Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Education Grants Program

FY 2016 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINES:
Collaboration Applications Deadline: February 9, 2016
Strengthening Applications Deadline: February 12, 2016

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS EDUCATION GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.223, Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program.

DATES: All New Collaboration Project applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 9, 2016. All Standard Project applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 10, 2016. All Strengthening Project applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 12, 2016. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C. of this RFA). Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within 6 months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks your comments about this RFA. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we’ll use them to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice via e-mail to: Policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program for fiscal year (FY) 2016 to promote and strengthen the ability of Hispanic-Serving Institutions to carry out higher education programs that attract, retain, and graduate outstanding students capable of enhancing the nation’s food, agricultural, and natural resource scientific and professional work force. The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2016 is approximately $8.8 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for HSI projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a HSI grant.
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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 1455 of National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA), reauthorized by section 7115 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, provides the Secretary of Agriculture with the authority to make competitive grants to Hispanic-Serving Institutions for the purpose of promoting and strengthening Hispanic-Serving Institutions ability to carry out education, applied research, and community development programs. This program is administered under the provisions of section 1455 of (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3241) pursuant to section 815 of Public Law 104-127 and Public Law 110-246.

Per section 7128 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246), activities funded under this program are no longer required to benefit a consortia of Hispanic-Serving Institutions to be supported by the grant. Consequently, the definition of a “Strengthening Project” under the HSI Education Grants Program has been revised to a project where the applicant, or applicant and one other Hispanic-Serving Institution will be involved in the execution of the project.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The Department of Agriculture is designated as the lead Federal Agency that supports higher education in the food and agricultural sciences. In this context, NIFA has specific responsibility to initiate and support projects to strengthen higher education teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences.

The Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Education Grants Program directly aligns with the Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan (March 2014 version) (http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_03-2014.pdf) and specifically addresses: Goal 6 – Education and Science Literacy. The HSI program is also aligned with the NIFA Strategic plan (2014-2018) (http://nifa.usda.gov/about/pdfs/strat_plan_2014.pdf), specifically addressing Strategic Goal No 1, (Science – Catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education, and extension programs); Subgoal 1.7 – (Ensure the development of human capital, communities, and a diverse workforce through research, education, extension and engagement programs in food and agricultural sciences to support a sustainable agriculture system).

The purpose of NIFA’s HSI Education Grants Program is to support innovative teaching or education applications with potential to impact Hispanic-Serving Institutions to build capacity and then to become models for other institutions that serve underrepresented students, at the regional or national level. HSI education projects should develop human capital relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. While research and extension activities may be included in a funded HSI Education project, the primary focus must be to improve teaching, enrollment, and graduation rates within a degree-granting program.
Priorities

NIFA’s mission is to invest and advance agricultural research, education and extension to solve societal challenges. For the purpose of HSI Program, the following NIFA Priority Science Areas are considered as the national priorities:

1) Climate Variability and Change
2) Childhood Obesity and Prevention
3) Food Safety
4) Food Security
5) Sustainable Bioenergy
6) Water for Agriculture

Priority will be given to projects that promote and strengthen the ability of Hispanic-Serving Institutions to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs, and address educational needs, as determined by each institution, within a broadly defined area of food and agricultural sciences and related disciplines.

HSI encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through the Cooperative Extension System’s eXtension Initiative. Funds may be used to 1) enhance an existing Community of Practice or 2) to establish a new Community of Practice that focuses on Stakeholder/Land Grant Institutions Partnership: Integrated Research, Extension and Education. Projects must align with the eXtension vision, mission and values. A letter of acknowledgement from eXtension is required, and a letter of support may be required from one or more of the Communities of Practice. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to http://create.extension.org/node/2057.

C. Program Area Description

NIFA is soliciting applications for the HSI Education Grants Program meeting the following characteristics and/or conditions:

1. HSI Education Grant Program Objectives

Grant applications must address how the proposed projects will be able to contribute to the goals above by aligning the projects to the following HSI Education Grants Program objectives:

a) Strengthen institutional capacities to develop and enhance faculty, curriculum, methods of instruction, and infrastructure including libraries and scientific instrumentation to serve underrepresented students in identified State, regional, national, or international educational need areas in the food and agricultural sciences;
b) Recruit, retain, and support undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented groups to prepare them for careers in the food, agricultural, and natural resources, and human sciences sectors;

c) Facilitate cooperative initiatives between two or more Hispanic-Serving Institutions or between Hispanic-Serving Institutions and public or the private sector to maximize the development and use of resources and to improve the food and agricultural sciences teaching programs; and

d) Support the activities of Hispanic-serving institutions to enhance educational equity for underrepresented students.

2. Educational Need Areas

There are different educational need areas that HSI projects should focus on and develop in order to contribute to the HSI education program goals and objectives. If addressing more than one Educational Need Area in the application, please list the need areas in order of priority in the Project Summary (See Part IV, B.3).

Projects addressing the HSI Program Objectives (Part I, C.3.) or Educational Need Areas below must demonstrate how proposed activities will provide more efficient and effective approaches than existing institutional programs in order to increase both the quality and quantity of targeted students.

Applicants should propose to improve mainstream instructional practices and address future needs within the food and agricultural sciences system. Applicants should consider projects that meet the various Educational Need Areas:

a) Curricula Design, Materials Development, and Library Resources (including development of courses of study and degree programs).

