

Specialty Crop Research Initiative/Citrus Disease Research and Extension

FY 2015 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Pre-applications (Stakeholder Relevance Statement): Complete, pre-applications must be received by 5:00 pm Eastern Time on June 1, 2015.

Invited Full Applications: Complete, invited full applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on August 14, 2015.

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

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

Specialty Crop Research Initiative/Citrus Disease Research and Extension

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under **10.309**.

DATES: Complete, pre-applications must be received by **5:00 pm Eastern Time on June 1, 2015**. Complete, invited full applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on August 14, 2015**. 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@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 **Specialty Crop Research Initiative/Citrus Disease Research and Extension RFA**.

NIFA offered outreach webinars on its center of excellence implementation February 26th and March 12th, 2015. A recording can be accessed on the NIFA website.

In the coming months, NIFA will be holding additional webinars to collect stakeholder input about our center of excellence implementation strategy. Details and access information will be posted on the NIFA website. Comments and suggestions relative to centers of excellence should be sent to Policy@nifa.usda.gov by September 30th, 2015.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the **Specialty Crop Research Initiative/Citrus Disease Research and Extension (SCRI/CDRE)** program for fiscal year 2015 to solve critical United States specialty crop issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research and extension activities that use systems-based, trans-disciplinary approaches. The intent of the SCRI program is to solve the needs of the various specialty crop industries through the promotion of collaboration, open communication, the exchange of information, and the development of resources that accelerate application of scientific discovery and technology. The total amount available for support of the SCRI program in FY 2015 will be approximately \$23 million.

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

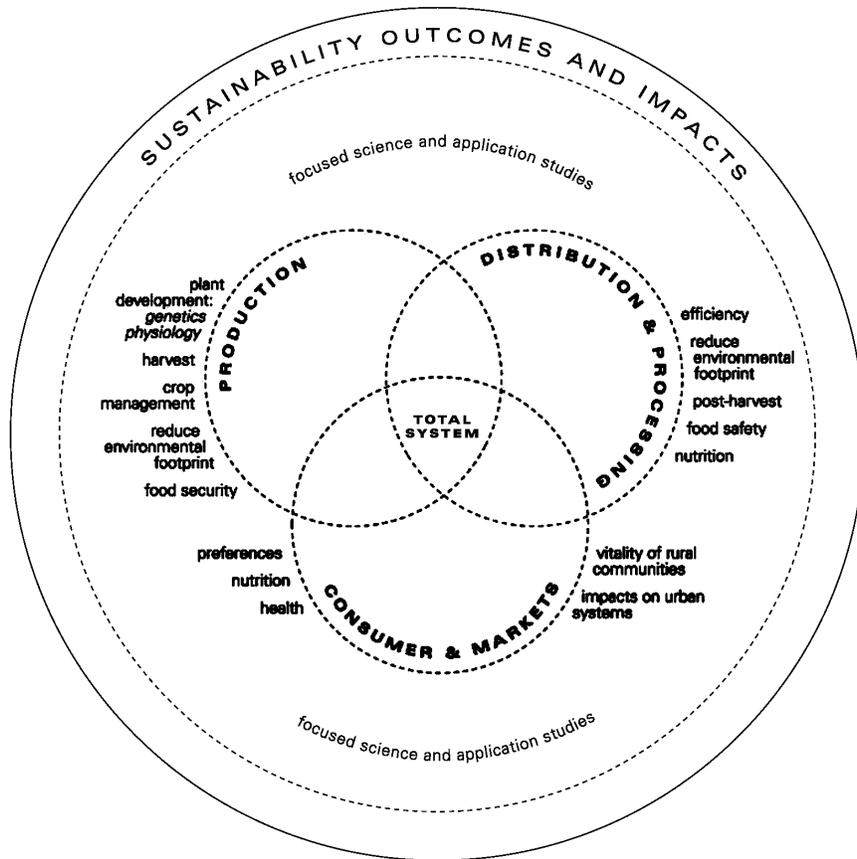
Please Note: In FY 2015, the SCRI/CDRE program will be competed in two stages. Applicants will be required to submit a pre-application containing a Stakeholder Relevance Statement (SRS). The content of the SRS is described in Section IV, B. of this RFA. Applicants whose SRSs are ranked highly enough **will be invited to submit full applications**. Invited full applications will undergo a scientific peer review. Review criteria for the SRS and invited full application review can be found in Section V, A. of this RFA. **Both the relevance review and the results of the scientific peer review are equally important when recommending applications for award.**

Applicants are strongly encouraged to propose a unique approach to solving problems facing the specialty crop industry using a systems approach:

A systems approach is any process of estimating or inferring how local policies, actions, or changes influence the state of the neighboring universe. It is a framework that is based on the belief that the component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. The only way to fully understand why a problem or element occurs and persists is to understand the part in relation to the whole.

The philosophy of the SCRI program is that truly effective, long-term solutions to specialty crop industry challenges can best be achieved by understanding and treating those problems as complex systems of many interacting components. This perspective requires projects that are larger in scope and complexity, and that demand more resources than have traditionally been allocated to individual research and extension projects.

In doing so, applications should focus on entire primary systems, or on areas where two or more primary systems overlap. For the purpose of this announcement, a primary system is one of the three main sectors of the specialty crop industry depicted in the graphic below: the production system; the processing and distribution system; and the consumer and marketing system. Meeting the challenges faced by these industries can best be handled by considering the full breadth of system components (see example components listed for each primary system), rather than treating each component in isolation and ignoring important interactions and conflicts among components that may reduce the viability of component-specific solutions in the long term.



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

We encourage you to go to the SCRI More Information page, www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/scri/scri.html, to view archived presentations from workshops on “Planning and Managing Systems Based Trans-disciplinary Projects for USDA/NIFA” to help you develop your application.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) Citrus Disease Research and Extension Program (CDRE) is authorized in section 412(j) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7632(j)), as added by section 7306 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), to award grants to eligible entities to:

- A. conduct scientific research and extension activities, technical assistance, and development activities to combat citrus diseases and pests, both domestic and invasive and including *huanglongbing* and the Asian citrus psyllid, which pose imminent harm to United States citrus production and threaten the future viability of the citrus industry; and
- B. provide support for the dissemination and commercialization of relevant information, techniques, and technologies discovered pursuant to research and extension activities funded through SCRI/CDRE and other research and extension projects targeting problems caused by citrus production diseases and invasive pests.

B. Purpose and Priorities

SCRI/CDRE supports Goals 1, 3 and 4 of the USDA Strategic Plan; Goal 1 of the REE Action Plan; and NIFA science goals 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7.

Based on consultation with the Citrus Disease Sub-committee (CDS) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB), which occurred on December 9 and 10, 2014, only applications that deal with the huanglongbing (HLB, citrus greening) complex or its management will be considered in FY 2015. Pre-applications proposing research and extension on other citrus diseases or citrus disease vectors will be returned without review.

The CDS has further identified 4 areas of particular interest, which are presented in order of importance to the industry:

1. Bacterial therapy systems that either kill or suppress *Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus* (CLAs)
2. Development of techniques and substrates that allow for CLAs to be cultured in artificial media
3. Development of methodologies that allow for the early detection of CLAs in non-symptomatic citrus plants and in *Diaphorina citri*, the insect vector of the pathogen
4. Development of rootstocks resistant to, or tolerant of, CLAs that are suitable for a wide range of growing environments.

The four priorities listed above are not intended to be exclusive but represent those areas that the CDS considers to be of highest priority for fiscal year 2015. Applications that deal with other areas of HLB/vector management will also be considered.

