Youth Farm Safety Education and Certification (YFSEC) Competitive Grant Program

__FY 2016 Request for Applications (RFA)__

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 20, 2016

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA

Anticipated funding amount per award: $300,000
Expected number of awards: 1

USDA
United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

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

YOUTH FARM SAFETY EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATION (YFSEC) 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 20, 2016**. 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 Youth Farm Safety Education and Certification (YFSEC) RFA.

Visit the NIFA website to access a factsheet on the Center of Excellence (COE) designation process, including COE criteria, and a list of programs offering COE opportunities in fiscal year 2016. You can also review a recording of COE outreach webinars held in February and March of 2015 from the site. The COE webpages will be updated throughout FY 2016 with additional information, such as a summary of comments received from stakeholders.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Youth Farm Safety Education and Certification (YFSEC) Program for fiscal year (FY) 2016 to supports national efforts to deliver timely, pertinent, and appropriate farm safety education to youth seeking employment or already employed in agricultural production. The appropriated amount available for NIFA to support this grant in FY 2016 is approximately $300,000.

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

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

YFSEC program is authorized under the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914, as amended (7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.).

Since the Youth Farm Safety Education and Certification (YFSEC) Program was first funded in FY 2001, 1890 Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, including Tuskegee University, West Virginia State University, and Central State University have been eligible to apply at any appropriated level. Section 7403 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act (FCEA) of 2008 amends section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 [7 U.S.C. 343(d)] regarding eligibility. Beginning in FY 2009, the eligibility to compete for YFSEC funding was broadened to include the University of the District of Columbia.

B. Purpose and Priorities

NIFA's non-formal education programs and services in farm safety promote rural health and seek to strengthen economic vitality. Critically important component of effective farm safety initiatives is that they employ agricultural and human social and behavioral sciences in mitigating agricultural hazards to workers. Non-formal education programs in the area of youth farm safety provide timely safety information to rural youth, their families, and their on-farm employers, as well as increased access to opportunities for all parties involved to engage in protection of youth's health and promotion of safe agricultural practices. To date, Agricultural and Human Sciences educators and other relevant partners, supported by innovative communication platforms, have developed and implemented diverse youth farm safety education and certification initiatives in order to protect and enhance resiliency among youth and ensure long-term vitality of agricultural communities. NIFA's YFSEC competitive grant program provides funding for just such projects.

YFSEC Program addresses the following USDA/NIFA goals and priorities:
- USDA Strategic Plan for FY 2014-2018: Goal1 (*Assist Rural Communities to Create Prosperity so They are Self-Sustaining, Repopulating, and Economically Thriving*; Objective 1.1 *Enhance rural prosperity, including leveraging capital markets to increase government's investing in rural America through supporting human and social capital*);
- 2014 USDA's Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Action Plan: Goal 7 (Rural Prosperity/Rural-Urban Interdependence and Prosperity; specifically, *Strategy 3 of Goal 7: Support information and technology transfer and translational research, "transformational extension," to inform citizens and enable and support vibrant and resilient communities;* and Strategy 4 of Goal 7: *Build new partnerships with underserved and non-traditional populations*);
- NIFA Strategic Plan for 2014-2018: Goal 1 *(Catalyze Exemplary and Relevant Research, Education and Extension Programs (Sub-goal 1.1: Advance our Nation's ability to achieve global food security and fight hunger; and Sub-goal 1.7: Ensure the development of human capital, communities, and a diverse workforce through research, education,*

> *extension and engagement programs in food and agricultural sciences to support a sustainable agriculture system*); and
> - NIFA's Agricultural Systems Portfolio priorities in the area of agricultural safety in farming and ranching, and Family & Consumer Sciences Portfolio priorities in the areas of community vitality and family well-being.

Since 2001, when the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Agriculture (NIFA) began funding the YFSEC program, the program has supported projects that focused on identifying and developing educational resources that mitigate agricultural hazards to young workers, regardless of their knowledge, experience, ability, ethnicity, or culture. Over the years, two complete curricula were developed through the YFSEC program, one from the Pennsylvania State University and one from Purdue University. Both curricula are available on the www.agsafety4youth.info web site. These curricula are based on core competencies, identified by agricultural safety experts, required to operate agricultural machinery safely.