The purpose of this strategy is to promote new and improved curricula, materials, and library resources to increase the quality of and continuously renew the academic programs of HSIs in the food, agricultural, natural resources, and human sciences. The overall objective is to stimulate the development and facilitate the use of exemplary education models and materials that incorporate the most recent advances in subject matter, research on teaching and learning theory, and instructional technology and to demonstrate the benefit of new technologies. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: the development of courses of study, degree programs, and instructional materials; the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects; the introduction of new subjects or new applications of knowledge pertaining to the food and agricultural sciences; or the acquisition of books and journals relating to the food and agricultural sciences.

b) Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching.

The purpose of this strategy is to advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising
skills. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications in a field; expanding competence in innovative technologies and new methods of instruction delivery or student advising skills; or pursuing further graduate-level study in a field related to the food and agricultural sciences. Each faculty recipient of support for developmental activities must be an "eligible participant" as defined in the definitions section of this RFA. Training of faculty and encouraging faculty to develop them in Leadership in Agriculture.

c) **Instruction Delivery Systems.**
The purpose of this strategy is to encourage the use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: incorporating alternative instructional methodologies that respond to differences in student learning styles; inter-institutional collaborating in such a manner to deliver instruction in ways that maximize program quality and reduce unnecessary duplication; and considering and implementing innovative instructional techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems in response to advances in knowledge and technology. This includes the development of capacity for distance education in these particular areas in which institutions partner with one another to optimize resources in offering courses/programs via distance education.

d) **Scientific Instrumentation for Teaching.**
The purpose of this strategy is to provide students in science-oriented courses the necessary experience with suitable, up-to-date equipment in order to involve them in work central to scientific understanding and progress. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional laboratory and other classroom equipment to help assure the success and sustainability of outstanding higher education programs in food and agricultural sciences; upgrading existing equipment; or replacing non-functional or obsolete equipment.

e) **Student Experiential Learning**
The purpose of this strategy is to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs outside the formal classroom that provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. Applications may emphasize knowledge and applications that provide students with skills desired by employers such as: preparing future graduates to advance knowledge and technology, and improving participants’ capacity to: enhance the quality of life of communities, conserve resources, and revitalize the Nation's economic competitiveness. During these experiences, students should advance their decision-making and communication skills, and improving real-life technological expertise. Applicants are encouraged to find a USDA agency, non-profit, and/or private sector organization to assist in the development of these student experiential learning activities, including international experiences.

f) **Student Recruitment and Retention**
The purpose of this strategy is to strengthen student recruitment and retention programs in order to promote and strengthen the Nation's scientific, professional, and technical workforce in the food and agricultural sciences. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: supplementing efforts to attract increased numbers of outstanding underrepresented students to prepare for careers as food and agricultural scientists, professionals, and technicians; promoting opportunities for students from Hispanic-Serving Institutions to engage in a robust exchange of ideas and a more effective use of the full breadth of the Nation's intellectual resources; or mentoring programs and other initiatives (including financial assistance) to attract and retain outstanding students. Strengthening project applicants may request funding (up to $25,000) to provide financial assistance to one student beyond his/her participation in the project that will address this purpose.

3. Student Eligibility for Financial Support

Each student recipient must be enrolled at an eligible institution and meet the requirement of an "eligible participant" as defined in the definitions section of this solicitation. The following criteria must be taken into consideration when selecting scholarship recipients:

a) Be a citizen or national of the United States, as defined in the definition section;
b) Must be attending a public or other non-profit Hispanic-Serving Institution as defined in the definitions section of this RFA;
c) Leadership activities and community service;
d) Desire to pursue a career at USDA or in food and agricultural sciences;
e) Major related to the food and agricultural sciences;
f) Participation in HSI's Education Grants Program Activities;
g) G.P.A.;
h) Essay indicating interest in food and agricultural sciences; and
i) Potential for adding diversity.

A student earning a two-year degree could become eligible to receive support to complete a four-year degree or a student earning a four-year degree could be sponsored to complete a master's degree. The student should be selected within the first 18 months of the award and encouraged to complete funded schoolwork within 54 months of the initial award date (4.5 years). Two-year colleges must have an articulation agreement allowing the student to complete a bachelor’s or professional degree at the selected granting institution.

4. Disciplines and Subject Matter Areas Supported

Eligible institutions may, within the Educational Need Area targeted for support, propose projects in any discipline(s) or subject matter area(s) of the food, agriculture, natural resources or human sciences. According to Section 1404(9) of NARETPA as amended by Section 7101 of Public Law 110-246, the term "food and agricultural sciences" means basic, applied, and developmental teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable energy and natural
resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, or rural economic, community, or business development including activities relating to the following: (1) Animal health, production, and well-being; (2) Plant health and production; (3) Animal and plant germ plasm collection and preservation; (4) Aquaculture; (5) Food safety; (6) Soil and water conservation and improvement; (7) Forestry, horticulture, and range management; (8) Nutritional sciences and promotion; (9) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability; (10) Home economics; (11) Rural human ecology; (12) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4–H clubs; (13) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis; (14) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture; (15) Biotechnology related to agriculture; and (16) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products.

5. Levels of Study Supported
Applications must be directed to formal, for-credit academic programs at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels of study.