SCRI/CDRE seeks to address these challenges by funding systems-based, trans-disciplinary approaches. **PLEASE NOTE: For purposes of the SCRI/CDRE program, the term trans-disciplinary, is defined as a multi-disciplinary approach that brings biological and physical scientists together with economists and social scientists to address challenges in a holistic manner.** It is anticipated that successful applications will:

1. Engage stakeholders in collaborative ways to insure that the solutions developed are commercially feasible;
2. Bring together multi-state, multi-institutional teams of biological, physical, and social scientists to develop strategies and actions emphasizing **systems-based, trans-disciplinary** approaches for meeting the identified priorities, including an economic analysis of the costs and benefits associated with proposed solutions;
3. Address priorities through research and development, outreach, extension, technology transfer, and other efforts potentially leading to commercialization, where appropriate;
4. Present plans for documenting the impacts of funded applications that include stakeholder involvement; and
5. Include explicit mechanisms to communicate results to producers.

SCRI/CDRE provides support for the following four project types in FY 2015. These project types are described in more detail in Part II, C. Applicants should decide which project type is best suited to the objectives of their research and extension project and develop a budget that fits the objectives. Applicants are discouraged from developing a project (and selecting a project type) based on a budget request target.

1. Standard Research and Extension Projects (SREPs)

- a. Project Period – Up to five years.
- b. Budget – Normally, federal funds will not exceed \$1,000,000 per year. Requests less than \$250,000 per project are discouraged.
- c. Purpose – To support targeted problem-solving efforts that would not otherwise qualify in scope for support as a CAP project.
- d. It is anticipated that most awards will be in the range of \$2,000,000 to \$4,000,000 per project.

2. Coordinated Agricultural Projects (CAPs)

- a. Project Period – Three to five years.
- b. Funding range – Normally, federal funds will not exceed a total of \$2,000,000 per year.
- c. Purpose – To address specific multiple components of a primary system or multiple components of areas where primary systems overlap (see diagram on page 4).
- d. It is anticipated that most awards will be in the range of \$5,000,000 to \$7,000,000 per project.

3. eXtension Projects

- a. Project Period – Three to five years.
- b. Budget – Normally, federal funds will not exceed \$450,000 per project.
- c. Purpose – To develop new, or support existing, Communities of Practice, learning networks, or innovation hubs for the eXtension system.

4. Research and Extension Planning Projects

- a. Project Period – One year.
- b. Budget – Federal funds up to \$50,000 per project.
- c. Purpose – To provide assistance to applicants in the development of quality future SREP or CAP proposals (grant planning). Funds may also be requested to provide assistance to consumer, producer, or industry groups for developing strategic research and extension plans—including goals, objectives, priorities, etc. (strategic planning) that could provide an actionable industry roadmap, including providing input to future SCRI/CDRE grant applications.

This notice identifies the objectives for SCRI/CDRE projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a SCRI/CDRE award.

We encourage you to go to the SCRI More Information page, www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/scri/scri.html, to view archived presentations from workshops on “Planning and Managing Systems Based Trans-disciplinary Projects for USDA/NIFA” to help you develop your application.

Project applications must budget sufficient resources to carry out the proposed set of extension and research activities, must address at least one of the five legislatively mandated focus areas described below, and should describe the practical applications being sought. The intent of the SCRI/CDRE program is to promote collaboration, open communication, the exchange of information, and the development of resources that accelerate application of scientific discovery and technology to solve the needs of the citrus industry. The SCRI/CDRE program aims to reduce duplication of efforts and integrate activities among individuals, institutions, states, and regions. Therefore, applications should clearly articulate how a SCRI/CDRE award will complement and/or link with existing programs or projects.

1. Research in plant breeding, genetics, genomics, and other methods to improve citrus characteristics, such as:
 - a. product, taste, quality, and appearance;
 - b. environmental responses and tolerances;
 - c. nutrient management, including plant nutrient uptake efficiency;
 - d. pest and disease management, including resistance to pests and diseases resulting in reduced application management strategies; and
 - e. enhanced phytonutrient content.
2. Efforts to identify and address threats from pests and diseases, including threats to specialty crop pollinators;

3. Efforts to improve production efficiency, handling and processing, productivity, and profitability over the long term (including specialty crop policy and marketing);
4. New innovations and technology, including improved mechanization and technologies that delay or inhibit ripening; and
5. Methods to prevent, detect, monitor, control, and respond to potential food safety hazards in citrus production.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for NIFA support of this program in FY 2015 is approximately \$23 million. These funds will be awarded through **grants**. 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://fms.treas.gov/index1.html>.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2015, applications may be submitted to the SCRI program as one of the following two types of requests:

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

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

C. Project Types

Standard Research and Extension Projects (SREPs): In FY 2015, applicants submitting SREPs will be required to submit a SRS. See Section IV, B. for a description of the requirements for the contents of a SRS. SREP awards will support targeted problem-solving efforts that contribute to the overall sustainability of citrus production or one of its components, and that would not otherwise qualify in scope and effort for support as a Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP). Beginning with stakeholder-identified concerns, projects should seek solutions that lead to measurable benefit to producers. Applications should bring together both research and extension components of the agricultural knowledge system around a citrus disease or pest problem area or activity. Partnerships with end-user groups (*e.g.*, industry, processors, manufacturers, growers, technology providers) are strongly encouraged, as is the use of students in key research and extension roles (*e.g.*, internships and other opportunities for students to engage with stakeholders and their needs or student exchange opportunities across collaborating institutions). For each SREP award, there is an expectation that an advisory panel will be formed to inform the project throughout its life, including the identification and prioritization of research and extension objectives. Applications should detail the creation and functions of this panel. As

part of industry communication, the project should publish a web site by the end of the first year that can inform a broad audience regarding ongoing progress and outcomes. The project must contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of citrus production. Further, the project must bring together biological, physical, and social scientists, as appropriate to project goals and address economic, environmental, and social aspects of specialty crop sustainability. SREPs will have a project period ranging up to five years.

Applications must include, as an appendix, a timeline that clearly identifies which key personnel are involved in which objectives during each time segment of the project. This appendix should also identify short-, medium- and long-term metrics that will be used in project evaluation, the expectations for each team member, a mechanism whereby progress metrics can be evaluated, and how the project will complement and/or link to existing programs or projects.

Coordinated Agricultural Projects (CAPs): In FY 2015, applicants submitting CAPs will be required to submit a SRS. See Section IV, B. for a description of the requirements for the contents of a SRS. CAPs will be awarded to consortia or groups of qualified applicants to address multiple components of citrus production, with the expectation that the project will make significant contributions to the industry sustainability. These projects should apply trans-disciplinary, multi-functional, and, where appropriate, multi-institutional approaches to provide viable solutions to the highest priority stakeholder needs. An aim of a CAP award is to encourage maximum flexibility in applied research and extension. Applications will be evaluated based on how well their goals and objectives respond to current stakeholder needs. It is recognized, however, that as a project's comprehensive approach unfolds, unexpected advances and promising leads, or unforeseen new national needs related to project goals and objectives, may be identified. CAPs will have a project period ranging from three to five years.

