

Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program

**MODIFIED: Pages 1, 2, & 16 (06/11/2015).
Application Deadline Date Extended to June 30, 2015.**

Fiscal Year 2015 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 30, 2015

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA

ANTICIPATED AWARD AMOUNT: \$462,000



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

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

Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.500.

DATES: Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time** on **June 30, 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 via e-mail to: Policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program (SLSNCGP) for fiscal year (FY) 2015 to decrease the impact of disasters through cooperative extension programming. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2015 is approximately \$462,000.

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

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 3(b) & (c) of the Smith-Lever Act, Pub. L. No. 63-95 (7 U.S.C. 343), allows the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), to conduct competitive grant programs to State Extension Service at 1862 Land-Grant Institutions to support innovative, education-based approaches to addressing emergency preparedness and specific responses related to natural and human-made disasters.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The SLSNCGP provides information and tools to USDA, stakeholders and collaborators to improve decision making in handling natural and human-made disasters. The SLSNCGP increases awareness and capacity building of urban/rural communities' response to natural and/or human-made disasters by increasing individual, family, small business and community disaster preparedness through extension education as well as collaboration with other agencies and volunteer organizations.

There has been an increase in the number and severity of disaster type critical incidents, including but not limited to, earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires, floods, hurricanes, drought, contagious diseases, and terrorist events. Climate change is one of the contributing factors to extreme weather patterns resulting in natural disasters. The Cooperative Extension System (CES) has played a major role in disaster preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery (pre-disaster, during and post disasters).

This SLSNCGP aligns with the 2014 USDA Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Action Plan (http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_03-2014.pdf). The SLSNCGP specifically addresses the following 2014 USDA REE Action Plan goals –

- Goal 2 - Responding to Climate and Energy Needs; and
- Goal 7 - Rural Prosperity/Rural-Urban Interdependence.

The SLSNCGP supports NIFA Strategic Plan Goal 1 Science: Catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education and extension programs.

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

- Education and Technical assistance through inter-disciplinary and multi-state disaster training programs and demonstration projects for problem solving, especially those which build upon already existing strengths, contribute to or expand the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) and/or eXtension educational materials related to disaster preparation, mitigation, response and recovery;
- Collaboration with Federal, state and local agencies and other disaster relief organizations, which might include nongovernment organizations, to support education

and service activities that enhance recovery of impacted rural communities, schools, businesses and agricultural-based activities;

- Long range family, community and regional planning projects that will enhance implementation of programs that serve public needs in preparation for, during and after emergency situations within impacted states and across impacted regions;
- Communication delivery of key information that meets end-users' needs in a timely fashion with consideration of potentially limited communication channels due to disaster situations; and
- Dissemination of credible, science-based information that is reliable and easily accessible even if electronic access is compromised. When appropriate, NIFA encourages collaboration with the 1890 and 1994 Land-grant Institutions.

C. Program Area Description

Projects should support extension activities through at least one (1) of the following strategies to be considered for funding:

1. Enhance regional/national networks that add value to official information by delivering it:
 - In an audience and situation appropriate format;
 - In a timely fashion; and
 - Coupled with appropriate and existing research based information.
2. Provide regional/national education and communications leadership to develop or add value to current educational materials regarding disaster issues, utilizing the proper distribution mix of the EDEN website, eXtension, related social media, and/or other outlets. This strategy could include materials targeted to underserved or non-traditional audiences (such as people who speak English as a second language, low literacy individuals, and/or special populations).
3. Improve regional/national stakeholder partnerships (which might include the public, governments at all levels, non-profit and/or volunteer organizations, academia, and/or industry) across traditional boundaries to decrease the impact of disasters through extension education.
4. Deliver extension education to affected citizens and communities, in one or more states, to decrease the impact of a major declared disaster that occurred no more than 12 months prior to the application due date of this RFA.

NIFA intends to fund Special Needs projects to implement applied scientific programs that serve public needs in preparation for, during and after emergency situations. Though national, regional, and multi-state efforts are a priority for categories 1-3, highly replicable single-state projects may be considered if they have a strong plan for transferring successful methods to other states. Extension Special Needs will also fund the development of educational programs and

demonstration activities focusing on disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. Successful projects in the past have helped extension educators, who normally do not have a disaster extension focus, to have a greater impact in this area. The most competitive proposals will provide educational and communication leadership across an optimized mix of these and other resources.

Proposals are welcomed that add new or build upon existing web-based educational materials on the EDEN website, <http://www.eden.lsu.edu>. This platform is ideal for staff development. It is recommended that applicants contact the EDEN executive committee during proposal formulation to solicit support and guidance.

