

# Agriculture Risk Management Education Partnerships (ARME) Competitive Grants Program

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## *FY 2018 Request for Applications (RFA)*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** April 27, 2018

**ELIGIBILITY:** See Part III, A of RFA

**ANTICIPATED TOTAL AWARD:** approximately \$4,483,200



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture

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

**AGRICULTURE RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS (ARME) 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 p.m. Eastern Time on April 27, 2018**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C of this RFA). Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT:** We at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seek your comments about this RFA. We will consider your 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 your written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this notice via email to [Policy@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:Policy@nifa.usda.gov). (This email address is only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and *not* for requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the **Agriculture Risk Management Education Partnerships Competitive Grants Program (ARME) RFA**.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA requests applications for the **Agriculture Risk Management Education Partnerships Competitive Grants Program (ARME)** for fiscal year (FY) 2018 to provide resources for four regional risk management education centers for the purpose of developing and delivering agricultural risk management education materials. In addition, this program will also provide one grant for a Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center to provide associated support to the regional centers. The anticipated amount available for applications in FY 2018 is approximately \$4,483,200. Based on the FY 2018 competition, it is the intention of NIFA to provide continuation awards in FY 2019 and FY 2020. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2018. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

This notice identifies the objectives for ARME projects, deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an ARME grant. Applicants should become familiar with the Regional Risk Management Education Centers Operations Manual (ARME OP Guide) <http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/extension-risk-management-education-operations-manual>.

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## **PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority**

Section 133 of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 (ARPA), (Pub. L. 106-224), amended the Federal Crop Insurance Act to add section 524(a) (3); [7 U.S.C. Section 1501 as amended by section 132(a) and section 524]; which requires the Secretary, acting through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), to establish a competitive grants program for the purpose of educating agricultural producers about the full range of risk management activities. These activities include futures, options, agricultural trade options, crop insurance, cash forward contracting, debt reduction, production diversification, marketing plans and tactics, farm resources risk reduction, and other appropriate risk management strategies. The Agriculture Risk Management Education (ARME) program brings the existing knowledge base to bear on risk management issues faced by agricultural producers and expands the program throughout the Nation on a regional and multi-regional basis.

As amended section 524(a) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act, 7 U.S.C. 1524(a) was further amended by Section 12026 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246), which requires that the Secretary place special emphasis on risk management strategies, education, and outreach specifically targeted at: (A) beginning farmers or ranchers; (B) legal immigrant farmers or ranchers that are attempting to become established producers in the United States; (C) socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers; (D) farmers or ranchers that (i) are preparing to retire; and (ii) are using transition strategies to help new farmers or ranchers get started; and (E) new or established farmers or ranchers that are converting production and marketing systems to pursue new markets.

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

Funds are provided for support to the four ARME Regional Centers and one Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center.

The ARME Program aligns with the USDA Strategic Goals FYs 2018-2022  
<https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda/strategic-goals>

This work directly aligns with and helps advance:

1. [USDA's Strategic Plan for FY 2014-2018](#) : **Goal 1, Objective 1.3;**
2. [USDA'S Research, Education, and Economics \(REE\) Action Plan](#): **Goal 7;**
3. [NIFA's Strategic Plan FY 2014-2018](#); **Goal 1: Science:** Catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education, and extension programs; and
4. NIFA's Family & Consumer Sciences Portfolio priorities in the area of [community vitality](#).

The primary purpose of the ARME program is to provide U.S. agricultural producers and their families, as appropriate, with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed risk management decisions that enhance profitability of their operations.

**NIFA is soliciting applications for the ARME under the following areas:**

The ARME Program will fund four (4) regional centers nationwide and a Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center:

- Northeast Region ARME Center
- North Central Region ARME Center
- Southern Region ARME Center
- Western Region ARME Center
- Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center

The purpose of the four (4) Regional ARME Centers is to conduct regional and multi-regional based competitive grants programs for the purpose of funding agricultural risk management organizations and individuals who are risk management experts. Also these organizations and individuals have the knowledge and experience in developing various risk management curricula and delivering to agencies, institutions and professionals involved in risk management serving farmers and their families.

The purpose of the Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center is to provide supporting services to the four regional centers. Support to the four regional ARME centers will include electronic, on-line submission of proposals to the four regional centers sub-awards competitive grants programs, provision of a results verification system that includes both progress report and final report templates for the sub-awards process, national communications planning and execution for the program, assistance in coordination of events and conferences as directed, and archival support for all materials and curriculum developed through the regional center sub-awards competitive grants programs.