CAP applications are expected to demonstrate coherent and complementary integrated activities with the ultimate goal of developing a strategy or solution that could be implemented for citrus production. Applications are expected to take advantage of recent advances in biological, physical, and social and economic sciences and to translate basic discoveries and knowledge to practical applications. The project must contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of citrus production. The application's methodology and analytical approach must be appropriate to project objectives and effectively combine research and extension activities. A continuity plan must describe how the partnership effort will continue beyond the period of NIFA funding and address future long-term plans for proposed activities. Applications are expected to demonstrate the potential to develop a national strategy or solution as an ultimate goal. This would include the intent to promote collaboration, open communication, the exchange of information and development of resources that accelerate the application of scientific discovery and technology to solving the needs of citrus industry. Such a national CAP should aim to reduce duplication of effort and integrate activities among individuals, institutions, states, and regions. Therefore, applications should clearly articulate how the national-scope CAP they are proposing would complement and/or link with existing programs or projects.

A CAP must seek to bring together a multi-state, multi-institutional, and/or trans-disciplinary team to integrate scientific discoveries and technology with practical application; and provide

complementary extension efforts to bring science-based information to relevant audiences that will allow them to make informed decisions. For each CAP award, there is an expectation that an advisory panel will inform the project throughout its life, including the identification and prioritization of research and/or extension objectives. Applications must detail the creation and functions of this panel. As part of industry communication, the project should publish a web site by the end of the first year that can inform a broad audience on progress and outcomes.

CAP teams should be comprised of members working in discovery, learning, and engagement to conduct research and extension utilizing systems science and trans-disciplinary approaches on an emerging or priority area important to citrus diseases and pests. This integrated team should contain expertise in biological science disciplines, physical science and engineering disciplines, socio- economic sciences, extension, and program evaluation, as appropriate, as well as expertise from principal stakeholders and partners. Partnerships with end-user groups (e.g., industry, processors, manufacturers, growers, technology providers) are strongly encouraged, along with the use of undergraduate students in key research and extension roles (e.g., internships and other opportunities for students to engage with stakeholders and their needs or student exchange opportunities across collaborating institutions). The application should outline the potential of the CAP team, its structure, coordination and plan of implementation.

There is an expectation that objectives may be redirected and/or new objectives may be developed with associated budget adjustments. To encourage flexibility, the program does not expect that all investigators associated with the proposed project will be supported throughout its duration. Applications must include, as an appendix, a budgeted project management plan and timeline to ensure efficient functioning of the CAP team. A timeline chart that clearly identifies which key personnel are involved in which objectives during each time segment of the project is particularly helpful. This plan should include an organizational chart, administrative timeline, a description of how the project will be governed, intellectual property management, and identification of short-, medium- and long-term metrics that will be used in project evaluation, the expectations for each team member, a mechanism whereby progress metrics can be evaluated, and how the project will complement and/or link to existing programs or projects to include multi- disciplinary, multi-institutional, multi-state and trans-disciplinary collaborations. Given the size and scope of CAP projects, applicants are strongly encouraged to budget for a half-time or full-time (as appropriate) project management position to deal with day-to-day project operations and coordination. The management plan must include a strategy to become self-supporting by the end of the project period. See Part IV, B (3) (c) – Field 11 for attachment instructions.

Applications must include, as an appendix, a budgeted plan and timeline for an advisory group of principal stakeholders and scientists relevant to the proposed research and extension projects (e.g., include letters of commitment and rationale for their role) to assess and evaluate the quality, potential outcomes, and impacts, and how they could function effectively to support the goals and objectives of the CAP). See Part IV, B (3) (c) – Field 11 for attachment instructions.

eXtension Projects. In FY 2015, applicants submitting eXtension project applications will be required to submit a SRS. See Section IV, B. for a description of the requirements for the

contents of a SRS. NIFA encourages the development of information and educational content using current and emerging technologies to advance the widespread adoption of research-based practices and technologies by producers and other end users. Groups of qualified individuals will receive grants to develop new or to enhance eXtension: (1) Communities of Practice (CoPs), (2) Learning Networks, or (3) Innovation Hubs. Interested applicants are strongly urged to review the recently published framework for the NEW eXtension (<http://bit.ly/InnovStratFrame>) that outlines eXtension's transition to a new governance, a collaborating and innovating organization, a broad and expanding toolkit of delivery models, and an entrepreneurial resource base.

If the proposal involves creation of a new eXtension team (CoP, learning network, or innovation hub), instead of enhancing or expanding an existing one, then strong justification is needed for such creation in the application. Proposals to establish a new team or to enhance an existing one should include a letter of acknowledgement from eXtension (<http://create.extension.org/node/2057>). If proposing establishment of a new team, an application must clearly demonstrate that it has surveyed existing CoPs, learning networks, and innovation hubs and articulate how the proposed team will complement and coordinate with the existing base of related teams to avoid duplication of effort and to leverage resources. If the proposed work will expand an existing team, the applicant should contact the leader of the appropriate team to explore options for collaboration early in the proposal development process. This will allow sufficient time for collaborative development of the plan of work and budget, as well as obtaining letters of collaboration from both eXtension and the target team. All key personnel for an application should be registered with eXtension.org and have user accounts.

eXtension applications typically will include funds to support core functions (e.g., community development, content development, travel, technology support, communication, evaluation, etc.) and development of project-specific deliverables for integration into eXtension. Budgets should include supporting funds for both core and project-specific functions.

The application must demonstrate an understanding and application of a whole system(s) approach with the potential for the project to contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of specialty crop production efficiency, handling and processing and marketing systems. The project must bring together biological, physical, and social scientists, as appropriate, to project goals to address economic, environmental, and social aspects of specialty crop sustainability.

In addition to addressing the relevance criteria established for the SCRI/CDRE, eXtension applications should also address in their narrative the steps listed on the eXtension web site (<http://create.extension.org/node/2057>). eXtension applications will have a project period of three to five years.

Please see the following links for more information:

eXtension

<http://about.extension.org/>

The NEW eXtension Strategic Framework

<http://bit.ly/InnovStratFrame>

Communities of Practice

<http://about.extension.org/createcop/>

Research and Extension Planning Projects. In FY 2015, applicants submitting Research and Extension Planning Projects will be required to submit a SRS. See Section IV, B. for a description of the requirements for the contents of a SRS. Research and Extension Planning Projects are intended to support two types of activities, either to: (1) provide assistance to applicants in the development of quality future SREP or CAP proposals (grant planning) or (2) provide assistance to consumer, producer, or industry groups for developing strategic research and extension plans—including goals, objectives, priorities, etc. (strategic planning). The expectation is that developed “plans” could provide the relevance bases for future SCRI grant applications. Priority will be given to applicants who can: (1) demonstrate limited resources for either submitting large grant applications or for supporting strategic planning activities on their own, (2) articulate benefits to be accrued from formal planning activities, and (3) provide evidence of a high likelihood that quality future applications would be submitted for SCRI/CDRE projects (desired for grant planning) or would result in a publicly available strategic plan, which could be used to support a variety of industry-relevant research and extension activities, including development of one or more future SCRI/CDRE grant applications (desired for strategic planning). Research and Extension Planning Project grants do not support preliminary research. However, support for stakeholder survey activities may be requested, where appropriate and necessary.

Grant planning applications are encouraged to bring together biological, physical, and socio-economic scientists and others, as appropriate, including end-users and technology providers, to identify research and/or extension needs, update information, and advance understanding of specialty crop issues and problems. This information should be used to build teams that can develop SCRI/CDRE applications to address the identified challenges using a systems-based, trans-disciplinary approach. The application must develop a whole system(s) approach with the potential for the project to contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of specialty crop production efficiency, handling and processing or marketing systems. Project goals must address economic, environmental, and social aspects of specialty crop sustainability. These activities can take the form of workshops or symposia and may constitute an initial step in preparing an SCRI/CDRE application in subsequent years. Applicants should be careful to ensure that participants represent a broad range of expertise by detailing the types of participants who will be invited. Note: The intent of these planning projects is to foster collaboration and networking opportunities to enhance the preparation of future high-quality grant applications. To convey to the review panel that grant planning can successfully lead to a quality grant application, the application should also incorporate the necessary activities and resources for grant development and writing.