6. Institutional Collaboration
Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with a USDA agency to leverage grant funds and/or contribute towards overall goals and objectives. USDA agencies are listed below:

a) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS);

b) Agricultural Research Service (ARS); and

c) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS);

d) Economic Research Service (ERS);

e) Farm Service Agency (FSA);

f) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS);

g) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS);

h) Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS);

i) Forest Service (FS);

j) Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA);

k) National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS);

l) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS);

m) Rural Development Agency; and

n) Risk Management Agency.

Examples of collaborative activities with USDA could include but are not limited to: internships, USDA Career Days, Hispanic-Serving Institution student visits or tours, and USDA staff presentations to students and faculty. The USDA Office of Human Capital Management has identified 20 Mission Critical Occupations (MCO’s) in its FY 2008 Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program Plan. Using this information, the HSI Education Grants Program encourages collaboration on food, agriculture, natural resources and human science fields, which are primarily the top fifteen occupations listed below:
1) Forestry Technician  
2) General Biological Scientists  
3) Biological Science Technician  
4) Soil Conservation Specialist  
5) Soil Conservation Technician  
6) Forestry Specialist  
7) Dietician and Nutritionist Specialist  
8) Consumer Safety Specialist  
9) Soil Science Specialist  
10) Veterinary Medical Officer  
11) General Business and Industry  
12) Statistician Specialist  
13) Consumer Safety Inspection  
14) Food Inspection Specialist  
15) Agricultural Commodity Grader

7. Leadership Skills Development
All projects are also required to provide opportunities for Leadership Skills Development. The development of leadership skills, knowledge and qualities are necessary for preparing students for agricultural related careers in private sector, government and academia. Applications must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to ensure that students are equipped with both technical and leadership abilities upon graduation. Specific activities may include:

a. Developing practical applications to increase understanding of leadership roles, including critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills, ethics and professionalism, and working in teams,

b. Connecting the academic classroom experience with daily leadership roles and organizational activities,

c. Providing opportunities for mentoring and shadowing, and

d. Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc.

8. International Experiential Learning
This grant program could also supports the goals and objectives of the “100,000 Strong” study abroad initiatives (http://100kstrong.org; http://www.100kstrongamericas.org), and grant applicants may consider the same in their applications.
PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2016 is approximately $8.8 million. The funds will be awarded through a grant. The funds will be awarded competitively through a peer panel review process. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

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

B. Grant Types

In FY 2016, you may submit applications to the HSI Program as one of the following three grant types:

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

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

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

C. Project Types

This project will only accept **Education applications** for funding in FY 2016.

There are three project types: **Strengthening, Standard, and Collaboration.** Approximately one-third of the available funds will be used to fund Strengthening projects. The intent of all the projects is to build capacity at participating institutions and to promote collaboration, open
communication, the exchange of information, and the development of resources that accelerate education of underrepresented students.

Activities supported should better position the institution(s) involved to engage on its (their) role as a Hispanic-Serving Institution and reach out to the current or potential underrepresented student population. Applicants must describe in the budget narrative how these funds will be allocated. Projects with budget requests exceeding the budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed.

1. **Strengthening applications** for this program must be submitted by a single Hispanic-Serving Institution (two or 4-year degree granting College or University), a set of Hispanic-serving Institutions, or a Hispanic-Serving Institution as a lead working with other non-Hispanic-Serving Institutions. These funds are expected to enhance institutional capacity with the goal of leading to future funding in the project area, as well as strengthen the competitiveness of the applicant’s education activities. The educational activities should be designed to: (1) increase the pool of highly-qualified underrepresented students in professional careers in the food and agricultural sciences and USDA’s workforce; (2) increase the state-of-the-art scientific knowledge for Hispanic-Serving Institutions; (3) provide technical and financial assistance through grant and scholarship programs to recruit and retain talented students and faculty; and (4) provide support for the development and utilization of faculty/staff expertise.

2. **Standard applications** for this program must be submitted by a group of up to three Hispanic-Serving Institutions form a bridging arrangement for the purpose of carrying out common objective(s) on the group’s behalf in order to promote and strengthen their abilities to carry out higher education programs related to the food, agricultural, and natural resources, and human sciences. Grants are designed to help institutions develop competitive projects, and to attract new students into careers in high-priority areas of national need. These institutions will work together to support at least fifteen undergraduate and ten graduate students from underrepresented groups to complete Baccalaureate, and MS or PhDs when applicable in the disciplines and subject matter areas supported. Each project will recruit, retain, and graduate at least 25 students in a discipline (or closely aligned field) at the baccalaureate or graduate level.

3. **Collaboration applications** must be submitted from four or more Hispanic-Serving Institutions that will build linkages to generate a critical mass of expertise to address an activity focused to carry out higher education programs related to the food, agricultural, and natural resources, and human sciences. Projects that assemble critical mass of expertise to enhance education programs on NIFA Priority Areas (see Part I B, above) with the goal of leading to larger integrated funding applications in the future is encouraged. A successful collaborative project that builds linkages to generate critical mass of expertise is expected to increase cost effectiveness, achieve economies of scale, strengthen the scope and quality of a project’s impact, and reach a larger number of institutions and students. Awards will be made based on funding available for FY 2016. Collaboration projects will fund and conduct recruitment activities to select 50 students (44 B.S., 5 M.S., and 1 Ph.D.) interested in food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences.
In addition, applicants could apply for one-time conference funds to support a meeting that will bring together HSI educators, scientists, and administrators to identify education needs, best practices, or advance an area of science. These supplemental funds are not expected to exceed $50,000 for one conference annually and are not renewable. Indirect costs are not permitted on conference supplements.