In FY 2013, per stakeholder's request, the *YFSEC* program moved further to develop a coordinated, national approach to agricultural safety and health education for youth. In that effort, NIFA made awards in support of a multi-institution, multi-state project titled *Safety in Agriculture for Youth (SAY),* led by Pennsylvania State University. Over the past 3 years, SAY project has met the needs of the YFSEC programs in implementing a national approach to youth farm safety education and certification by: (1) Establishing four stakeholder groups (Content Identification, Curriculum Alignment, Outreach, and Marketing) that engaged experts from various sectors and leadership positions within academia, public health and the agricultural industry; (2) Establishing a National Steering Committee to help identify curriculum and testing gaps, certification needs, and industry recognized credentials; (3) Developing a youth farm safety tool that assesses alignment of existing youth farm safety curricula with the Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources (AFNR) Career Cluster Content Standards; (4) Developing and implementing a National Clearinghouse for gathering of national youth farm safety and education curricula and testing; (5) Working closely with members of the SAY National Steering Committee to developed a national outreach strategy to promote awareness and utilization of the farm safety materials by diverse stakeholder audiences; and (6) Annually assessing resources required to sustain the Clearinghouse and to continue national dialogue about youth farm safety education and certification needs.

In FY 2016, NIFA is soliciting applications for the YFSEC program that will help build upon and strengthen accomplishments made to date by the SAY project, as well as identify and address curricula and outreach gaps.

NIFA encourages (but does not require) projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension (https://extension.org/).

C. Program Area Description

The YFSEC program proposals are expected to continue with the coordinated national approach to agricultural safety and health education for youth.

Program Area Code: RB (program code name is Youth Farm Safety)

Application Deadline: June 20, 2016 (5:00 p.m. ET)
Proposed Budget Requests: Proposed budgets must not exceed $300,000 for project periods of 1 year. Program anticipates making 1 new award.
Requested Grant Type: Cooperative Agreement
Program Area Contact: Dr. Aida Balsano (202-720-4436 or abalsano@nifa.usda.gov)

Please note that grant applications requesting more than $300,000 per year and/or proposing project periods other than 1 year will *not* be reviewed. Similarly, grant applications with no secured letters of commitment from partner organizations/institutions will *not* be reviewed.

Priority consideration will be given to proposals with multi-institution, multi-state partnerships. Collaboration among 1862 and 1890 Land Grant Institutions within or across state lines on a joint application is encouraged. Collaborations with institutions/organizations/centers not eligible to apply as leads on a join application are also encouraged. <u>All applications involving such collaboration must demonstrate a clear and meaningful involvement in the project for each institution/organization/centers throughout the 1-year project period.</u>

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for NIFA support of this grant in FY 2016 is approximately $300,000. The funds will be awarded through a competitive grant process. 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/aboutfms/index.html.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2016, you may only submit the following types of application to the YFSEC Program:

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

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

C. Project Types

In FY 2016, the YFSEC program will focus on supporting a project proposing activities that aim to build upon accomplishments made to date by the SAY project. Proposals should describe their strengthening activities and address current curricula and outreach gaps in the following areas:
   a) Curriculum Alignment Submission Tool (CAST), an online instrument, developed by the SAY project, that allows educational authors to submit their agricultural safety and health curricula for possible inclusion in the national clearinghouse.
   b) SAY National Clearinghouse, which consists of two different types of educational products: formal curricula and other supporting resources that are indexed based on their alignment to AFNR Career Cluster Content Standards. The main purpose of the clearinghouse is to serve educators, employers, and parents looking for specific agricultural safety and health resources. In FY 2016, successful applicants to the YFSEC program should describe how they plan to:
      a. Increase the number of curricula and resources available through the clearinghouse;

b. Identify gaps in available curricula and communicate those gaps nationally;
c. Enhance outreach to agricultural educators working with youth to help integrate into classroom youth safety information available through the clearinghouse; and
d. Enhance outreach to faculty at institutions of higher education to share the availability of CAST and the existing youth safety information available through the National Clearinghouse.