Strategic planning applications are encouraged to bring together stakeholders representing various sizes of operations, scientific expertise, specialty crop associations, technology and service providers, and representation from entities along the product value chain, as appropriate,

to develop a strategic plan that addresses short-, medium-, and long-term citrus industry interests. The key expected outcome from this planning effort will be a publicly available strategic planning document. Such a document could be used subsequently to inform and direct critical research and extension activities, including development of SCRICDRE applications that address the plan's stated goals and priorities. Applications should include the anticipated meeting schedule in detail, participants identified by organizational affiliation, proposed meetings and other activities, and how the plan will be produced and distributed. Strategic planning projects are sought particularly to address the needs of limited-acreage crops and under-served or under-represented populations of producers, processors, distributors, retailers, etc.

Research and Extension Planning Proposal awards of Federal funds will not exceed \$50,000, and are not renewable. It is expected that planning activities supported by this program will occur within 12 months of awards being issued. Proposals should demonstrate measurable, cost effective benefits from any planning activities requested.

D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR) is critical for excellence, as well as public trust, in science and engineering. Consequently, we consider education in RCR essential to the preparation of future scientists. In accordance with sections 2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422, institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Per award terms and conditions, grant recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training.

Note that the training referred to herein shall be either on-campus or off-campus training. The general content of the ethics training will, at a minimum, emphasize three key areas of research ethics: authorship and plagiarism, data and research integration, and reporting misconduct. Each institution will be responsible for developing its own training system, as schools will need flexibility to develop training tailored to their specific student needs. Grantees should consider the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program for RCR (<https://www.citiprogram.org/rcrpage.asp>). Typically this RCR education addresses the topics of: Data Acquisition and Management - collection, accuracy, security, access; Authorship and Publication; Peer Review; Mentor/Trainee Responsibilities; Collaboration; Conflict of Interest; Research Misconduct; Human Subject Research; and Use of Animals in Research.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

For SCRI/CDRE, applications may be submitted by Federal agencies, national laboratories, colleges and universities, research institutions and organizations, private organizations or corporations, State Agricultural Experiment Stations, individuals, or groups consisting of two or more of these entities.

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

In accordance with section 1492 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3371), as added by section 7128 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), for grants awarded after October 1, 2014, the recipient of an award from the **SCRI/CDRE program** must provide funds, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both, from sources other than funds provided through such grant in an amount that is at least equal to the amount awarded by NIFA. The matching funds requirement does not apply to grants awarded:

1. To a research agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); or
2. To an entity eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program (as defined in section 251(f)(1)(C) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, 7 U.S.C. 6971(f)(1)(C)), including a partner (see Part VIII, E. Definitions for definition of partnership) of such an entity.

Entities eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program and exempt from the matching funds requirement include:

- a. 1862 Land-grant Institutions, including State Agricultural Experiment Stations receiving funding under the Hatch Act of 1887
- b. 1890 Land-grant Institutions
- c. 1994 Land-grant Institutions
- d. Recipients of Continuing Animal Health and Disease, Food Security, and Stewardship Research, Education, and Extension Program Funds — Capacity and Infrastructure Program (CIP)
- e. Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU)
- f. Insular Area Schools Eligible to Receive Funds from the Distance Education/Resident Instruction Grant Programs
- g. Recipients of McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program Funds

- h. Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) – (for exemption from the new matching requirement, these applications must include NLGCA certification, see instructions for requesting certification at <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/form/form.html>, and for attaching the certification in Part IV, C. of this RFA)
- i. Recipients of funds under a program established under section 1417(b) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)), including: (1) 1890 Institution Teaching, Research, and Extension Capacity Building Grants Program; (2) Higher Education Challenge Grants Program; (3) Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program; and (4) Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Grants Program
- j. Individual public or private, nonprofit Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions of higher education (see 20 U.S.C. 1059d).

A proposal submitted in response to this RFA may indicate that the work will be completed by multiple entities as a collaborative partnership. All partners must have a substantial involvement in the project throughout the life of the project. If a partnership among multiple entities is proposed, the proposal must clearly identify the following:

- 1) A narrative of each entity's clearly established role in the project;
- 2) How each entity involved as a partner on the project will contribute to execution of project objectives, determination of experimental design, development of the project work plan and time table, and submission of collaborative, timely reports; and
- 3) A comprehensive project budget that reflects each entity's financial or third party in-kind contribution (see section 2 of 7 CFR 3430 or section 96 of 2 CFR part 200) to the total project budget costs.

If a proposal indicates that the work on the project will be completed by multiple entities as partners, and at least one entity is exempt from the matching requirement under #2 above, the entire project will be exempt from the matching requirement regardless of whether all entities involved are otherwise exempt. Any partner entity can serve as the lead entity on the project. All partners must be significantly involved in the project.

After proposals have been recommended for award, NIFA will determine if the submitted proposal and proposed division of work reflects substantial involvement of all entities involved. If a proposal is recommended for award to a lead entity not otherwise exempt from the matching requirement and the proposal does not reflect substantial involvement of at least one partner that is exempt under #2 above, then the matching requirement will apply. Exemption from the matching requirement for an entity not otherwise exempt is limited to the project for which it is a partner.

Waiver of Match - NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a recipient for one year with respect to a competitive grant that involves research or extension activities that are consistent with the priorities established by the National Agricultural Research, Extension,

Education and Economics Advisory Board for the year involved. To determine whether proposed activities are consistent with the priorities of the NAREEEAB, please refer to the [2014 Research, Education and Economics Action Plan](#). Instructions for requesting a waiver are included in Part IV, C. of this RFA.

C. Centers of Excellence

Pursuant to Section 7214 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), beginning in Fiscal Year 2015, for applicable competitive research and extension programs, NIFA will be recognizing and providing priority in the receipt of funding to applications from “centers of excellence” that have been established for purposes of carrying out research, extension, and education activities relating to the food and agricultural sciences. In July of 2014, NIFA held listening sessions and accepted written comments from stakeholders to inform NIFA’s implementation of the centers of excellence provision. Information from the webinars and a summary of the input gathered are available on NIFA’s website at http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/offices/legis/cntr_ex_webinar_documents.html.

A center of excellence is composed of 1 or more of the following entities that provide financial or in-kind support to the center of excellence. Therefore, an eligible applicant who wishes to be considered as a center of excellence must be one of the following entities that provides financial or in-kind support to the center being proposed, as described in the grant application.

- (A) State agricultural experiment stations;
- (B) colleges and universities;
- (C) university research foundations;
- (D) other research institutions and organizations;
- (E) Federal agencies;
- (F) national laboratories;
- (G) private organizations, foundations, or corporations;
- (H) individuals; or
- (I) any group consisting of 2 or more of the entities described in (A) through (H).

For CDRE, only SREP and CAP applications will be considered for center of excellence designation. See Part IV, C. of this RFA for additional requirements that eligible applicants must meet to be considered a center of excellence.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

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

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, we recommend that the Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) first contact an Authorized Representative (AR, also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) 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.** Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the registration process. Refer item 2. below to locate the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide”.