**Standard and Collaboration Projects** are designed to build capacity at participating institutions to promote collaboration, open communication, the exchange of information, and the development of resources that accelerate education of underrepresented students. Applications must:

a) Seek to bring together a team of HSIs to develop and implement a Hispanic-serving initiative to recruit, retain, and support undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented groups.

b) Aim to coordinate efforts and integrate activities among individuals, institutions, states, and regions. Applications should clearly articulate how a Standard or Collaboration award will complement and/or link with existing programs or projects to make a significant impact on the education of underrepresented students.

c) Fund and conduct recruitment activities to select **at least 25 students interested in careers in food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences**. Include a K-12 outreach and recruitment component supporting the development of a student pipeline.

d) Track students and document student progress to show 90 percent retention until graduation.

e) Recruit an advisory board, including a minimum of five representatives from different institutions that have doctoral programs on the field selected.

f) Include summer programs for screening potential undergraduate or graduate students and enroll them in an agriculture or related program that includes completion of a degree.

g) Negotiate summer paid internships off campus with a USDA/affiliate agency or a local non-profit organization serving the food and agriculture community. Results of each internship should be documented consistently and must demonstrate learning and career/professional development outcomes.

h) Encourage more effective partnerships and reduce duplication of efforts among participating academic institutions;

i) Develop an advisory board that includes at least 5 members from different graduate programs on the discipline.

j) Leverage funding to maximize the number of students participating in the project;

k) Document measurable impacts and target audiences;

l) Develop a project website with information on the students funded;

m) Work with USDA to develop a plan for Summer Internship placement;

n) Provide professional development opportunities to participating students, such as resume development, mock interviews, dressing for success, and effective communication.

o) Hold USDA internship application workshops for students twice a year;

p) Participate on a meta-analysis for collaboration applications. Request and receive Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval.
Undergraduate and/or graduate students’ activities may include any of the following activities:

a) Cross-institutional and multi-disciplinary exchanges that will give graduate students brief exposure to work at a collaborating institution and a new team;
b) Summer internships (or research/extension experiences) for undergraduate students;
c) Opportunities for students to serve as institutional ambassadors to recruit other students into their programs;
d) Curricula and training that incorporates the principles of professionalism and professional ethics (undergraduate and graduate levels).
e) A degree-appropriate understanding of the scientific method, experimental design and methodologies, and analyzing, interpreting, and communicating data;
f) International experiences leading to an understanding of global issues;

Additionally, undergraduate and graduate students’ activities must:

a) Lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions;
b) Include academic guidance and tutoring as required as well as an internship search;
c) Include travel support for four students to attend professional conferences and make presentations;
d) Include academic support mechanisms so that participating students maintain good standing of a 3.0 GPA or higher with a minimum of 15 credit hours per semester as an undergraduate;
e) Provide resources to support assigned faculty in mentoring activities.
f) Provide opportunities for students to acquire research experience with faculty;
g) Recruit students to replace any dropouts and meet the minimum students’ goal; and
h) Collect letters of commitment from students that indicate their accordance with all expectations. Students must confirm their understanding of any potential circumstances if they do not fulfill the requirements of the program, such as loss of reimbursement privileges.

Application Submission Limitations

For the FY 2016 program, an applicant may not submit as a lead institution more than four Strengthening applications, two Standard applications, and two Collaboration application. Only two awards will be made to an institution as a lead. Only one Standard and Collaboration application will be funded per institution.

Individually accredited institutions are recommended to only submit two Standard applications.
Individually accredited institutions are recommended to only submit one Collaboration application.
Project Duration

No project may be active for longer than five (5) years, including no-cost extensions.

a) **Strengthening Project** will be fully funded for a duration of 48 months.

b) **Standard Projects** will be funded for 12 months and up to $250,000 per year with the opportunity for renewal for three additional years at a similar level, for a maximum of four years or $1,000,000, based on the availability of funds for this purpose and the projects’ previous performance.

c) **Collaboration Projects** will be funded for 12 months and up to $500,000 per year with the opportunity for renewal for three additional years at a similar level, for a total of four years and $2,000,000, based on availability of funds and previous performance.

Award Size

The award size varies by project type as follows:

a) **Strengthening Project.** An applicant may request up to $250,000 (total, not per year) for a Strengthening Project. Additional funds up to $25,000 may be requested by the applicant to take advantage of their position as an HSI to recruit and support one outstanding student. Therefore, the total or maximum for a Strengthening grant award size is $275,000, including indirect costs. Applicants must describe in the budget narrative how these funds will be allocated. Note that the funds requested do not have to be divided equally between institutions or among project years. We expect to fund approximately 12 Strengthening applications, depending on funding availability.

b) **Standard Project.** Standard Projects will not exceed $250,000 per year for each of the 4 years totaling up to $1,000,000, including indirect costs, if funded for 4 years. Applicants must describe in the budget narrative how these funds will be allocated to the participating HSIs. Grantees will have the opportunity for renewal at a similar level based on the availability of funds and the project's previous year performance towards the accomplishment of specified timelines and outcomes. We expect to fund up to seven Standard applications, depending on funding availability.

c) **Collaboration Project.** Collaboration applications will be funded up to $500,000 per year, including indirect costs, for up to four years and will require the participation of at least four HSIs. Grantees will have the opportunity for renewal at a similar level based on the availability of funds and the project’s previous year performance towards the accomplishment of specified timelines and outcomes. We expect to fund up to four new Collaboration applications, depending on the availability of funds.