The Regional ARME Centers are expected to address the risk management needs of agricultural producers and their families particularly with regard to the following **FIVE (5)** risk management categories:

1. **Production Risk:** A production risk is any production related activity to achieve or event that has a range of possible outcomes, such as uncertain natural growth processes of crops and livestock.
2. **Marketing Risk:** Marketing risk is any related activity or event that leads to the variability of prices farmers receive for their products or pay for production inputs.
3. **Financial Risk:** Financial risk encompasses those risks that threaten the financial health or the business, such as the volatility of prices, yields and income as well as changing interest rates, credit rules, and the availability of credit.
4. **Legal Risk:** Legal risk is generated by uncertainties surrounding and resulting from government policies and regulations related to tax laws, food safety, labeling and marketing, protected species, water use, animal health and welfare, chemical use, animal waste, other environmental issues such as clean air and water, government commodity and income support programs, and the legal liabilities of a variety of litigious issues faced by farms and ranches.

5. **Human risk:** Human Risk refers to human relationships that impact the viability of farm and ranch businesses including communication, labor management and supply, intergenerational transition and estate planning, and human health and relationship issues including accidents, illness, disability, death and divorce.

The Regional Centers are expected to specifically target risk management as identified in the Legislative Authority (Part 1. A).

Regionally based programs and multi-regional based programs should be flexible while addressing special needs as determined by: producers and other stakeholders, listening and focus groups, and other parties knowledgeable and interested in agricultural risk management. Special emphasis areas as defined by Congress shall be included in the focus of the ARME Centers' activities through 2020.

The ARME Center applicants will be rated using the Evaluation Criteria for this RFA (See Part V. B.) to evaluate their proficiency in demonstrating ability and expertise working in support of producers who have limited exposure to risk management concepts, tools and strategies, and who can demonstrate expertise in support of and commitment to working with producers who fall within the five special emphasis target areas. Applicants' proposals will be evaluated for national expertise in one or more of the five identified areas of risk. Applicants are encouraged to recognize the risk management education needs of all producers, including traditionally underserved producers, regardless of the size or scale of operations, and of new and beginning farmers, as well as the other communities of producers identified in the "special emphasis" areas. Priority will also be given to those applicants with a demonstrated relationship with 1890 land grant institutions, 1994 land grant institutions, Hispanic Serving Institutions and other organizations serving socially disadvantaged, emerging, and underserved communities of farmers, ranchers, and producers. In addition, the host organization of the centers is required to adopt "streamlining" wherein the organization is granted the authority under a streamlining agreement to administer and manage an awards program conducted in accordance with the agreement stipulations.

The Regional ARME Centers will administer results-based, competitive programs. Program applicants at the regional level must identify the intended audience(s) and outcomes of their curricula and training, along with metrics to measure those outcomes. All curricula and training materials developed through this program to date, as well as reports on program outcomes, are archived and publicly available on the Ag Risk Library at: <http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/>

### **C. Program Area Description**

One of USDA's goals is to ensure a financially sustainable and competitive agricultural system through serving America's agricultural producers through effective, market-based risk management tools and solutions to strengthen the economic stability of agricultural producers and rural communities. Today's farmers and ranchers face an unprecedented risk environment. For an individual farm manager, risk management involves choosing tools and strategies designed to reduce the financial effects of the uncertainties of commodity prices, financial access,

government policies, crop yields, global economies, weather, human factors and other conditions that can cause fluctuations in farm income and subsequent profits.

The Agricultural Risk Management Education program works to fulfill [USDA's goal](#) to ensure a strong farm financial safety net through informing farmers and ranchers of risk management tools and strategies, especially in underserved and emerging communities.

In the four regions of the United States (Northeast, North Central, Southern and Western) one award will be made to one Regional Risk Management Education Center in each geographic area. In addition, a single award will be made to a Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center. Proposals should make clear that the applicant organization has the potential capacity to organize, coordinate, and lead centers in carrying out the activities required to address this program's priorities. Regional Center awardees will receive, review and fund proposals, and process awards under a competitive grants program protocol as a part of the Grant Award Terms and Conditions. Center awardees are required to join with USDA/NIFA in a "streamlining agreement". There are specific compliance requirements under this agreement.