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

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-SCRI-005035

in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

3. Invited applicants will be provided with a funding opportunity number for full applications. In order to access the application materials, applicants will have to enter the funding opportunity number rather than using the search function.

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 (see <https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants>):
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

B. Submission of Stakeholder Relevance Statements

Stakeholder Relevance Statements (SRSs) are required for all SCRI/CDRE project types. SRSs must be submitted as an attachment to a pre-application in the portable document format (PDF). SRSs that are not submitted in PDF format will not be transmitted from Grants.gov to NIFA and pre-applications not containing an SRS will be rejected.

Content of Stakeholder Relevance Statement for Research and Extension Planning Projects

- a. Title of Project
- b. Type of planning activity to be undertaken (i.e. grant planning or strategic planning)
- c. Anticipated amount of funding to be requested
- d. Name, professional title, affiliation and email address of the project director
- e. Name, professional title and affiliation of all known collaborators, including industry stakeholders
- f. Brief description of the stakeholder problem being addressed
- g. Brief description of relevant expertise represented by the project team
- h. Description of the planning activities to be undertaken and the expected outcomes of the planning process
- i. Brief description of the benefits to growers/processors/consumers and how that benefit will be documented and evaluated
- j. Letters of collaboration from all known industry stakeholders

PLEASE NOTE: SRSs for Planning Projects cannot exceed 4 pages in length, exclusive of the letters of collaboration. Pages must be formatted with margins of at least 1 inch on all sides. Text must be 12 point or larger and must be left justified. Detailed budgets and budget narratives **ARE NOT** required in the SRS. **The SRS must be submitted in the portable document format (PDF).**

Content of the Stakeholder Relevance Statement for SREP, CAP, and eXtension Projects

- a. Title of the project;
- b. Type of project to be submitted (i.e. SREP, CAP, eXtension);
- c. Anticipated amount of funding to be requested. [Please note: Because the scientific merit review panel will help verify that the pre-application and full-application projects are essentially identical, which includes the funds requested, the budget in a subsequent full application should not deviate substantially from the amount listed here in the pre-application.];
- d. Description of how the proposed project builds on previous efforts to combat HLB;
- e. Description of how the proposed project will contribute to the sustainability of the citrus industry in the presence of HLB;
- f. How stakeholders were engaged in defining the problem being addressed and determining project objectives;
- g. How stakeholders will continue to be engaged in project development and evaluation;
- h. How information developed during the project will be translated into actionable recommendations or products and delivered to end-users;
- i. Experience of PD and key co-investigators (6 max) in working with the specific stakeholder community and in dealing with the problem identified (a bio of up to 200 words can be included for each);
- j. List of project objectives with corresponding hypotheses to be tested;
- k. Outline of methodology to be used to achieve project objectives (NB: the list of objectives and the methodology outline, combined, should consume no more than one page);
- l. Logic model chart; and
- m. Letters of support and collaboration from industry stakeholders.

PLEASE NOTE: The SRS cannot exceed 7 pages in length, exclusive of industry letters of collaboration and support. The SRS must be formatted with margins no less than 1 inch on all sides. Text must be 12 point or larger and must be left justified. Detailed budgets and budget narratives **ARE NOT** required in the SRS. **The SRS must be submitted in the portable document format (PDF).**

The SRS should be prepared following Parts IV and V of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following **additional information** is needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

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

- a. **Field 1. Type of Submission.** Click the “Pre-application” box.
- b. **Field 15. Enter Estimated Project Funding.** Enter the anticipated amount of funding to be requested.
- c. **Field 20. Pre-application.** Click on “Add Attachment” to attach the Stakeholder Relevance Statement.

2. Supplemental Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- a. **Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “Citrus Disease Research and Extension”) and the program code (i.e., enter “CDRE”).
- 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. Content and Form of Invited 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. Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or that attachments are in PDF format; see Part III section 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. 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).

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.

- a. **Submission of invited full applications will require entering the grant number from the SRS in box 4b.** The grant number will be in the following format: “GRANT 11234567”. It is NOT the number beginning with the submission fiscal year. Failure to include this number will result in rejection of the application.

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.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to use the Project Summary template available through grants.gov. The Project Summary may not exceed **250 words** on one page, and should clearly indicate the appropriate project type (as described in Part I (C)). The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of the SCRI/CDRE. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. This word and page limitation applies regardless of whether figures or tables are included. These limits have been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Research and Extension Planning Projects must *also* state the objectives of any workshop or symposia as well as the proposed location and probable date(s) of the activity.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

NOTE: The Project Narrative section may not exceed a total of 20 single- or double-spaced pages, including figures and tables. The Introduction may not exceed 5 pages. **Research and Extension Planning Project narratives may not exceed 12 single- or double-spaced pages, including figures and tables.** These SCRI page limitations apply regardless of whether figures or tables are included. All pages, including those with figures and tables, should be numbered sequentially. Applications exceeding the applicable page limitation will be at risk of being excluded from review. These maximums have been established to ensure fair and equitable competition.

The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

- (i) In addition to the other components of the Project Narrative, all applications must include a **one-page response** to the results of the industry relevancy review. The response to the industry relevancy review **is not** counted against the page limit.
- (ii) In addition to the other components of the Project Narrative, resubmitted applications must provide a detailed response to the previous review. The response should be as concise as possible. There is a **five-page limit** to responses. If available, please include the Grants.gov

number or NIFA proposal number of the previous submission. The response to the previous review **is not** counted against the page limit of the Project Narrative.

(iii) In addition to the other components of the Project Narrative, renewal applications must provide a progress report detailing, for each objective of the original project award: (1) project activities, both completed and continuing; (2) results and outputs from those activities; and (3) significant outcomes and impacts. The report should be as concise as possible, and is **limited to five pages**. If available, please include the NIFA proposal number or award number from the original project. The progress report **is not** counted against the page limit of the Project Narrative.

(iv) Immediately following the response to the industry relevancy review, and the response to the previous review of resubmitted applications, if applicable, or the progress report for renewal applications, all applications must include the following information in a combined executive summary and table of contents (table format preferred). The combined executive summary and table of contents **should not be more than five pages**, but **does not** count toward the narrative's page limitation. Applications without an executive summary will **NOT** be considered for funding. The executive summary should include the following elements:

1. Project title
2. Project type (see Part II, C)
3. List the legislatively mandated focus area(s) being addressed (see Part I, B), and provide an estimate of the percentage of effort/funds dedicated to each (sum of percentages should equal 100 percent).
4. Program Staff – include name, title, affiliation, address, and e-mail for PD(s), Co-PD(s) and Key Personnel (please see the definitions section for the role and responsibilities of PD, Co-PD, etc.).
5. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) describing the critical stakeholder need addressed by the project and the project's long-term goals (provide cross-references to full descriptions in the narrative).
6. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) of the outreach plan proposed by the project (provide a cross-reference to the full description in the narrative).
7. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) describing potential economic, social, and environmental benefits (Who benefits and how?).
8. Logic Model Requirement: Except for planning grant applications, projects must include the elements of a logic model detailing the activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. This information must be formatted into a logic model chart. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated_logic_model.html.

(v) Introduction (may not exceed 5 pages). List the following:

1. Provide a clear statement of the long-term goal(s), the critical need(s) of specialty crop industries being addressed, and supporting outreach objectives or research questions.
2. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project.

3. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Applications should also demonstrate how duplication of effort with similar activities by others will be avoided.
4. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed work should be included in this section. All works cited should be referenced and attached at Field 9 on the Form, Bibliography & Reference Cited. Refer to Part V, 4.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

(vi) Rationale and Significance. Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed research and/or extension activities. The specific relationship of the project's objectives to one or more of the SCRI focus areas should be clearly shown. These purposes and focus areas are described under Part I, B, Purpose and Priorities. Any novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers should also be discussed in this section.