Distribution of funds among participating members will be decided by the applicants.
**Subcontract Arrangements.** If it will be necessary to enter into a formal subcontract agreement with another institution, financial arrangements must be detailed in the “R&R Sub-award Budget Attachment(s) Form.” Annual and cumulative budgets and a cumulative budget justification are required for each subcontract agreement. Refer to Part V, 8. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions on completing this form. *A Letter of Commitment signed by the Authorized Representative of the subcontracting institution is also required.*

**D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research**

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

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

Awards may only be made to public or other non-profit Hispanic-Serving Institutions as defined below and in the definitions section of this RFA. To be eligible for competitive consideration for an award under this program, a Hispanic-Serving Institution must at the time of application certify that it has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students. By submitting an application, the applicant organization certifies that it is eligible to receive funding under this program.

Eligible institution means an institution of higher education:

(1) that has an enrollment of needy students as defined in this section;
(2) except if waived by the Secretary of Education, the average educational and general expenditures of which are low, per full-time equivalent undergraduate student, in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student of institutions that offer similar instruction;
(3) that is legally authorized to provide, and provides within the State, an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree; or that is a junior or community college as defined in this section;
(4) that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or that is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation;
(5) that meets such other requirements as the Secretary of Education may prescribe; and
(6) that is located in a State.

If an institution cannot accept Federal funds directly, it must submit a letter stating that it will accept the award, but that funds must be administered through a fiscal agent organization. This agent must be identified in the letter from the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by an authorized representative of the fiscal agent organization. The letter should include the fiscal agent’s point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. Both the fiscal agent organization and the applicant school or institution must submit complete organizational management information (see Part V, D.).

Nevertheless, the legal recipient of the award must be a Hispanic-Serving Institution. (Submission of fiscal agent information (above) is not requested now, but will be required, before an award is made.) An applicant’s failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.
1. Branch Institutions
For the purposes of this program, the individual branches of a State university system or public system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree granting institutions are treated as separate institutions eligible for awards. Accreditation must be by an agency or association recognized by the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education. Institutions also must be legally authorized to offer at least a two-year program of study creditable toward an associate’s or bachelor’s degree. Separate branches or campuses of a college or university that are not individually accredited as degree granting institutions are not treated as separate institutions.

2. Subcontracts
Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. Budget for subcontractors must be included with the corresponding budget narrative.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching
In accordance with section 1492 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3371), as added by section 7128 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), for grants awarded after October 1, 2014, the recipient of an award from the HSI Education Grant Program must provide funds, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both, from sources other than funds provided through such grant in an amount that is at least equal to the amount awarded by NIFA unless one of the exemptions described herein is applicable. Note that NIFA included information at http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/matching_require.html to further assist you in determining if you must meet the new matching requirement.

The matching funds requirement does not apply to grants awarded to:

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

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

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

g) Entities eligible to receive funds under the of McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program Funds

h) Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) – (for exemption from the new matching requirement, these applications must include NLGCA certification, see instructions for requesting certifications at http://www.nifa.usda.gov/form/form.html, and for attaching the certification in Part IV, B. of this RFA).

i) Entities eligible to receive funds under the of funds under a program established under section 1417(b) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)), including: (1) 1890 Institution Teaching, Research, and Extension Capacity Building Grants Program; (2) Higher Education Challenge Grants Program; (3) Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program; and (4) Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Grants Program.

j) Individual public or private, nonprofit Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions of higher education (see 20 U.S.C. 1059d).

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

a) A narrative of each entity’s clearly established role in the project;

b) How each entity involved as a partner on the project will contribute to execution of project objectives, determination of experimental design, development of the project work plan and time table, and submission of collaborative, timely reports; and

c) A comprehensive project budget that reflects each entity’s financial or third party in-kind contribution (see section 2 of 7 CFR 3430 or section 96 of 2 CFR part 200) to the total project budget costs.

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

After applications have been recommended for award, NIFA will determine if the submitted application and proposed division of work reflects substantial involvement of all entities involved. If an application is recommended for award to a lead entity not otherwise exempt from the matching requirement and the application does not reflect substantial involvement of at least one partner that is exempt under #2 above, then the matching requirement will apply. Exemption from the matching requirement for an entity not otherwise exempt is limited to the project for which it is a partner.
Waiver of Match - NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a recipient for one year with respect to a competitive grant that involves research or extension activities that are consistent with the priorities established by the National Agricultural Research, Education, Extension and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB) for the year involved. To determine whether proposed activities are consistent with the priorities of the NAREEEAB, please refer to the 2014 Research, Education and Economics Action Plan. Instructions for requesting a waiver are included in Part IV, C. of this RFA.