### **1. Regional Risk Management Education Center**

Quality proposals for a Regional Risk Management Education Center will demonstrate the ability to provide the following: 1) a focused development and implementation of relevant Risk Management Education programs to agricultural producers; 2) the management capacity to develop and maintain a Regional Risk Management Education Center with networks to deliver programs; 3) verification of program impacts; and 4) effective regional communication networks and linkage to a national network.

Proposed budgets for the Regional ARME Center grants may include funding for the Center Director and support staff. Center Directors must be actively employed and engaged with the host institution and must demonstrate significant expertise in some area of risk management through their curriculum vitae.

Additional funding may be used to support Center activities including needs assessment, stakeholder input and guidance, regional competitive processes, and regional support of coordinated national training efforts. This also includes materials developed and other necessary activities to enhance the delivery of risk mitigation tools to appropriate audiences and conferences as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Regional ARME Centers' advisory councils, their respective Center Directors, and USDA/NIFA.

The ARME program is designed to develop a competitive sub-award grants program that is regionally or multi-regionally based, producer focused, results based and, when possible, incorporates public and private partnerships. Any funded project must have verifiable results. The Regional ARME Center Directors shall collaborate regarding sub-awards grants program management activities and release requests for applications in a coordinated, simultaneous manner. Regional ARME Center Directors must ensure that the integrity of the competitive process is maintained at all times.

## **2. Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center**

The USDA/NIFA, using stakeholder input, has placed a high priority on a Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center. This Center electronically stores program materials for risk management educators and professionals and other interested parties. The Center should be a source of addressing risk management education technologies, both in development and delivery.

It is critical that the Center communicates effectively and works closely with the directors of the four Regional Centers. It is expected that the Center will provide electronic support to the Regional Centers by receiving pre-proposals, proposals, annual progress reports, and final reports on an electronic basis, and be able to retransmit the pre-proposals and proposals to the various Regional Centers, as necessary. Applicants for the Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center should present plans and other information that demonstrate their program and administrative capacity to organize and operate such a center. Specific information regarding meeting the needs of underserved, disadvantaged, minority groups and other risk management audiences, including special emphasis communities of producers, also should be addressed in terms of possible outreach and assistance efforts.

Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center proposals will be expected to demonstrate the ability to provide, facilitate, and/or demonstrate: 1) management capacity to develop and maintain a Risk Management Electronic Support Center; 2) national source for access to Risk Management Education materials, and promoting and coordinating risk management education; 3) electronic support to the Regional Risk Management Education Centers; and, 4) collaboration with the four Regional Centers to identify and address regional risk management education priorities.

In summary, the Risk Management Electronic Support Center shall support the regional centers in the following ways: provide user-friendly electronic applications for submission of pre-proposals and proposals to the various regional centers; archival services for all risk management materials produced through the regional centers' grants, including a searchable database of all funded projects and the results of completed projects.

## PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

### A. Available Funding

The total amount of funds available for five awards under this ARME request for applications is \$4,483,200 for FY 2018 and each year thereafter through FY 2020 for support of five grant awards under this program.

Funding Breakdown:

- North Central ARME Center: \$1,082,736
- Western ARME Center: \$1,082,736
- Southern ARME Center: \$1,082,736
- Northeastern Center for ARME: \$845,424
- Digital Center for ARME: \$355,968

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2018. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

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

The Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA. For more information see [https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsservices/gov/pmt/asap/asap\\_home.htm](https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsservices/gov/pmt/asap/asap_home.htm).

### B. Types of Applications

In FY 2018, you may only submit a new application to the ARME Program.

**New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the ARME Program. We will review all new applications competitively using the screening for administrative requirements, review panel evaluation of proposals using evaluation criteria and selection process described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

Note: It is the intention of NIFA to make awards for each fiscal year commencing in FY 2018 through FY 2020 based upon the FY 2018 competition. Therefore, **only new proposals are being solicited**, and they should contain a plan of work for each year, budget and budget narrative for each year, and a consolidated budget covering the entire period. The proposal cover page (See Part IV, this RFA, Application and Submission Information) should include the entire grant period and the total amount being requested for the entire period of the grant proposal (e.g., FY 2018 – FY 2020 or three (3) years). Note that yearly funding awards will be made on an annual basis contingent upon the availability of funds and satisfactory performance by the centers

in the management and oversight of regional and multi-regional ARME competitively funded projects.