(vii) Approach – **For CAPs, SREPs, and eXtension Projects** (*for Research and extension Planning Projects see (vii) below.*) The activities proposed or problems being addressed must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:

1. A description of the activities proposed, key personnel or institution roles in those activities, and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed (a Gant chart or other “task X time” representation of project activities is desirable);
2. Methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods. Clearly describe the systems thinking used in the project methodology and the contribution of trans-disciplinary approaches;
3. Expected outcomes, including how the project contributes to long-term profitability and sustainability of the citrus industry;
4. Means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted;
5. How results or products will be used;
6. Outreach plan: including, how and where appropriate, science-based tools will be disseminated, participants involved in delivery, and how impacts will be measured;
7. Pitfalls that may be encountered;
8. Limitations to proposed procedures; and
9. A full explanation of any materials, procedures, situations, or activities related to the project that may be hazardous to personnel, along with an outline or precautions to be exercised to avoid or mitigate the effects of such hazards.
10. For **SREPs**, provide a timeline that clearly identifies which key personnel are involved in which objectives during each time segment of the project. Also identify short-, medium- and long-term metrics that will be used in project evaluation, the expectations for each team member, a mechanism whereby progress metrics can be evaluated, and how the project will complement and/or link to existing programs or projects. This description cannot exceed 3 pages in length and **does not** count against the page limit.
11. For **CAPs**, provide the details of a project management plan and timeline. A timeline chart that clearly identifies which key personnel are involved in which objectives during each time segment of the project is particularly helpful. This plan should include an organizational chart, administrative timeline, a description of how the project will be governed, intellectual property management, and identification of short-, medium- and

long-term metrics that will be used in project evaluation, the expectations for each team member, a mechanism whereby progress metrics can be evaluated, and how the project will complement and/or link to existing programs or projects to include multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional, multi-state and trans-disciplinary collaborations. The management plan must include a strategy to become self-supporting by the end of the project period. This description cannot exceed 5 pages and **does not** count against the page limit.

12. For all project types except Planning Projects, include a plan and timeline for the recruitment and functioning of an advisory group of principal stakeholders and scientists, as appropriate, relevant to the proposed research and extension projects to assess and evaluate the quality, potential outcomes, and impacts, and how they could function effectively to support the goals and objectives of the project. This description cannot exceed 3 pages and **does not** count against the page limit.

(viii) **Approach – For Research and Extension Planning Projects:**

1. A justification for the meeting (see Part II, C);
2. Recent meetings on the same subject with dates and locations;
3. Names and organizational affiliations of the chair and other members of the organizing committee;
4. A proposed program (or agenda) for the activity, including a listing of scheduled participants and their institutional affiliations (see Part II, C);
5. Expected outcomes, including how the planning project expects to contribute to the development of a successful application for a SCRI/CDRE CAP or SREP (grant planning) or produce an actionable research and extension roadmap for the industry (strategic planning); and
6. The method of announcement or invitation that will be used.

(ix) **Center of Excellence Justification**

For CDRE, only SREP and CAP applications will be considered for center of excellence designation.

In addition to meeting the other requirements detailed in Part IV, C., of this Request for Application (RFA), eligible applicants who wish to be considered as centers of excellence must provide a brief justification statement, as part of their Project Narratives and within the page limits provided, describing how they meet the standards of a center of excellence, based on the following criteria:

(A) the ability of the center of excellence to ensure coordination and cost effectiveness by reducing unnecessarily duplicative efforts regarding research, teaching, and extension in the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application;

(B) in addition to any applicable matching requirements, the ability of the center of excellence to leverage available resources by using public-private partnerships among agricultural industry groups, institutions of higher education, and the Federal Government in the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application. Resources leveraged should be commensurate with the size of the award;

(C) the planned scope and capability of the center of excellence to implement teaching initiatives to increase awareness and effectively disseminate solutions to target audiences through extension activities in the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application; and

(D) the ability or capacity of the center of excellence to increase the economic returns to rural communities by identifying, attracting, and directing funds to high-priority agricultural issues in support of and as a result of the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application.

Additionally, where practicable (not required), center of excellence applicants should describe proposed efforts to improve teaching capacity and infrastructure at colleges and universities (including land-grant colleges and universities, cooperating forestry schools, certified Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) (list of certified NLGCA is available at http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/pdfs/nlgca_colleges.pdf), and schools of veterinary medicine).

PLEASE NOTE: The complete Stakeholder Relevance Statement, along with all letters of support and collaboration, the industry reviewer scores and comments, and the rank of each pre-application invited to submit a full application will be appended to the full application once it is accepted from grants.gov. **Therefore, it is not necessary for applicants to include letters of support as part of the full application.** Letters of collaboration from individuals not identified in the SRS should be included in the full application.

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This section of the Guide includes information about the people who require a Senior/Key Person Profile, and details about the Biographical Sketch and the Current and Pending Support, including a link to a suggested template for the Current and Pending Support.

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

6. R&R Budget

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

Matching: If you conclude that the project meets the criteria for a waiver and wish to seek approval for a waiver (as specified under Part III, B.), **a justification should be included in the Budget Narrative.** NIFA will consider this justification when ascertaining final matching requirements. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements.

For those projects where a waiver is not sought, applications shall include written verification of commitments of matching support from all sources (including both cash and fair market value of

in-kind contributions from third parties). The matching amount must be at least equal to the amount awarded through SCRI/CDRE. All matching must be secured to be considered. The applicant must provide evidence of the required amount of matching prior to award and the information should be included in the proposal. Written verification means:

(a) For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization (and the applicant organization ONLY if provided after submission of the application), must include: (1) The donor's name, address, and telephone number; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation (the budget narrative must describe how the cash donation will be used); (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period; and (6) whether the applicant can designate cash as the applicant deems necessary or the cash contribution has been designated to a particular budget item.

(b) For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization (and the applicant organization ONLY if provided after submission of the application), must include: (1) The donor's name, address, and telephone number; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project; (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in-kind contribution and a description of how the fair market value was determined; and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

Summarize on a separate page the sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant institution and place that information in the proposal as part of the Budget Narrative. You must place all pledge agreements in the proposal immediately following the summary of matching support.

Establish the value of applicant contributions in accordance with applicable cost principles. Refer to 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

Additional Budget Information

For Research and Extension Planning Projects: The budget for the planning activity may include an appropriate amount for transportation and subsistence costs for participants and for other related costs. Planning awards of federal funds will not exceed \$50,000 and are not renewable. Include an itemized breakdown of all support requested in the Budget Justification (Field K. of the R&R Budget).

Project Director Workshop: It is the intent of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative to require successful applicants or a designee to attend at least two project director workshops during the term of their project. For the purposes of budget development, applicants are required to request funds for attending at least two such workshops. The request for these funds should be clearly indicated in the budget narrative section of the application. Please note: this workshop requirement is waived for recipients of planning grant awards.

7. Supplemental Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- c. Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “Citrus Disease Research and Extension”) and the program code (i.e., enter “CDRE”). Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application.
- d. 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.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Prior to electronic submission of the application via Grants.gov, it is strongly recommended that an administrative review be conducted to ensure that an application complies with all application preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review. SCRI/CDRE also has unique requirements, such as the inclusion of a project logic model, and applicants should ensure that all required components are included.