An application submitted in response to this RFA may indicate that the work will be completed by multiple entities as a collaborative partnership. All partners must have a substantial involvement in the project throughout the life of the project. If a partnership among multiple entities is proposed, the application must clearly identify the following: A narrative of each entity’s clearly established role in the project; How each entity involved as a partner on the project will contribute to execution of project objectives, determination of experimental design, development of the project work plan and time table, and submission of collaborative, timely reports; and

A comprehensive project budget that reflects each entity’s financial or third party in-kind contribution (see section 2 of 7 CFR 3430 or section 96 of 2 CFR part200) to the total project budget costs.

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

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

Instructions for requesting a waiver are included in Part IV, C. of this RFA.
PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

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

New Users of Grants.gov

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

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

To receive application materials:

1. You must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov to access, complete, and submit applications. For basic system requirements and download instructions, see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determine whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.

2. To obtain the application package from Grants.gov, go to http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html. Under Step 1 click on “Download a Grant Application Package,” and enter the funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-HSI-005597.

   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

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 APPLICATIONS 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.

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

**Include the following underlined text along with your responses:**

- List the **Project Title:** The character limit on the title is 140 characters. The title should not be too similar to previously funded awards.
  - **Project Code:** NJ
- List the **Project Director** (and any) **Co-Project Director(s)** (include institutional affiliation for each)
- List your project’s **Degree Level:** (i.e. associates of science, bachelors of science, masters of science, etc.)
- List your project’s **Priority Need Area** (See Part I, B.1.):
- List your project’s **Educational Strategy(ies):**
- List your project’s **Primary Discipline/Subject Matter:** (the academic major where the project’s primary focus will occur; e.g., forestry, animal sciences, food safety, human nutrition, etc.)
- **Partners:** If Collaboration Project, list all partner institutions/organizations that will share grant funding (Note: Each Partner identified needs to have their budget information submitted on a separate Sub-Award Budget Attachment). If not a Standard or Collaboration Project, enter: ‘N.A.’.
- **Total Funds Requested:** (List total Federal funds requested for this application. If this project is a Collaboration Project, also list each partner’s total funds requested next to the institution’s name).
- **Summary Text** - Provide a very concise (approx. 250 word) summary of your project to include:
  - **Purpose:** What is the major problem your project will address?
  - **Audience:** Who are the intended beneficiaries? Who will be impacted? How many?
  - **Number of students that will benefit from the project:** How many? Degree level?
  - **Products:** What will be produced?
Outcome/Impact: What is the intended result (consequence) of your project? Describe as the primary benefits to your audience. Note: outcomes/impacts should be measurable, and should be included in your project’s assessment/evaluation plan to demonstrate how you will assess whether or not these benefits were achieved. Please include a Table of Content after the summary.

Project Summary(Abstract is required in all applications and is limited to 1-2 pages (Times New Roman font size 12, Normal Margin). Applicants are encouraged to revisit the page numbers after converting the narrative to PDF format and make the necessary adjustments if the required page limit has been exceeded. Project Summary/Abstract that exceeds this page limit requirement will not be accepted for review. See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template. List the primary USDA.

Educational Need Areas (from Part I, C.4) addressed by this project; the primary NIFA Priority Need Area (from Part I, B.1.); and the Primary Discipline (from Part I, C.5.). Briefly summarize the project objectives and include all measurable project outcomes, including the number and type of beneficiaries, including the level A.A., B.S., M.S. or Ph.D., supported by the HSI program. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the HSI Program Goals.


The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages of written text double-spaced (excluding up to a maximum of 5 additional pages for supporting figures and tables). We have established this maximum (25-page limit) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Applicants are encouraged to revisit the page numbers after converting the narrative to PDF format and make the necessary adjustments if the required page limit has been exceeded. Project narratives that exceed this page limit requirement will not be accepted for review.

The Project Narrative must include all of the following: (Note: To facilitate application review and evaluation, include the following, underlined wording as headings in the Project Narrative, followed by the applicant’s response for each item.)

(A) NIFA Priority Science Area

The first section of the project description should define the NIFA Priority described above in Part I, to be addressed in the project.

(B) HSI Education Grants Program Goals

Applicants must include a statement that shows how the proposed projects will advance the goals of the HSI Education Grants Program, which are:
To attract and support undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented groups in order to prepare them for careers related to the food, agricultural, and natural resources and human sciences of the United States;

Enhance the quality of postsecondary instruction within these disciplines;

Provide opportunities and access to food, agricultural, and natural resources and human sciences careers in the public and private sector; and

Align the efforts of HSIs and other non-profit organizations in support of the academic development and career attainment of underrepresented groups.

(C) Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education; Significance of the Problem:

1. **Institutional Long-range Goals.** Demonstrate how the institution attributes a high priority to the project, discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution's long-term (five- to ten-year) goals, explain how the project will help satisfy the institution's high priority objectives, or how the project is linked to and supported by the institution's strategic plan.

2. **Identification of Educational Problem(s) and Project Impact.** Clearly identify and explain how the proposed project will address at least one of the Educational Need Areas described in Part I, C.4. Briefly explain the project’s anticipated, overall impact on improving the quality of food and agricultural sciences education and how it will advance the goals of the HSI Education Grant Program.