ARME project periods may range between one (1) and three (3) years. In FY 2018, NIFA plans to make continuation grants for an initial project period of one year to grantees that have requested funding for up to 3 years. A continuation grant is a grant instrument by which the Department agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that grantee performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the Federal government and the public. If these three elements are met, NIFA plans to provide additional support in FYs 2019 and 2020. NIFA will provide applicants funded in FY 2018 with further instructions about submitting applications in FYs 2019 and 2020.

## **C. Project and Grant Types**

### **1. Project Types**

#### Extension Projects

Single-function Extension Projects conduct programs and activities that deliver science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions. Program delivery may range from community-based to national audiences and use communication methods from face-to-face to electronic or combinations thereof, Extension Projects may also include related matters such as certification programs, in-service training, client recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative instructional methodologies appropriate to informal educational programs.

Extension Projects address one or more of the following key strategic actions:

1. Support informal education to increase food and agricultural literacy of youth and adults;
2. Promote science-based agricultural literacy by increasing understanding and use of food and agricultural science data, information, and programs;
3. Build science-based capability in people to engage audiences and enable informed decision making;
4. Develop new applications of instructional tools and curriculum structures that increase technical competency and ensure global competitiveness;
5. Offer non-formal learning programs that increase accessibility to new audiences at the rate at which new ideas and technologies are tested and/or developed at the community-scale; and
6. Develop programs that increase public knowledge and citizen engagement leading to actions that protect or enhance the nations' food supply, agricultural productivity, environmental quality, community vitality, and/or public health and well-being.

These projects should lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group. These projects should synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results.

In response to the FY 2018 ARME RFA, ARME will continue to support two types of extension projects – (a) The Regional Agriculture Risk Management Education (ARME) Centers and (b) the Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center (RMEESC). One award will be made for each of the four Regional ARME Centers and one for the Regional Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center. Therefore, there will be a total of **five (5) awards**. Project periods shall not exceed three years (36 months).

(a) Regional Agriculture Risk Management Education (ARME) Centers

Four grants to four separate Regional ARME Centers will be provided as a result of this FY 2018 competition: one each in the Northeast Region, North Central Region, Southern Region, and the Western Region.

The Regional ARME Centers are expected to conduct projects within their region and multi-regional projects with other Centers. These projects are to be solicited and selected for funding by the ARME Center through a sub-award competitive process that parallels the competitive process utilized by NIFA, is specifically approved by NIFA National Program Leader and other relevant personnel, and is contained within the Operational Guide for ARME Centers. It is anticipated that the Centers will support special projects for training, coordination and communication networks, including outreach and assistance to disadvantaged or underserved customers, and other clientele groups with particular risk management education needs that are developed, with stakeholder input, and conducted by or on behalf of the Centers, and with specific prior approval by NIFA.

(b) Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center (RMEESC)

One award will fund the RMEESC. The RMEESC can be located in any region.

2. **Grant Types.** The following is a list of available grant types under this RFA.

(a) Regular Grant supports targeted original scientific Research, Education/Teaching, Extension, or Integrated Projects. An eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system may submit a grant application for project activities to be undertaken principally on behalf of its own students or faculty, and to be managed primarily by its own personnel. The applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

**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 more information.

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Applications may only be submitted by qualified public and private entities. This includes all colleges and universities, Federal, State, and local agencies, nonprofit and for-profit private organization or corporations, and other entities. 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 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**

USDA/NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

## **PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. Electronic Application Package**

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA. We urge you to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For information about the pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.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 two 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/applicants/adobe-software-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 where appropriate

#### **Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-ARPA-006535**

Click “Search.” On the displayed page, click the corresponding link to continue. A Grant Application Package is tied to a particular funding opportunity. You may submit an application ONLY to the particular funding opportunity to which the Grant Application Package is associated.

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 (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.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](mailto: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. EST).