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

1. Complete, **stakeholder relevance statements (pre-applications)** must be received in Grants.gov by **5:00 PM Eastern time on June 1, 2015.**
2. Complete, **INVITED** full applications must be received in Grants.gov by **5:00 PM Eastern time on August 14, 2015.**

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 15 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.**

E. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Costs

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 amended section 1462(a) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs to 22 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award.

PLEASE NOTE: In Fiscal Year 2015, SCRI/CDRE applicants will not be permitted to use unrecovered indirect costs to meet the matching requirement for this program. The Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) did not include a provision to continue this practice.

Special Notices:

1. NIFA will withhold all funds for a SCRI award to an applicant requesting indirect costs if the applicant has not negotiated an indirect cost rate with its cognizant federal agency.
2. If a grantee is in the process of negotiating an indirect cost rate with its federal agency, NIFA will withhold all funds from that grantee until the indirect cost rate has been established.
3. If an institution's indirect cost rate has expired or will expire in the near future, a clear statement on renegotiation efforts must be included in the application. (See Part IV, D.6. SF 424 (R&R) Budget Fed & Non-Fed).
4. It is incumbent on all applicants to have a current indirect cost rate or begin negotiations to establish an indirect cost rate prior to the SCRI submission deadline. Because it may take several months to obtain an indirect cost rate, applicants needing an indirect cost rate are encouraged to start work on establishing these rates well in advance of submitting a SCRI application.
5. In lieu of requesting indirect costs (if the applicant does not have a negotiated rate), an applicant may prepare a budget in which all charges in the budget are included as direct costs.

2. Construction and Renovation

Funds made available under SCRI shall not be used for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

F. 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

The Agriculture Act of 2014 mandates that USDA/NIFA consult with the Specialty Crop Committee of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board in developing the review process and evaluation criteria for SCRI and SCRI/CDRE. Based on these consultations, SCRI/CDRE has instituted a two-phase review process. The first phase of the review process is the Industry Relevancy Review. Each Stakeholder Relevance Statement (SRS) will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each SRS will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Administrative requirements include: meeting the application deadline; meeting eligibility requirements; satisfying program intent; inclusion of all required sections of the SRS package; and adherence to guidelines. An SRS that meets these requirements will be evaluated for relevance.

For the purposes of the Industry Relevancy Review, reviewers will be selected from: (a) persons directly involved in the growing, handling and processing of specialty crops; or (b) persons representing those defined in (a) above through trade organizations or other professional associations.

Reviewers will review each pre-application and give it a score based on the criteria in Section V, B. The results of the Industry Relevancy Review, including ranking, will be provided to peer reviewers during the second phase of the review process and will be considered during the ranking that occurs in that second phase of the SCRI/CDRE review process.

The second phase of the SCRI/CDRE review will be a scientific peer review of invited full applications. Each full application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Administrative requirements include: meeting the application deadline; evidence that the application was invited for submission; meeting eligibility requirements; satisfying program intent; providing evidence of 100 percent non-federal matching funds if the applicant is required to do so; and including all required sections of the application package. Applications that meet these requirements will be evaluated for technical merit by a scientific peer review panel.

Section 7301 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 amended section 103(a) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) (7 U.S.C. 7613(a)), to require that Peer and Merit review procedures *shall not* take the offer or availability of matching funds into consideration. Therefore, while matching is required for certain applicants under SCRI/CDRE, it will only be considered as part of the administrative review of applications and will not be included in the Peer and Merit Review (see Part III, B for more information).

Scientific peer review panelists will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as

well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (d) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and gender representation and age distribution; and (e) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA. In each case, the review criteria are listed in decreasing order of importance.

Criteria for Stakeholder Relevance Review for Planning Projects

1. The problem being addressed is significant at a national or regional level
2. Addressing the problem will result in benefits to growers/processors/consumers. The project will result in a partnership between a sector of the citrus industry and a scientific community
3. The project fully integrates research and extension
4. The project team represents a trans-disciplinary approach to problem solving
5. The project will result in a systems approach to insuring the sustainability of the citrus industry

Criteria for Stakeholder Relevance Review for SREP, CAP, and eXtension Projects

1. The proposed project builds on previous research and has real potential to result in systems to maintain the sustainability of citrus production in the U.S. (either regionally or nationally) in the presence of HLB.
2. The described research and extension approach will result in impacts/outcomes that are important to the target stakeholders.
3. Stakeholders were involved in identifying and developing project goals and objectives.
4. Plans are in place for stakeholders to remain actively engaged in project activities.
5. Information developed by the project team will be delivered to stakeholders in ways that allow them to implement new and/or improved practices.
6. Stakeholders will be involved in program evaluation.
7. Project team has at least some members who have worked with the target stakeholders in the past and have experience with the described research and extension approach.

Criteria for Scientific Peer Review

Criteria for Standard Research and Extension Projects (SREPs)

1. Conceptual adequacy. Application clearly states objectives that are potentially attainable within project time, scope and budget.
2. Design. The application's methodology and analytical approach are appropriate to project objectives, and effectively combines research and extension activities. The application demonstrates understanding of a whole system(s) approach and discusses how the project will contribute to an integrated systems solution to the identified problem. Even if a single component is the focus of the project, the proposal must provide a thorough analysis of the broader systems context and why that component is critical and why the solution offered will lead to an improved system in economic, ecological, and social terms. The project must contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of specialty crop production efficiency, handling and processing, or marketing systems.
3. Involvement of appropriate, relevant expertise and use of trans-disciplinary approach. Application documents that the project brings together expertise in biological science disciplines, physical science and engineering disciplines, socio-economic sciences, extension, and program evaluation, as appropriate, as well as expertise from principal stakeholders and partners. Project goals should address economic, environmental, and social aspects of specialty crop.
4. Outreach plan. Application includes a detailed outreach plan based on the project logic model that includes project benefits and a description of how impacts will be measured, including the likelihood that the project will provide solutions that lead to measurable benefits to producers and consumers.
5. Feasibility, probability of success, including the likelihood that the project will contribute to the overall sustainability of a component or primary system.
6. Appropriateness of budget.

Center of Excellence Status

All eligible applicants will be competitively peer reviewed (as described in Part V, A. and B. of this RFA), and ranked in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Those that rank highly meritorious and requested to be considered as a center of excellence will be further evaluated by the peer panel to determine whether they have met the standards to be centers of excellence (Part III C. and Part IV C.). In instances where they are found to be equally meritorious with the application of a non-center of excellence, based on peer review, selection for funding will be weighed in favor of applicants meeting the center of excellence criteria. NIFA will effectively use the center of excellence prioritization as a "tie breaker". Applicants that rank highly meritorious but who did not request consideration as a center of excellence or who are not deemed to have met the centers of excellence standards may still receive funding.

In addition, the applicant's Notice of Award will reflect that, for the particular grant program, the applicant meets all of the requirements of a center of excellence. Entities recognized as centers of excellence will maintain that distinction for the duration of their period of performance or as identified in the terms and conditions of that award.