3. **Project Justification.** Clearly state the specific instructional problem or opportunity to be addressed. Describe how and by whom the focus and scope of the project were determined. Summarize the body of knowledge justifying the need for the proposed project. Discuss how the project will be of value at the State, regional, national, or international level(s). Describe any ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project for which previous funding was received under this program.

4. **Innovation.** Describe the application’s creative approach to improving the quality of food and agricultural sciences education, solving a higher education problem, or advancing educational equity.

5. **Multidisciplinary and/or Problem-based Focus.** Identify the Discipline(s) (described in Part I, C) supported and how it relates to the NIFA Priority selected and the collaborating USDA agency. Also, discuss whether the project may be adapted by, or serve as a model for other institutions.

6. **Level of Study.** Include a table describing the expected number of students benefiting (described in Part IV, C. 5), from this project and the level of education such as associate, baccalaureate, master’s, or doctoral degrees at each of the institutions.
participating in the program. Please include in your project narrative a table similar to the one presented below to summarize the students supported by level of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutions Participating in the Project (1 to X)</th>
<th>Number of Students Supported by Level of Study Supported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K to 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution 3</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Institution 4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(D) Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages:

Objectives. Cite and discuss the specific project objectives to be accomplished and how these align with the HSI Education Grant Program Objectives. Performance-based objectives should be used as they will inform the evaluation plan.

NOTE: You can use the ABCD method for creating a performance objective (Heinich, Molenda, Russell & Smaldino, 2002) to systematically think about writing appropriate performance objectives towards your project goals:

- **A is for audience** - Who are the learners? Are they adult learners? Are they workshop participants? Are they young students? How many? At what level?
- **B is for behavior** - What learning is overt and observable?
- **C is for condition** - How? In what context or under what circumstances will learning occur? Will the audience be expected to know pieces of information to accomplish learning?
- **D is for degree** - How much will be accomplished? How well or to what level does this learning need to be perfected?

1. **Plan of Operation and Methodology.** Describe procedures for accomplishing the objectives of the project. Describe plans for management of the project to ensure its proper and efficient administration. Describe the way in which resources and personnel will be used to conduct the project.
2. **Timetable.** Provide a timetable for conducting the project. Identify all important project milestones and dates as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination, and close-out.

3. **Products, Results, and Measurable Outcomes.** Explain the expected products and results, and their potential impact (outcome) on strengthening food and agricultural sciences education in the United States. **(Important Note:** “Products” may be actual items or services acquired with funds, e.g., “…developed three, new Web-based courses containing supplemental materials”; “Results” are intended or unintended consequences of the project, e.g., “…additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours”; and “Outcomes/Impacts” are a measure of the results by comparing what might have happened in the absence of the funded project, e.g., “…an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, web-based course materials”). Quantify outputs and/or outcomes.

4. **Evaluation Plans.** Provide a methodology and implementation plan for evaluating the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable outcomes during the project. Indicate the criteria, and corresponding weight of each, to be used in the evaluation process, describe any data to be collected and analyzed, and explain the methodology that will be used to determine the extent to which the needs underlying the project are met. Identify data to be used as baseline data. Demonstrate that the project’s impact on improving education will be evaluated. Please see Appendix A for suggested potential indicators and units of measurement. Finally, all applicants should actively participate and fund a meta-evaluation.


**Independent Evaluator.** Grantees are encouraged to obtain an independent evaluation to secure appropriate documentation of the project’s outcomes and impacts. **Up to 5 percent of grant funds** may be used for this purpose in both Strengthening Projects and Standard Projects. Collaboration projects could use up to one percent of their grant funds for this purpose.

**Meta Evaluation.** All applicants should actively participate and fund a meta-evaluation and should plan to fund a project data collector as part of the evaluation project. Collaboration projects should assign about $18,000 for a meta-evaluation. Finally,
Strengthening and Standard projects should plan to spend an additional $5,000 per year for the purpose of a meta-evaluation.

5. **Logic Model.** Applications for projects must include the elements of a logic model detailing the activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. This information may be provided as a narrative or formatted into a logic model chart. The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used to develop your project before writing your application. Two additional pages are allowed for this information. See Part IV, B.f. for details on where to attach this information to your application. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html).

6. **Sponsoring USDA agency.** Document, if applicable, how applicants will find and partner with a sponsoring USDA agency in order to leverage grant funds and/or contribute towards the proposed project overall goals and objectives.

7. **Dissemination Plans.** Applicants must include in the project’s Dissemination Plan a description of how the applicant plans to communicate project accomplishments (products, results and impacts, etc.) to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. This plan should include the following: educational journals; professional discipline publications; a website; presentations at regional or national conferences and workshops; and the Annual HSIs Project Director’s Conference. Discuss the institution’s commitment to disseminate project results and products. Identify target audiences and explain methods of communication. Consider distributing materials to other Hispanic-Serving Institutions, especially HSI grantees. **Applicants are encouraged to develop a project web page within the first six months of the project as part of their dissemination activities.**

As part of the award, you will be required to disseminate your findings and best practices at two types of meetings (see Part VI, D). **The proposed budget should reflect the attendance to a new project director’s meeting and end of the year meeting the first year and an annual meeting every year after the life of the project. These meetings and a budget for four students to travel to meetings designated by the agency.**

(E) **Institutional Capability and Capacity Building:**

1) **Institutional Commitment and Capability.** Demonstrate that the program administration is committed to the project and has the capability to ensure its completion. Discuss how the benefits to be derived from the project will transcend the applicant institution during the grant period. For example, substantiate that the institution attributes a high priority to the project, discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution's long-term (five- to ten-year) goals, explain how the project will help satisfy the institution's
high-priority objectives, or show how this project is linked to and supported by
the institution's strategic plan.