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**

Electronic applications are to be prepared 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** you need 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 whether 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](mailto:electronic@nifa.usda.gov)
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. EST, 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 Part V, Section 2.18 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances (e.g., Prohibition Against Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

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

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 3 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

### **3. R&R Other Project Information Form**

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available 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 ARME. 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.**

1) NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 6 pages of written text and up to 6 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (12 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

- **Introduction:** Include a brief summary of work you propose to complete under the current increment of funding you are requesting with this application. Also state your specific program aims which must align with the overall objectives outlined in the RFA.
- **Statement of Need:** Describe how this overall project will address relevant issues and the audience(s) to be served.
- **Program Delivery:** Describe the methods or procedures to be applied to the proposed efforts.
- **Communication Plan:** Describe how progress, results, and other relevant information will be communicated to stakeholders and to the public.
- **Capacity:** Describe the organization's administrative/management/expert capacity to develop and maintain a Regional Risk Management Education Center with Networks to deliver regional ARME programs OR to develop and maintain a Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center.
- **Evaluation:** Describe how the program structure and procedures/methodologies selected, based on project objectives which will be used to measure the extent to

which the objectives are met. Bibliography & References Cited – PDF Attachment. This RFA does not require a bibliography and references cited.

**c. Field 12. Add Other Attachments**

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.

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

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This section of the guide includes instructions about senior/key person profile requirements, 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. Part V.6 also notes the importance and use of the information.

**6. R&R Budget**

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 7 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

**USDA/NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.**

For further information and instructions regarding indirect costs, refer to Part V, section 7.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. For indirect cost funding restrictions, refer to Part IV, D. of this RFA.

**7. Supplemental Information Form**

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available 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 “ARME – Agriculture Risk Management Education Partnerships”) and the program code (i.e., enter “OC”). 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**

We recommend that you conduct an administrative review of the application before submission of it via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all 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 p.m. Eastern Time on April 27, 2018**. 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. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email 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 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, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.**

#### **D. Funding Restrictions**

Section 715 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded. See Part V section 7.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further indirect cost information.

You may not use grant funds awarded under this authority to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or plan, repair; rehabilitate, acquire, or construction of buildings or facilities.

Project periods cannot exceed the statutory time limit of five (5) years. The funding period will commence on the effective date cited in the award instrument. Any such limitation also applies to subcontracts made under awards subject to a funding period limitation.

#### **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.

## **F. Potential Streamlining for Competitively Selected Sub-Award Programs**

NIFA may agree to modify the requirements for the administration of the Agriculture Risk Management Education Partnerships Grants Competitive sub-awards granted by the four regions (Northeast, North Central, Southern, and Western).

For those organizations requesting a streamlining process the following items must be included in the proposal which is submitted to NIFA for consideration on or before April 27, 2018:

- A description of the sub-award program and the process that will be used to ensure effective management of the ARME fiscal resources (i.e., compliance with federal regulations and guidelines, no unallowable costs, documentation of expenditures, auditing procedures, adequate explanation and justification of budget items, reviewing and approving budgets, monitoring);
- A description of the approach that will be used to ensure that a fair and open decision-making process will be used to solicit and select potential applicants for each funding opportunity;
- Copies of Requests for Applications for all sub-award programs for which streamlining is requested;
- A description of the proposal review process;
- A list of reviewers (include their areas of expertise); and
- Criteria used to rank the applications during the selection process.

If the streamlining process is approved by NIFA, it will be noted on the Provisions section of the Award Face Sheet, Form NIFA-2009 and the organization will no longer be required to submit sub-award proposals and budgets to NIFA Awards Management Division for approval.

However, the organization will be required to obtain NIFA National Program Leader (NPL) approval for projects selected under the Competitive Program prior to issuing sub-awards or releasing funds for the projects. To obtain NPL approval the following information is to be submitted electronically:

- A table of sub-awards to be made that includes the project number, project director's name, institution, amount of the award, and the title of the project. A template table will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader. The table is to be signed by the AOR.
- A checklist of program and budget expectations for each sub-award. The check list must be signed by the project manager and their immediate supervisor or their AOR. Signatures certify the organization's responsibility for program and budget implementation standards.

A checklist template will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader.

- A checklist of program and budget expectations for each community. These shall be submitted as community projects are identified and developed (which should be within approximately 2 months after the organizations have been notified of funding). The check list must be signed by the project manager and their immediate supervisor or the AOR. Signatures certify the organization's responsibility for program and budget implementation standards. A checklist template will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader. A table that lists each community project and an abstract of each project. The abstract should be about 150 words in length and clearly state the issue and how it will be addressed. The table should be submitted with the individual community check lists. A template table will be provided by the NIFA National Program Leader.

