

Agriculture Risk Management Education Partnerships (ARME) Competitive Grants Program

FY 2015 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: July 6, 2015

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA

ANTICIPATED TOTAL AWARD: approximately \$4,449,600



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 **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on July 6, 2015**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C. of this RFA). Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within 6 months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks your comments about this RFA. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we'll use them to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this 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 **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** for fiscal year (FY) 2015. The grants will 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. Approximately \$4,449,600 is available to fund applications in FY 2015. **Based on the FY 2015 competition, it is the intention of NIFA to provide continuation awards in FY 2016 and FY 2017.**

This notice identifies the objectives for ARME projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an ARME grant. Applicants should become familiar with the Regional Risk Management Education Centers (RME 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 and Background

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 Risk Management Education (RME) 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.

Funds are provided for support to the four RME Regional Centers and one Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center. This work helps advance [USDA/NIFA's Strategic Goal 1](#): Science to *Catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education, and extension programs* and NIFA's overall mission to *Invest in and advance agricultural research, education, and extension to solve societal challenges*; Sub-goal 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*. Efforts further align with the [Research, Education, and Economics \(REE\) Strategic Goal 7](#): *to promote Rural Prosperity and Rural/Urban Interdependence which emphasizes using transformational research and extension to inform citizens and enable and support vibrant and resilient communities*. This program contributes to the accomplishment of [USDA Strategic Goal 1](#): *Assist rural communities to create prosperity so they are self-sustaining, re-populating, and economically thriving* and Objective 1.3: *support a sustainable and competitive agricultural system*.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The primary purpose of the RME 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.

- 1) The RME Program will fund four regional centers nationwide and a Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center:
 - a) Northeast Region RME
 - b) North Central Region RME
 - c) Southern Region RME
 - d) Western Region RME
 - e) Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center RME

The purpose of the four regional RME 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 RME 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.

- 2) The Regional RME 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 market 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 of 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.

- 3) The Regional Centers are expected to specifically target risk management as identified in the Legislative Authority (Part I. 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 RME Centers' activities through 2017.

The RME 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 RME 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 goal 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 of effort or substantial activity related to the subject matter of this RFA. 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 be expected to demonstrate the ability to provide and/or demonstrate 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 RME 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 RME Centers' advisory councils, their respective Center Directors, and USDA/NIFA.

The RME 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 RME Center Directors shall collaborate regarding sub-awards grants program

management activities and release requests for applications in a coordinated, simultaneous manner. Regional RME 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 has the wherewithal to communicate effectively and to work 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 pre-proposal and proposal receipt and subsequent electronic transmittal 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 request for applications is \$4,449,600 for FY 2015 and each year thereafter through FY 2017 for support of five grant awards under this program.

Funding Breakdown:

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

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury’s Bureau of the Fiscal Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see <http://fms.treas.gov/index1.html>.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2015, applications may be submitted as “NEW” applications only. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

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

Note: It is the intention of NIFA to make awards for each fiscal year commencing in FY 2015 through FY 2017 based upon the FY 2015 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 2015 – FY 2017 or three 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 RME competitively funded projects.

RME project periods may range between one (1) and three (3) years. In FY 2015, 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 2016 and 2017. NIFA will provide applicants funded in FY 2015 with further instructions about submitting applications in FYs 2016 and 2017.

C. Project Types

In response to the FY 2015 ARME RFA, two types of grants will be made, one award for each of the regional RME centers and one for a supporting Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center for a total of five awards. The statutory time limitation for awards issued under this authority is five years. No award may exceed this statutory time limitation.

1. Regional Risk Management Education (RME) Centers

Four grants to four separate Regional RME Centers will be provided as a result of this FY 2015 competition: one each in the Northeast Region, North Central Region, Southern Region, and the Western Region.

The Regional RME 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 RME 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 RME 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.

2. Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center (RMEESC)

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

D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

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

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

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by qualified public and private entities. This includes all colleges and universities, Federal, State, and local agencies, nonprofit and for-profit private organizations 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. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline will result in USDA/NIFA returning the application without review or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude USDA/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 an overview of the Grants.gov application process see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/grant-application-process.html>

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, we recommend that the Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) first contact an Authorized Representative (AR, also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If not (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed PRIOR to submitting an application. It can take as long as 2 weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations, the AR should go to **“Register” in the top right corner of the Grants.gov web page (or go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov.** Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the registration process. Refer item 2. below to locate the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide”.

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

To receive application materials:

1. You must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov to access, complete, and submit applications. For basic system requirements and download instructions, see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determine whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.
2. To obtain the application package from Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html> Under Step 1 click on “Download a Grant Application Package,” and enter the funding opportunity number

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-ARPA-005216

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

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” This guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information

about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

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

Grants.gov customer support

800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [federal holidays](#).

Email: support@grants.gov

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

Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self-service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. ET). Get help now!