SLSNCGP encourages projects that develop content and programs suitable for delivery through the Cooperative Extension System's eXtension Initiative. You may use funds to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (CoP) or to form a new CoP focused on disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery (pre-disasters, during and post disasters). Projects must align with the eXtension vision, mission, and values. You must have a letter of acknowledgement from eXtension; you may also need a letter of support from one or more of the Communities of Practice. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057>. The contact for questions regarding eXtension is Greg Crosby (gcrosby@nifa.usda.gov or 202-401-6050).

NIFA's programs are intended to promote advances in U.S. food, agriculture and forestry. Agriculture, for instance, is increasingly worldwide in scope and reach. If appropriate, applicants to SLSNCGP may include international partnerships or engagement in proposals. In doing so, applicants are to keep in mind that any international activity included in a proposal (e.g., partnerships, exchanges, training, and/or travel) must first and foremost support SLSNCGP goals. Applicants must clearly describe and demonstrate how international activities proposed in the application will contribute to and support the objectives and desired outcomes within the United States of America while also benefiting the international partner. The contact for questions regarding global engagement is Michael McGirr (mmcgirr@nifa.usda.gov or 202-205-3739).

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for NIFA support of this program in FY 2015 is approximately \$462,000. The funds will be awarded through a grant award. 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 Bureau of the Fiscal Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see

<http://fms.treas.gov/index1.html>.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2015, you may submit applications to the **SLSNCGP** as one of the following grant types of requests:

New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the SLSNCGP. We will review all new applications competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

Resubmitted application. This is an application that has previously been submitted to the SLSNCGP but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

Special Needs awards support Extension projects and have typically ranged from \$30,000 to \$120,000. However, the amount requested may vary depending on the geographic scope of the project (single state, multi-state, regional, or national) and the urgency of the need(s) being addressed. **Typical project periods range from one (1) to three (3) years.** Applications are encouraged that specifically address one or more of the following five (5) key target areas:

1. Education and technical assistance;
2. Collaboration;
3. Long range family, community and regional planning;
4. Communication delivery; and/or
5. Dissemination of credible, science-based information.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by 1862 Land-grant Institutions in the 50 states, American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Pursuant to rules and policies governing Section 3(b) & (c) of the Smith–Lever Act as amended, no allotment shall be made to a State under subsection (b) or (c), and no payments from the allotment shall be made to a State, in excess of the amount that the State makes available out of non-Federal funds for cooperative extension work.

To comply with the matching requirements of the Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program, applicants are required to provide 100 percent matching funds from non-federal sources for all proposed federal funds sought in the application. **In-kind and third party contributions are not allowed for this program; thus, all of the matching funds must come from the applicant institution (please note that sub-awards/partner match would be considered third party).** Grant awards cannot be issued until ALL required matching has been documented and verified.

Matching: Applications shall include written verification of commitments of matching support from non-federal sources. This written verification must be signed by an Authorized Representative from your institution. Written verification means:

The sources and the amount of all matching support from the applicant institution should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application as a part of the Budget Justification attachment (see Field K on the Form SF 424 (R&R) Budget Fed/NonFed). Include the matching amount, the budget category for the match, and detail how the matching support will be used (e.g., salary and position supported). Additionally, all pledge agreements must be included as a part of the PDF attachment in Field K as well.

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should 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 allowable costs.

Additional Budget Information For 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 for this grant will not exceed \$15,000

and are not renewable. Include an itemized breakdown of all support requested in the Budget Justification (Field K. of the R&R Budget Fed/NonFed).

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-SLBCD-005135** in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” This guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If you require assistance to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms) **or submitting the application**, refer to resources available on the Grants.gov website (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-resources.html>). Grants.gov assistance is also available at:

Grants.gov customer support
800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [federal holidays](#).
Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov iPortal (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. Content and Form of Application Submission

You should prepare electronic applications following Parts V and VI of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III section 3. of the guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. 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.

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

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

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

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

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

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 10 pages of written text regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced and up to four (4) additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (14 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

Introduction: Include information on the following in the order identified:

- i. Provide background information on and describe the disaster education problem that the project proposes to address;
- ii. Concisely state which of the four program areas the project will address (Enhance regional/national networks; Provide regional/national education and communications leadership, Improve regional/national stakeholder partnerships, Provide single or multi-state educational leadership as a result of a declared disaster); and
- iii. Concisely state the overall goal(s) of the proposed project.