The NPL retains the right to review all or a random sample of full sub-award proposals and ranking to insure the fidelity of program and budget standards and administration of the projects. This streamlining process was established as a trial effort starting with FY 2009 funding and will be fully implemented in FY 2018. The NIFA National Program Leader may revoke an approved streamlining agreement if the program or budget administration by a grantee is deemed sub-standard.

## **PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. General**

We evaluate each application in a two-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--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;
- Need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields;
- Need to include 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;
- Need to include 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;
- Need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and
- Need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of ARME will recommend that your project be approved for support from currently available funds or be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

ARME 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.

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

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

A reviewer's written evaluation entails two levels of assessment. First, the reviewer summarizes how well the application addressed each evaluation criterion. After the application has been assessed for strengths and weaknesses of each criterion, the reviewer then evaluates the overall likelihood that the project will have significant outcome and impact. These written reviews are used to begin [panel](#) discussions with other reviewers serving on the peer review panel. Through these discussions, peer review panelists come to consensus on the final rating and ranking of proposals. A complete description of NIFA's peer review process can be found at the NIFA website

[https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/NIFA-Peer-Review-Process-for-Competitive-Grant-Applications\\_0.pdf](https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/NIFA-Peer-Review-Process-for-Competitive-Grant-Applications_0.pdf)

The four Regional ARME Centers will be evaluated on one set of criteria and the Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center will be evaluated with a separate set of criteria. **We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:**

Proposals for Regional ARME Centers will be evaluated based on the criteria described below.

*1. Development and Delivery of Relevant ARME Programs to Agricultural Producers 25 points*

Focus on Producers

Factors include demonstrated understanding of agricultural RME needs including use of feedback mechanisms that identify emerging needs of producers and indicate program relevance and effectiveness. How does your organization gain information from producers that identify current and emerging ARME needs? It is important to note the role of the advisory councils/board in such an effort. Also, to the extent possible reviewers must clearly have an idea of the submitting entities particular expertise and experience in the area of focus on producers.

Programs Targeted to Agricultural Risk Management Education Needs

Identify how ARME programming will address multi-regional, regional, state, and local risk management issues. Recognize the risk management education needs of all producers, including traditionally underserved producers, regardless of the size or scale of operations, and of each of the five “special emphasis” communities of producers, including new and beginning farmers, and the types of agricultural risks associated with specialty crops and climatic conditions. Innovative approaches that address ARME issues are welcomed. Explain the applicant’s specific experiences with special emphasis producer communities and identify what is the applicant’s specific plan for greater inclusion of special emphasis producer communities’ risk education needs.

Use of ARME Materials Appropriate for Regional Educational Needs

Factors to be considered will include ready access to existing ARME materials that apply to regional risk management issues and the ability to develop additional materials as needed. How will you provide access to the materials developed as part of the grants you will be awarding?

*2. Management Capacity to Develop and Maintain a Regional Risk Management Education Center with Networks to deliver ARME Programs 25 points*

Use of a Competitive Process to Select Sub-Award Projects at the Regional Level

Clearly identify regional ARME needs and link them to ARME identified regional and national objectives. How will the ARME Center Advisory Council select proposals for funding? What process will be employed to competitively determine the selection of proposals for funding?

Development of a Regional ARME Delivery Network and Coordination with the National ARME Delivery Network

These networks (regional and national) should ensure that public and private entities involved in the regional ARME Program participate in an institutional/organizational framework, coordinate delivery of ARME programs to agricultural producers, within and between regions, as appropriate.

#### Expertise and Institutional/Organizational Support

Center staff should possess adequate training, experience and the capacity to develop, manage, and oversee regional ARME programs (including experience developing, managing and overseeing similar programs), conduct training as appropriate, and participate in national coordination activities. Institutional/organizational support including facilities should be noted as well. Status of Project Director must be noted; specifically, the full or part-time status of the Project Director, his or her relationship to the applying entity, prior knowledge of and experience in risk management education-related activities, and related pertinent information is required.

### *3. Verification of Program Impacts 25 points*

#### Definition of Performance Targets

Performance targets should be closely related to program objectives and expected outcomes, and should focus on change in the knowledge and behavior of program participants. How will your organization keep track of projects and whether the grantees have met the objectives they set out to accomplish? How will the organization ensure compliance with identified performance targets by sub-grantees? What are the identified performance targets for the regional ARME Center and how will these targets be met in the short and long-term?