c) [OSHA 10-Hour General Industry (Agriculture) Course](), a web-based course developed for entry level workers and employers through a collaboration between Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the SAY project. Students who successfully complete the course receive a printable certificate, as well as an OSHA 10-Hour General Industry wallet card from the OSHA Training Institute. Successful applicants must show how they plan to interphase with CareerSafe and other prospective partners to promote availability of this course among youth and agricultural educators working with youth.

d) SAY project has pulled together an effective, engaged, diverse National Steering Committee (NSC) with representatives from, for example, Department of Education – Office of Vocational and Adult Education, National Children's Center, NIOSH Ag Centers, American Farm Bureau Federation, National FFA Organization, National Council for Agricultural Education, and 4-H. Over the past three years, NSC members have met via webinars, conference calls, and face-to-face at NIFA (twice-a-year) to learn of progress made by the SAY project team, as well as to provide recommendations for improvement and share networking and outreach opportunities of import to the project and the YFSEC program. FY 2016 applicants to the YFSEC program should describe how they envision continuing engagement of this committee, enhancing its composition, and defining role(s) the committee will play in informing their proposed project activities and deliverables.

Given that the primary source of funding for the YFSEC program are Federal funds, grantee should contract with hotels for lodging at or below the Federal per diem rate for the NSC meetings and any other meetings relevant to the project and that require travel. NIFA retains the right to disallow use of NIFA funds for any travel that does not meet these requirements.

D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

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. Award recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [http://nifa.usda.gov/responsible-and-ethical-conduct-research]() for further information**.**

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted only by Cooperative Extension Services (CES) at 1862 Land-Grant Colleges and Universities and 1890 Land-Grant Colleges and Universities, including the Tuskegee University, West Virginia State University and Central State University.

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

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

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 (COE) provision. Information from the webinars and a summary of the input gathered are available on NIFA's website at http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/centers-excellence-webinars.

A COE 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).

Only standard grant applicants may be considered for COE designation. See Part IV, B. 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 to 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/download-application-package.html and enter the funding opportunity number

   Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-SLBCD-005800

   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. See Section 2.18 of the NIFA Application Guide which provides that the applicant's electronic signature on the SF-424 affirms its agreement with Federal representations and assurances (e.g., Prohibition against FY 16 Appropriations Act Funding under Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

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.

Proposals must include a Project Summary/Abstract page of 400 words or less. The summary page should include the following, in the order listed here:
- Project title;
- Names of PD, Co-PDs, and key project personnel and their affiliated institutions;
- Names of partnering institutions and organizations (if not already listed);
- A brief description of the proposed project, including the relevance of the project to the goals of the YFSEC Program needs;
- Funding amount requested;
- Type of application: New or Renewal (see page 6 of this RFA for definitions); and
- Whether the proposal includes a request for Center of Excellence consideration.

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 25 pages of written text regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced and up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (30 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Applications exceeding the maximum page limitation will be disqualified from the review process and not considered for funding.

Grant-writing resources may be accessed at http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/usda-grant-writing-webinar-series-partnership-stakeholders.

The Project Narrative must include all of the following sections:

(a) Project Justification;
(b) Objectives, Activities, Outcomes, and Timeline;
(c) Division of Labor;
(d) Management Plan;
(e) Budget Justification;
(f) Project Communication and Dissemination; and
(g) Centers of Excellence Request and Justification (if applicable).