Here are tips for consideration to include in the introductory statement:

- Describe the targeted issue to be addressed and why it is important.
- What is the current problem or situation?
- Who is affected by it and the approximate size of the population affected?
- What geographic area(s) is/are affected by it?
- How long has the problem existed?
- What has already been done in this area? What are the gaps?
- What will happen if the problem is not addressed?
- Provide relevant local/state/regional statistics or other data to document the need for this issue to be addressed in the target community.
- Describe the potential benefit to the population group or community served.
- How does this project support the Extension Disaster Education Network?

- If the project seeks to contribute to an existing eXtension COP, briefly describe how it will complement or enhance the COP's resources currently available to the public.
- If proposing to conduct a pilot project, briefly lay out the project steps beyond the pilot period and show how the SLSNCGP will enable the project to become competitive for future funding.

Objectives: Objectives must be realistic and answer the questions of “Whom,” “What,” and “To What Extent.” Each objective needs a specific action plan describing a reasonable scope of activities that can be accomplished within the resource and time constraints of the grant. Be sure to:

- Present a clear, concise set of project objectives;
- Describe the involvement of stakeholders in developing project objectives and implementing results; and
- Describe how this project will build upon or expand related work or programs.

Methods: Describe the procedures for the proposed effort, including:

- Techniques and methods to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project, and how they accomplish stated objectives;
- A definition of the target audience and/or end users of project deliverables;
- A description of the proposed project activities related to the objectives provided and in the sequence in which it is planned. A project timeline should include education/extension/planning activities with milestones, partners'/collaborators' roles (if appropriate) and verifiable indicators, which demonstrate progress; and
- A narrative describing planned project evaluation, which may refer to a LOGIC model included as an appendix.

The inclusion of any innovative or unusual methods in the plan should be justified. Be sure to identify any inter-agency or partner involvement since it might strengthen the proposal.

The procedures or methodology to be applied to the proposed effort should be explicitly stated. This section should include:

- Scope and duration of the project;
- A brief description of participant recruitment strategy(ies) to be used;
- Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for use in this project;
- Development and implementation challenges that may be encountered; and
- Proposed procedures and any limitations, if applicable.

Evaluation Design: Proposals should contain a strong outcome evaluation component. There are two forms of evaluation. An evaluation of EFFORT is measured by assessing the extent to which the activities are accomplished for the overall project (sometimes called Process Evaluation). An evaluation of EFFECTIVENESS is measured by assessing the extent to which objectives are accomplished (sometimes called Impact Evaluation). Remember that evaluation is a continuing process and should be conducted periodically, not only at the end of the grant period.

Each objective listed in the project plan should have a related Process and Impact Evaluation measure(s), clearly stated outcome(s) and anticipated impact(s). Describe the evaluation design and methodologies, based on your stated project objectives and program plan that will be used to measure the extent to which the objectives were met and anticipated outcomes and impacts reached.

This section should address, but not necessarily be limited to:

- Focus of evaluation as to population being served;
- Provide evaluation metrics that will be measured for each objective;
- Evaluation framework(s) within which information will be collected (e.g., sample survey, questionnaire, or other) as relates to specific objectives, outcomes and impacts;
- Anticipated program outcomes;
- Anticipated program impacts on the population served by the proposed project;
- Type of data to be collected, as linked to expected results; and
- Analytical procedures used to evaluate data and assess project impacts on the population served.

At a minimum, the evaluation should enable you to answer the following questions:

- Has the program successfully attained the stated implementation objectives?
- Are you implementing the services or training that you initially planned to implement?
- Are you reaching the intended target population? and
- What difference will the project make? What is the public value of this effort?

c. Field 9. Bibliography & References Cited

No page limit. Submit as an attachment in PDF format. Title the attachment as “Bibliography & References Cited” in the document header and save file as “Bibliography References Cited”. All work cited in the text should be referenced in this section of the application. All references must be complete, include titles and all co-authors, conform to an acceptable journal format, and be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.

d. Field 11. Other Attachments – PDF Attachment

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

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.

Note: Matching is required for this program; hence, the R&R Budget (Federal and Non-Federal) form should be utilized.

To comply with the matching requirements, the applicant institution is required to provide 100 percent matching funds from non-federal sources for all proposed federal funds sought in the application. In-kind and third party contributions are not allowed for this program (please note that sub-awards/partner match would be considered third party). Grant awards cannot be issued until ALL required matching has been documented and verified.

All matching should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the proposal as part of the Budget Narrative. The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circular A-21 (2 CFR Part 220), Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

All contributions, including cash, must meet the criteria included in section 23 of 7 CFR 3019, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations.”

7. Supplemental Information Form

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

- a. Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “ESNP Special Needs”) and the program code (i.e., enter “MB”). Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application.
- b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

C. Submission Dates and Times

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.

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on June 30, 2015**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV. A. for Grants.gov contact information.