#### Regular and Accurate Reporting of ARME Program Activities and Impacts

The process described should include the formation of accountability and reporting systems integrated with program objectives, identify focus on results and identify use for semi-annual, annual, and/or requested reporting at regional and national levels. The means by which you expect to archive final reports also should be addressed.

### *4. Effective Regional Communication Networks and Linkage to a National Network 25 points*

#### Capacity to Provide Effective ARME Communication at Intra- and Inter-regional Levels

This includes use of media outlets and the distribution of regional ARME materials that have nationwide application. What is the specific Regional ARME Centers' communication plan within the region; what is the specific Regional ARME Centers' communication plan; how will the Regional ARME Center coordinate with other ARME Centers and the RMEESC in a national communications plan for the ARME program?

#### Participation in National Conferences and Workshops

This activity should promote program coordination and sharing of materials. Are there national conferences or symposia that have relevance to ARME? What will be the Regional ARME Center's involvement with other organizations? What is the applicant's experience in participation with and/or coordination of national conferences and/or workshops?

Proposals for the Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center (RMEESC) will be evaluated based on the criteria described below.

*1. Management Capacity to Develop and Maintain a Risk Management Electronic Support Center 33 points*

Documentation as to Organizational Effectiveness in Designing and Operating an Electronic Support Center

Relate the experience your organization and key staff have in designing and operating an electronic support center or the equivalent. Relate how operational priorities will be established and how coordination will take place with the four Regional ARME Center Directors.

*2. Provide electronic support to the Regional Risk Management Education Centers 33 points*

Provide Electronic Support to the Regional ARME Centers

Generally describe how proposals, awards and projects will be tracked. Is there a particular proposed format available? What system requirements will there be? Describe the system resources your organization possesses.

Public Access to the System

Describe how the system will provide public access to reports and accomplishments of ARME projects and activities funded by the Regional ARME Centers. How will the system report and make information content available to the public, e.g., educators, professionals, non-profit organizations, and other interested parties?

Technology Support

Clearly describe how your organization will provide technology support to the four Regional ARME Centers. How will your organization resolve technology issues, support pre-proposal and proposal submission and reporting requirements, coordinate multi-regional proposals and requests for applications for funding?

*3. Provide a national source for access to ARME materials, and promoting and coordinating risk management education 34 points*

Compilation of Materials and Linkages & Coordination of National Communications Effort

Identify the specific plans and/or approach your organization will use to design and execute a national communications plan for and with the Regional ARME Center programs. Demonstrate an ability to compile and organize information produced through the grant programs of the Regional ARME Centers and other programs that exist throughout the Nation. It is important that the ARME Program have the means by which such information can be organized, archived, or linked in such a manner that interested parties involved in ARME have the opportunity to access such information readily.

Relationship with the Land-grant University System and Other Education Providers

There is a great deal of relevant risk management education activity and data produced under projects conducted throughout the land-grant and other university systems. The applicant

organization should be able to demonstrate a familiarity with such projects and the educational materials. It is important that the reviewers understand the current trends and activity around land-grant and other universities addressing risk management education. Please identify how the Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center will extract and provide public access to relevant ARME data and information produced throughout the land-grant and other university systems, and/or federal or state, public or private organizations, should they be available.

#### Coordination/Sponsoring Risk Management Conferences

It is important that the Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center be fully engaged with the four Regional ARME Centers in the coordination of various risk management conferences, symposium, etc. What experience has your organization had in coordinating various management conferences, symposia or similar events? Describe your organization's capabilities to coordinate and sponsor risk management or other relevant or related conferences.

#### Program Coordination and Training of Educators and Others in New Risk Management Tools and Strategies

As technology changes and advances, so do the tools available for agricultural risk mitigation. Describe how your organization would go about the task of promoting program coordination and the training of educators and others on new and emerging risk management tools and strategies. Describe previous relevant efforts in this regard.

### **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](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 one-time, with updates on an as-needed basis. This requirement is part of the responsibility determined 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 pre-award 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 ARME 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, the information described in [2 CFR 200.210](#).

See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view current NIFA award terms and conditions.

### **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**

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, they will be identified in the award.

To foster interactions and mutual learning among projects, three (3) organized conferences will be held, either by webinar or phone. During these conferences, each award team will share their progress to date (including any ongoing challenges and those solved), present next steps, and consider collaboration opportunities with one or more award teams on issues of mutual interest and for joint benefit.