(a) Project Justification (25 pts.)

o   Justify the need for the project by describing the nature and magnitude of the youth farm safety education and certification issues(s) and needs the project is seeking to address. Indicate why the needs and issue(s) you identified are important to rural health and community vitality. Estimate the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to diverse stakeholders. Provide references for any data cited. Explain and substantiate any assumptions made.

o   Clearly state the role and long-term implications of the CAST, National Clearinghouse, and OSHA 10-Hours General Industry (Agriculture) Course for a national youth farm safety and education curricula, certification requirements, and testing. For background information on these tools/resources, see http://articles.extension.org/pages/70004/safety-in-agriculture-for-youth.

o   Describe current curricula gaps and outreach needs of CAST and the National Clearinghouse, and outreach needs and opportunities for the OSHA course this application intends to address.

o   Detail the characteristics of the lead institution and its team that make it particularly qualified to conduct the proposed work. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project, including the work of key project personnel.

o   Projects are encouraged to partner with other institutions/organizations/centers on their proposed activities. Identify other partners on your project and provide justification for their inclusion.

o   Since the project seeks to contribute to eXtension's Ag Safety and Health Community of Practice (CoP), briefly describe how you will engage the leadership of this CoP and enhance the CoP's resources currently available to the public.

(b) Objectives, Activities, Outcomes and Timeline (35 pts.)

o   Under each goal, organize proposed objectives and related activities in a logical sequence, the sum of which must comprise an attainable project. The sum of activities under each objective must lead to completion of that objectives within the 1-year maximum project duration.

o   Under each activity, list expected outcomes, describe the proposed means of evaluating the activity's efficacy, and describe outcomes' value to YFSEC stakeholders. Where appropriate, the plan should allow evaluation results to refine and adjust objectives and activities while informing future plans.

- o Use a summary table at the end of this section to show the relationships between goals, objectives, the activities designed to attain the objectives, expected outcomes, desired impacts, and the data sources to be used.
- o Priority is placed on building upon and strengthening accomplishments made to date by the SAY project, as well as identifying and addressing curricula and outreach gaps/needs. Hence, *New Applications* should account in their plans for time and engagement necessary to make a successful transition from the current to a new project leadership.
- o Briefly describe challenges that might be encountered, limitations to proposed methodology, and how you plan to address them.

(c) Division of Labor (10 pts.)

- o Prospective partners on the proposal may jointly or individually provide leadership for different objectives. Define the responsibilities of the respective organizations under each objective. For each activity, include time frames, personnel, and their roles.
- o Land Grant Institutions submitting joint applications must demonstrate that the institutions' roles and responsibilities in regards to main aspects of project development and implementation will be meaningful and appropriate.
- o Projected composition and role(s) of the National Steering Committee should be addressed in this section as well.
- o Applicants may consult with past YFSEC grantees or consumer advisory type groups in developing their cooperators' role assignments.

(d) Management Plan (10 pts.)

- o Provide an explanation of how the relationship between the lead institution and each of the partner organizations will be managed.
- o Describe the fiscal and administrative oversight provided by the lead institution and the non-profit disability partner.
- o Briefly explain the lead institution's funds management strategy for funded projects. The funds management outlined in the Management Plan must comply with all administrative and national policy requirements listed in PART VI, C. of this RFA.
- o Briefly describe the proposed working relationship with NIFA staff, with a focus on communication, planning, and oversight.

(e) **Budget** (as below #6. R&R Budget) **and Budget Justification (10 pts.)**

- o There should be a direct relationship between the items in the budget and budget justification, as well as between budget justification and the objectives/activities contained in the Project Narrative.
- o Every item in the budget should be justified in the proposal. The amount of detail depends on the nature of the project and the breakdown of costs.
- o Proposed budgets should not exceed $300,000 nor request funding for more than 1 year in total.
- o In Budget Justification, costs (e.g., personnel, materials, travel, etc.) should be broken down and itemized rather than shown as lump sums.

(f) Project Communication and Dissemination (10 pts.)
  - o Briefly describe how progress and results from this project will be communicated to all partners on the proposed project, National Steering Committee, NIFA, Regional and National stakeholders, and the public.
  - o Include your main project communication and dissemination activities in the proposal Timeline.

(g) Center of Excellence Justification

Applicants who wish to be considered as centers of excellence must provide a brief justification statement at the end 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).

c. Field 9. Bibliography

No page limit. Submit as an attachment in PDF format. Title the attachment as "BibliographyReferencesCited".
All work cited in the proposal must 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.