Criteria for Coordinated Agricultural Projects (CAPs)

1. Conceptual adequacy. Application clearly states objectives that are potentially attainable within project time, scope, and budget.
2. Design. The application's methodology and analytical approach are appropriate to project objectives, a continuity plan addresses future long-term plans for the proposed activities, and the project effectively combines research and extension activities. The application demonstrates an understanding of a whole system(s) approach and *applies* that approach to overcoming the identified problem. The project must contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of specialty crop production efficiency, handling and processing or marketing systems.
3. Involvement of appropriate, relevant expertise and use of trans-disciplinary approach. Application documents that the project brings together expertise in biological science disciplines, physical science, engineering disciplines, socio-economic sciences. The application should include appropriate extension activity, and program evaluation and the application documents should include expertise from principal stakeholders and partners. Project goals should address economic, environmental, **and** social aspects of specialty crop sustainability.
4. Outreach plan. Application includes a detailed outreach plan based on the project logic model that includes project benefits and a description of how impacts will be measured.
5. Feasibility, probability of success.
6. Appropriateness of budget.

Center of Excellence Status

All eligible applicants will be competitively peer reviewed (as described in Part V, A. and B. of this RFA), and ranked in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Those that rank highly meritorious and requested to be considered as a center of excellence will be further evaluated by the peer panel to determine whether they have met the standards to be centers of excellence (Part III C. and Part IV C.). In instances where they are found to be equally meritorious with the application of a non-center of excellence, based on peer review, selection for funding will be weighed in favor of applicants meeting the center of excellence criteria. NIFA will effectively use the center of excellence prioritization as a "tie breaker". Applicants that rank highly meritorious but who did not request consideration as a center of excellence or who are not deemed to have met the centers of excellence standards may still receive funding.

In addition, the applicant's Notice of Award will reflect that, for the particular grant program, the applicant meets all of the requirements of a center of excellence. Entities recognized as centers of excellence will maintain that distinction for the duration of their period of performance or as identified in the terms and conditions of that award.

Criteria for eXtension Projects

1. Documented need. Application includes documentation substantiating that project is essential in helping producers, processors and/or consumers to overcome current or likely future problems/challenges in citrus agriculture.

2. Stakeholder involvement. Application includes information on how stakeholders were selected and how their input and participation were solicited and will continue to be incorporated throughout multiple aspects of the proposed project.
3. Systems-based approach. Application demonstrates an understanding and application of a whole system(s) approach with the potential for the project to contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of citrus production efficiency, handling and processing, or marketing systems.
4. Trans-disciplinary approach. Application documents that the project brings together biological, physical, and social scientists as appropriate to project goals to address economic, environmental, **and** social aspects of citrus industry sustainability.
5. Team: Community of Practice, Learning Network, or Innovation Hub. Application describes the team, including a plan to increase membership (in the case of CoPs and learning networks) or key technical/application expertise (in the case of innovation hubs), and a team leadership and management plan.
6. Community of Interest. Application describes the stakeholder community to be served and methods the team will use to engage the community with educational products, emerging technologies, or programs, and maintain support on a continuing basis.
7. Plan of Work. Application includes a logic model description that adequately demonstrates procedures for the development of the following:
 - a functioning and sustainable team including inputs, outputs, and outcomes;
 - a detailed plan for team activities, which may include content development, technology prototyping, aggregation, repackaging, testing, evaluation, etc. in year one, and maintenance, sustainability, and evolution over time;
 - a brief description of milestones for years two and three;
 - an anticipated date for initial inclusion of deliverables in the eXtension public site (public release); and
 - documented resources currently available to this proposed team and plans for team sustainability.

Criteria for Research and Extension Planning Projects

1. Documented need. Application includes documentation substantiating that project is directed to current or likely future challenges in combating HLB. Demonstrate specific need for planning activity, e.g., limited resources for submitting large grant applications (or for developing a strategic plan) and potential benefits accrued from formal planning activities.
2. Stakeholder involvement. Application includes information on how stakeholders will participate in the activity, including a listing of key participants who will be invited and their affiliations.
3. Conceptual adequacy and design. Application clearly states objectives and includes a preliminary agenda that addresses those objectives; Application demonstrates an understanding of and proposes to develop the application of a whole system(s) approach with the potential for the project to contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of specialty crop production efficiency, handling and processing or marketing systems.
4. Involvement of appropriate, relevant expertise in planning activity committees, speakers, and attendees. Application documents that the project brings together biological,

physical, and social scientists as appropriate to project goals to address economic, environmental, **and** social aspects of specialty crop sustainability.

5. Feasibility. Likelihood that the effort will result in a future grant application to the SCRI/CDRE and/or will result in an actionable strategic research and extension plan.
6. Appropriateness of budget.

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).

E. Application Disposition

An application may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the application; however, withdrawn applications normally will not be returned. One copy of each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by **SCRI/CDRE** for a period of three years.

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, 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 and the Federal Agency Identification 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 the ones listed below.

2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

2 CFR Part 400 —USDA implementation of 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

2 CFR Part 415 – USDA General Program Administrative Regulations.

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.

2 CFR Part 180 and Part 417--OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-Wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and USDA Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension.

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

2 CFR Part 416—USDA General Program Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

2 CFR Part 418—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.

2 CFR Part 421—USDA Implementation of Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).

2 CFR Part 422—Research Institutions Conducting USDA-Funded Extramural Research; Research Misconduct.

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).

44 U.S.C. 3541 et seq. (Pub. L. 107-347) - Federal Information System Security Management
Act of 2002 (FISMA), to improve computer and network security within the Federal
Government. Applies to awardees if it will collect, store, process, transmit, or use information
on behalf of NIFA.

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are to use REEport, NIFA's electronic, web-based inventory system to submit an initial
project initiation which documents expected products and outcomes of the project. Additionally,
annual progress report documenting realized project outcomes must be submitted to the
electronic system. The web-based system facilitates an electronic workflow between grantees
and NIFA for project accomplishments to be easily searchable and allows for public access to
information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements, including
those specific to the annual and final technical reports, are included in the award terms and
conditions.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Tom Bewick; National Program Leader; Division of Plant Systems Production; Institute of Food Production and Sustainability; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2240; telephone: (202) 401-3356; fax: (202) 401-4888; e-mail: tbewick@nifa.usda.gov.

OR

Daniel Schmoldt; National Program Leader; Division of Plant Systems Production; Institute of Food Production and Sustainability; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2240; telephone: (202) 720-4807; fax: (202) 401-5179; e-mail: dschmoldt@nifa.usda.gov.

Administrative/Business Contact –

Susan Bowman, Awards Management Division, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2271; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 202005-2271; telephone: (202) 401-4324; e-mail: sbowman@nifa.usda.gov.

OR

Adrienne Woodin, Awards Management Division, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2271; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 202005-2271; telephone: (202) 401-4320; e-mail: awoodin@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 2 CFR part 415, subpart C, 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.

For the purpose of this program, the following additional definitions are applicable:

Director means the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) and any other officer or employee of NIFA to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Partnership requires that all participants have a substantial involvement in the project throughout the life of the project. If a partnership between multiple entities is proposed, the proposal should clearly identify the following:

- 1) A narrative of each entity's clearly established role in the project;
- 2) How each entity involved as a partner on the project will contribute to execution of project objectives, determination of experimental design, development of the project work plan and time table, and submission of collaborative, timely reports; and
- 3) A comprehensive project budget that reflects each entity's financial or in-kind contribution to the total project budget costs.

Project Director or PD means the single individual designated by the grantee in the grant application, who is responsible for the direction and management of the project and who is

approved by the Authorized Departmental Officer. By extension of this definition, then, all project personnel listed as Co-PDs on an application are assumed to be approved by the grantee institution as ready and able to fulfill the role of PD in the event that the PD can no longer serve in that capacity. All other project personnel should be identified as co-principal investigators or key personnel.

Specialty crop means fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture).

Trans-disciplinary means a multi-discipline approach that brings biological and physical scientists together with economists and social scientists to address challenges in a holistic manner.