At the end of the grantee's final year, the grantee must prepare a final report to USDA/NIFA that summarizes all significant activities undertaken towards achieving the outcomes of the project. The report should include: basic demographics and total numbers on participants served / resources developed; tables, graphs, and other figures to facilitate comparing targeted project results with actual results, aggregated for the entire project; for projects expected to lead to measurable, documented changes in participants' learning, actions or conditions, final numbers of participants who showed/reported significant changes in learning, actions or conditions; project list of all educational materials (including web links when appropriate) produced by the project; and success stories and pictures showcasing project impacts. Reports must be received in REEPort within 60 days of the end of the performance period.

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –  
Toija Riggins, Ph.D.  
National Program Leader  
Institute of Youth, Family and Community  
Division of Family and Consumer Sciences  
NIFA/USDA  
1400 Independence Ave., SW, MS 2250  
Washington, DC 20250-2251  
Phone: (202) 720 – 2297  
Email: [toija.riggins@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:toija.riggins@nifa.usda.gov)

Administrative/Business Contact –  
Rochelle McCrea  
Team Leader,  
Awards Management Division  
Office of Grants and Financial Management  
NIFA/USDA  
1400 Independence Ave., SW, MS 2250  
Washington, DC 20250-2251  
Phone: (202) 445 – 5405  
Email: [rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov)

Or,

Towana DeShazo  
Grants Support Assistant  
Awards Management Division  
Office of Grants and Financial Management  
NIFA/USDA  
1400 Independence Ave., SW, MS 2250  
Washington, DC 20250-2251  
Phone: 202-401-4155  
Email: [tdeshazo@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:tdeshazo@nifa.usda.gov)

## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. 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 Budget or Project Plans**

In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons:

- (i) Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring prior written approval).
- (ii) Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
- (iii) The disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project, by the approved project director or principal investigator.
- (iv) The inclusion, unless waived by the federal awarding agency, of costs that require prior approval in accordance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E—Cost Principles of this part or 45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, “Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals,” or 48 CFR Part 31, “Contract Cost Principles and Procedures,” as applicable.
- (v) The transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs as defined in §200.75 Participant support costs to other categories of expense.
- (vi) Unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards, the subawarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount subawards as described in §200.332 Fixed amount subawards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
- (vii) Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity.
- (viii) The need arises for additional federal funds to complete the project.

The awardee will be subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award. See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> for information about NIFA award terms.

### **B. 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 of Agriculture 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. We will retain for three years a copy of an application that does not result in an award. 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.

### **C. Regulatory Information**

This program is not subject to the provisions of 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.

### **D. Definitions**

Refer to [7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Financial Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions](#), for applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

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

Agricultural Risk Management means the informed use, as appropriate, of the full range of agricultural risk management activities, including futures, options, agricultural trade options, crop insurance, cash forward contracting, debt reduction, production diversification, farm resources risk reduction and other risk management strategies, by agricultural producers. It includes those risks encountered in the production, marketing, financial, legal, and human resource(s) aspects of farm and ranch operations.

Beginning Farmer and Rancher means a person that has not operated a farm or ranch; or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years (as defined by section 7405(a) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 [7 U.S.C. 3319f(a)

National ARME Program means the requirement for each regional center to conduct its programs in coordination with RMEESC and the other three ARME Centers (i.e., to function as a national A RME program), not as four separate, isolated centers.

Producers means individuals, families, or other entities in the U.S. engaged in the business of agricultural production and marketing before the farm gate.

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

Regions means (1) the Northeast region consisting of the 12 Northeast States and the District of Columbia (ME, VT, NH, MA, RI, CT, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, and WV); (2) the Southern Region consisting of 13 States plus Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (VA, NC, SC, KY, TN, GA, FL, AL, MS, LA, TX, AR, and OK); the North Central Region consisting of 12 States (OH, MI, IN, IL, MO, KS, IA, WI, MN, NE, SD, and ND); and the Western Region consisting of 12 States and the American Territories in the Pacific (HI, AK, WA, OR, CA, ID, NV, UT, AZ, MT, WY, CO, and NM).

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

Socially disadvantaged group means a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. [7 U.S.C. 2003(e)].

#### **E. Materials Available on the Internet**

ARME program information will be made available on the NIFA web site at <http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/extension-risk-management-education-operations-manual>. The following are among the materials available on the web page:

1. Operations Manual