4. <u>R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)</u>
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. <u>R&R Personal Data</u> – 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. However, NIFA strongly encourages applicants to provide the requested information to help NIFA identify and address any inequities based on gender, race, ethnicity, or disability of its proposed PDs/PIs and co-PDs/PIs. Information not submitted will seriously undermine the statistical validity, and therefore the usefulness, of information received from others. The information you submit will be kept confidential and will be used only for tracking and statistical purposes necessary to meet the demands of the agency and will not be part of the review process.

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

7. <u>Supplemental Information Form</u>
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 "Youth Farm Safety") and the program code (i.e., enter "RB"). 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. **Field 12. Other Attachments**
   - **Letters of Commitment from All Partners on the Proposed Project** (e.g., 1862, 1890 or 1994 Land Grant Institutions; CareerSafe; eXtension, etc.). The letters should state partner's readiness to collaborate on the proposed YFSEC project and describe the

partner's <u>specific role(s)</u> on the project. Title the attachments as, for example, "1890Letter" or "eXtensionLetter".

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.

While the checklist should be used to check the application for completeness, the application should be checked additionally for the following required item(s). This is <u>not</u> an exhaustive list of required items; it only serves to highlight **required items that are sometimes overlooked by applicants:**
- Project Summary/Abstract
- Project Narrative
- Timeline
- Bibliography
- Current and Pending Support forms
- Conflict of Interest forms
- Letters of Commitment

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 20, 2016.** 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

Pursuant to Section 1473 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA), as amended, 7 U.S.C. 3319, **indirect costs and tuition remission are not allowable costs under Section 3(d) of Smith-Lever funded projects, and no funds will be approved for this purpose.** Costs that are a part of an institution's indirect cost pool (e.g., administrative or clerical salaries) may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable.

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

Unallowable costs include, but are not limited to, the following examples:
1. Entertainment Costs not permitted include banquets, award ceremonies, and meals for persons not traveling on behalf of the project except when provided to maintain the continuity of a meeting, tickets to shows or sporting events, and alcoholic beverages.
2. Awards and Certificates of Achievement are disallowed by OMB Circular, A-21—Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.
3. Facility Costs not permitted include the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.
4. Any expense not directly related to the program or project is considered unallowable. Examples include child-care services, kitchen help hired to prepare refreshments, and promotional or appreciation gifts such as clothing, coffee mugs, or bags.

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.

See Part V., Section 4.12. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide (Field 12 on the Form) for instructions regarding mandatory Felony Convictions or Tax Delinquent Status.

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 the YFSEC program 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.

The YFSEC program 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:

Evaluation criteria that will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA will encompass all areas of the project summary and narrative as outlined and described in Part IV, B. Section 3 (R&R Other Project Information Form), Fields 7-12. As such, proposals will be evaluated on whether or not they include information requested in this RFA; the quality of information provided; and the feasibility of project's successful completion given proposed objectives, associated activities, time, and partner(s)' commitments. Each component of the Project Narrative is assigned a specific number of points, for a total of 100 points. The points are allocated as follows: Project Justification – 25 pts; Objectives, Activities, Outcomes, and Timeline – 35 pts; Division of Labor – 10 pts; Management Plan – 10 pts; Budget and Budget Justification – 10 pts; and Project Communication and Dissemination – 10 pts.

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 the YFSEC program 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 may include, but are not limited to, the ones listed on the NIFA web page - http://nifa.usda.gov/federal-regulations.

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 is available at http://nifa.usda.gov/policy-guide.

Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research
Please refer to Part II, D for more information.

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.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact:
Aida Balsano, Ph.D.
National Program Leader
Division of Family and Consumer Sciences
USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
Telephone: (202) 720-4436
E-mail: abalsano@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contact:
Bruce Mertz
Team Leader, Team I
Office of Grants and Financial Management
USDA, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
Telephone: 202-401-5062
Email: bmertz@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.