at risk of being excluded from NIFA review.
- Have all seven required components of the SF 424 Research and Related (R&R) Application Package been completed? Did you use the “Check Package for Errors” feature of the Adobe Reader (see section 1.8 of the NIFA Application Guide)?
 - SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
 - R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)
 - R&R Other Project Information
 - R&R Senior/Key Person (Expanded)
 - Personal Data
 - R&R Budget (Fed/Non-Fed)
 - R&R Subaward Budget Attachment (Only if submitting a Collaboration Project)
 - Supplemental Information Form
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**
 - Have all required fields been completed? Field 5 must contain the name of the eligible organization.
- ◆ **R&R Other Project Information**
 - Have the fields describing project potential or actual environmental impact been properly completed?
 - Project Summary/Abstract (PDF)
 - Has the Project Summary PDF been attached to this form in Field 7?
 - Does this section adhere to the format?
 - Does it include the name of co-project directors, associated partner/collaborating institutions, and the percentage of the budget allocated to each partner/collaborating institution?
 - Does it say whether the application is Standard (and Development) or Educational Enhancement Team or Clearinghouse; and whether it is a new, resubmitted or renewal proposal?
 - Project Narrative (PDF)
 - Has the Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 8?
 - Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations?
 - Bibliography & References Cited (PDF)

- Attach as PDF file in Field 9, but only if needed.
- ❑ Facilities & Other Resources (PDF)
 - Attach as PDF file in Field 10, but only if needed.
- ❑ Equipment (PDF)
 - Attach as PDF file in Field 11, but only if needed.
 - Remember, 'Equipment' is defined as having a value of over \$5,000 for each item. Most equipment purchased for these projects is actually reported, instead, as 'Materials and Supplies' on the R&R Budget (Fed/Non-Fed) Form.
- ❑ Other Attachments
 - Attach as PDF files in Field 12.
 - Plan for Outcome Based Reporting, limited to 3 pages.
 - Management Plan, limited to 3 pages.
 - Collaborative Arrangements, no page limit.
 - Letter of Commitment from each organization providing matching funds.
 - If it is a resubmitted application, does it include a 1-page response to previous reviewers?
 - If it is a Standard Grant application that you want also to be considered for a Development Grant, does it include the 1-page Development Grant attachment?
 - If it is a renewal application, does it include the Accomplishment-Based Renewal (3-page limit) and the Past Performance report from CRIS?
 - (Optional) up to two examples of materials from previous projects ('Appendices').
- ◆ **R&R Senior/Key Person Profile**
 - ❑ Biographical Sketch (PDF)
 - Has the biographical sketch (vitae) PDF for the PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel been attached?
 - ❑ Current and Pending Support (PDF)
 - Has the current and pending support PDF for all PD(s) been attached?
 - Have all current and pending projects been listed and summarized, including this application?
- ◆ **R&R Personal Data DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**
 - ❑ Have all fields been completed except for the social security number?
- ◆ **R&R Budget (Fed/Non-Fed)**
 - ❑ Have all fields been completed?
 - ❑ Budget Justification
 - Has the Budget Justification PDF been attached to this form in Field K?
 - Are budget items individually justified?
 - For multi-institutional applications, has a budget justification been included for each institution involved?
 - Have the matching requirements been address?

SPECIAL NOTE: Must provide a match in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to 25 percent (25%) of the federal funds requested. All applicants will be required to provide appropriate matching documentation. See Part IV, B, 6 of this RFA for further details and specific instructions.

◆ **Supplemental Information Form**

- ❑ Does Field 2 indicate the Program Code Name and Program Code to which you are applying?

Have you included the required Conflict of Interest List (PDF) attachment? (See format in NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, Section VI, 1.8, p.46, for instructions.) Include this with lists of compiled attachments even if your responses to the questions are “N.A.”.