Have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of agency you are applying to
- Specific area of concern

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

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

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III section 3. of the guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or that attachments are in PDF format; see Part III section 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

For any questions related to the preparation of an application, review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable RFA. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

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

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

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

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

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

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

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

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of **RME**. 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. (PDF attachment)

The Project Narrative shall not exceed 6 pages of written text, regardless of whether it is single or double spaced and up to 6 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (12 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. The proposal must include 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 this 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 RME 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.

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

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

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

6. R&R Budget

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

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

7. Supplemental Information Form

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

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

C. Submission Dates and Times

Prior to electronic submission of the application via Grants.gov, it is strongly recommended that an administrative review be conducted to ensure that an application complies with all application preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review.

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on July 6, 2015**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

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

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

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

D. Funding Restrictions

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 July 6, 2015:

- 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 check list 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 check list 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 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. The process will be monitored and evaluated for efficiency and effectiveness before full implementation. 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 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 ARME 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.

ARME program staff 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

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

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

a. Focused Development and Delivery of Relevant RME Programs to Agricultural Producers

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 RME 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 RME 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 RME 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 RME Materials Appropriate for Regional Educational Needs

Factors to be considered will include ready access to existing RME 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?

b. Management Capacity to Develop and Maintain a Regional Risk Management Education Center with Networks to deliver RME Programs

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

Clearly identify regional RME needs and link them to RME identified regional and national objectives. How will the RME 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 RME Delivery Network and Coordination with the National RME Delivery Network

These networks (regional and national) should ensure that public and private entities involved in the regional RME Program participate in an institutional/organizational framework, coordinate delivery of RME 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 RME 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.

c. Verification of Program Impacts

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 RME Center and how will these targets be met in the short and long-term?

Regular and Accurate Reporting of RME 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.

d. Effective Regional Communication Networks and Linkage to a National Network

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

This includes use of media outlets and the distribution of regional RME materials that have nationwide application. What is the specific Regional RME Centers' communication plan within the region; what is the specific Regional RME Centers' communication plan; how will the Regional RME Center coordinate with other RME Centers and the RMEESC in a national communications plan for the RME 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 RME? What will be the Regional RME Center's involvement with other organizations? What is the applicant's experience in participation with and/or coordination of national conferences and/or workshops?

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

a. Management Capacity to Develop and Maintain a Risk Management Electronic Support Center

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 RME Center Directors.

b. *Provide electronic support to the Regional Risk Management Education Centers*

Provide Electronic Support to the Regional RME 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 RME projects and activities funded by the Regional RME 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 RME 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?

c. *Provide a national source for access to RME materials, and promoting and coordinating risk management education*

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 RME Center programs. Demonstrate an ability to compile and organize information produced through the grant programs of the Regional RME Centers and other programs that exist throughout the Nation. It is important that the RME Program have the means by which such information can be organized, archived, or linked in such a manner that interested parties involved in RME 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 university system. 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 universities addressing risk management education. Please identify how the Risk Management Education Electronic Support Center will extract and provide public access to relevant RME data and information produced throughout the land-grant university system and through other non-land grant 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 RME 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 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 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; however, withdrawn applications normally will not be returned. One copy of each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by 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:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to which the director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number and the Federal Agency Identification Number assigned by NIFA;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time NIFA intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of financial assistance approved for the award;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);
- (10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to the ones listed below.

2 CFR Part 25, “Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration”

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

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

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

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

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

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

2 CFR Part 415, “General Program Administrative Regulations”

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

2 CFR Part 417, “Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension”

2 CFR Part 418, “New Restrictions on Lobbying”

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

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

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

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

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

7 CFR Part 3407—USDA procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

7 CFR 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Financial Assistance Programs-- General Award Administrative Provisions.

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

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in federally-assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in federally-assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

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

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

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

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

To foster interactions and mutual learning among projects, Dr. Susan Shockey, Family & Consumer Economics National Program Leader will facilitate networking among cohort grant awardees throughout the year. 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. Dr. Ahlshia Shipley, Family & Consumer Sciences Specialist will provide guidance for use of REEport in completing the final report as part of the post-award management process. Reports must be received by Dr. Susan Shockey, Family & Consumer Economics National Program Leader within 60 days of the expiration date of the award.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact

Name: Susan Shockey

Title: National Program Leader

Unit: Division of Family and Consumer Sciences

Location: 4425 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 690 - 2674

Fax: (202) 690 - 2469

Email: sshockey@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contacts

Name: Duane Alphs

Title: Team Leader

Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management

Location: 2152 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 401 - 4326

Email: dalphs@nifa.usda.gov

Name: Rochelle McCrea

Title: Team Leader, Team I

Unit: Branch II

Location: 2160 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 401 - 2880

Fax: (202) 401 - 6271

Email: rmccrea@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 , is program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

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

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

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 RME Program means the requirement for each regional center to conduct its programs in coordination with RMEESC and the other three RME Centers (i.e., to function as a national 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)].

F. 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>