We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact the Agency Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Indirect costs and tuition remission are not allowed. Costs that are a part of the institution's indirect cost pool may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable.

E. Other Submission Requirements

You should follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV, section 1.9 in the document entitled “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.”

For information about the **status of a submitted application**, see Part III., section 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

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

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

When each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of SLSNCGP will recommend that the project: (a) be approved for support from currently available funds or (b) be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

SLSNCGP reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

B. Evaluation Criteria

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA. The following criteria will be evaluated equally:

1) Significance of the problem and potential for enhancing extension's reach of providing innovative, education-based approaches to addressing emergency preparedness and specific responses related to natural and man-made disasters by any one (1) of the four(4) strategies below:

- Enhance regional/national networks that add value to official information by delivering it:
 - In an audience and situation appropriate format
 - In a timely fashion and
 - Coupled with appropriate and existing research based information.
- Provide regional/national education and communications leadership to develop or add value to current educational materials regarding disaster issues, utilizing the

proper distribution mix of the EDEN website, eXtension, related social media, and/or other outlets. This strategy could include materials targeted to underserved or non-traditional audiences (such as people who speak English as a second language, low literacy individuals, and/or international opportunities). Any international aspects of the proposal must support EDEN or domestic work.

- Improve regional/national stakeholder partnerships (which might include the public, governments at all levels, non-profit and/or volunteer organizations, academia, and/or industry) across traditional boundaries to decrease the impact of disasters through extension education.
- Deliver extension education to affected citizens and communities, in one or more states, to decrease the impact of a major declared disaster that occurred no more than 12 months prior to the application due date of this RFA.

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of emergency preparedness, post-disaster relief programs or activities with a focus on rapid recovery and reestablishment through Extension engagement. Elements considered include: identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed; body of knowledge, and preliminary data and other past activities used to substantiate the need for the proposed project.

2) Proposed Approach, Program Design and Methodology (Objectives and Methods)

This criterion is used to assess the soundness of the proposed approach. Elements considered include the adequacy of the scope of the project to produce expected outcomes/changes in knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and/or behaviors in targeted population; objectives; soundness/evidence-base of educational curricula to be used in the project; proposed activities and sequence of activities; participant recruitment; methodology and limitations of the proposed approach; project timeline; and expected new products and results (e.g., educational approaches including training curricula, workshops, meetings, conferences, exhibits, publications, electronic communication, fact sheets, newsletters, and mass media). Proposed approach should be one that can be implemented at regional or national level and utilized via existing electronic distribution media such as the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) and/or eXtension.

3) Evaluation Design and Methodologies

This criterion is used to assess the adequacy of the evaluation design and evaluation methodology, and its capacity to measure the extent to which program objectives are met. Elements considered include: evaluation question(s), the methodological approach proposed for answering these questions, justification for the type of data to be collected, a data collection plan, data analysis plan, and strengths and limitations of the proposed evaluation approach.

4) Budget

This criterion is used to assess the extent to which the total budget adequately supports, is appropriate to the project being proposed, and is cost effective. Elements considered include: the

necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institutions(s), including matching funds; and appropriateness of the budget relative to time committed to the project by key project personnel.

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. See http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/competitive_peer_review.html for further information about conflicts of interest and confidentiality as related to the peer review process.

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. Each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by SLSNCGP 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 25, “Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration”

2 CFR Part 170, “Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information”

2 CFR Part 175, “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”

2 CFR Part 180, “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement)”

2 CFR Part 182, “Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”

2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”

2 CFR Part 400, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”

2 CFR Part 415, “General Program Administrative Regulations”

2 CFR Part 416, “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”

2 CFR Part 417, “Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension”

2 CFR Part 418, “New Restrictions on Lobbying”

2 CFR Part 421, “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”

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

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

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

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

7 CFR Part 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.

NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide—a compendium of basic NIFA policies and procedures that apply to all NIFA awards, unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary.

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

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> for information about NIFA award terms). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those, if any, will be identified in the award.

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

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Name: Beverly Samuel

Title: National Program Leader

Unit: Division of Family and Consumer Sciences

Location: 4427 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 720-6059

Fax: (202) 720-9366

Email: bsamuel@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contact –

Name: Susan Bowman

Title: Branch Chief

Unit: Branch I

Location: 2240 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 401-4324

Fax: (202) 401-6271

Email: sbowman@nifa.usda.gov

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

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

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

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

2. Changes in Project Plans

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

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

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

d. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not federal funds are involved, prior to instituting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed any applicable statutory limit or expiring appropriation limitation. The terms and conditions of award include information about no-cost extensions of the award and when ADO's prior approval is necessary.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes, if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of

amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 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.