2) **Institutional Resources.** Document that the necessary institutional resources
(administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials), and other appropriate
resources, will be made available to the project. Demonstrate how the
institutional resources to be made available to the project, when combined with
the support requested from USDA, will be adequate to carry out the activities of
the project.

3) **Academic Enhancement.** Document how this project will improve and
strengthen teaching at the institution (including any partner institutions). Discuss
how the benefits to be derived from the project will transcend the applicant
institution or the grant period.

4) **Continuation Plans.** Discuss the likelihood of, or specific plans for, continuation
or expansion of the project beyond the period of USDA support. For example,
does the institution's long-range budget or academic plan provide for the
realistic continuation or expansion of the initiative undertaken by this project
after the end of the grant period, are plans for eventual self-support built into
the project, are plans being made to institutionalize the program if it meets with
success, and are there indications of other continuing non-Federal support?

**(F) Key Personnel:**

Discuss the adequacy and specific attributes and project responsibilities of each key
person associated with the project. Also include the background and qualifications of
those personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering
the project evaluation and reporting process. Appropriate bilingual and bicultural
personnel should be included to better serve and attract underrepresented students to the
programs offered. Include a current and pending support form that lists time
commitment in percentage for each key staff. You are encouraged to include personnel
knowledgeable of the culture of underrepresented students expected to be found at a
Hispanic-serving Institution.

**(G) Budget and Cost-effectiveness:**

In addition to providing detailed information as part of the Budget Justification, include
the following information as part of the Project Narrative:

(1) Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed project activities. Explain
how such budget items as professional or technical staff, travel, equipment, etc., are
essential to achieving project objectives.
(2) Justify that the total budget will be adequate to carry out the activities of the project.

(3) Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale or leverages additional funds. For example, discuss how the project has the potential to generate a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on an Educational Need Area, or to promote coalition building that could lead to future ventures.

(4) Include the percentage of time key personnel will work on the project, both during the academic year and summer. The salaries of university personnel (i.e. their total compensation) must not exceed the faculty member's regular annual compensation. In addition, the total commitment of time devoted to the project, when combined with time for teaching and research duties, other sponsored agreements, and other employment obligations to the institution, must not exceed 100 percent of the normal workload for which the employee is compensated, in accordance with established university policies and applicable Federal cost principles.

(5) If the application addresses more than one Educational Need Areas or Discipline (e.g., student experiential learning and instruction delivery systems) state which one (primary) is most representative and list all the others in descending order of importance, and ii) estimate the proportion of the funds requested from USDA that will support each respective Priority Need Area or Discipline. Make sure you explain how the primary Priority Need (or Discipline) supports one or more of the six current USDA Educational Need Areas (see Part I, C.4).

(6) The table below can be used as a guide to determine and document the appropriate level of student stipend support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level: BS, MS, Ph.D.</th>
<th>Student Scholarship-Total Amount ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institution Name/Department</td>
<td>Name/Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree/Discipline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stipend</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel to Professional Conference</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expense X</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expense Y</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Field 9. Bibliography & Cited References - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format) If needed, provide a complete list of all references cited in the application. For each reference, provide the complete name for each author, the year of the publication, full title of the article, name of the journal or book published volume,
and the page numbers. The references should be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author.

Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format) Describe the types, location, and availability of instrumentation and physical facilities necessary to carry out the work proposed. If special academic, private or government laboratories or facilities are being used, include a letter in the application from the authorized representative of the facility describing the proposed arrangements and availability. Any such letter shall be included as a part of Other Attachments, see Field 12 below.

Field 11. Equipment Documentation - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format) Equipment purchased (defined as in excess of $5,000 for each item) must be fully justified under this section. Other purchases (e.g., computers, laboratory materials, etc.) are described, instead, in the Budget Justification section under the ‘Materials and Supplies’ line item.

Field 12. Other Attachments - (Must be PDF format).

• Response to Previous Review – PDF Attachment. 1 Page Limit. Title the attachment as ‘Response to Previous Review’ in the document header and save file as ‘ResponseToPreviousReview’. This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II, B., “Types of Applications”. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page, titled, “RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW”. If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.

• Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment. Title the attachment as ‘Appendices’ in the document header and save file as ‘Appendices’. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

• Collaborative Arrangements – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit. Title the attachment as ‘Collaborative Arrangements’ in the document header and save file as ‘CollaborativeArrangement’. If it is necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of the application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support signed by the AR of the consultant/collaborating organization) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.
• **Logic Model – PDF Attachment. 1-Page Limit per Award** Title the attachment as ‘Logic Model’ in the document header and save file as ‘Logic Model.’

• **Results from Prior HSI support** - If the PD or a Co-PD has received HSI support in the past five years, information on results from that prior funding period is required. This information will be used in the review of the application. For each award, list the NIFA award number, the amount and period of support, the title of the project, a summary of the progress or results of the completed work, the long-term effects of these results, and the publications resulting from the award.

• **Expected Outcomes – PDF Attachment**

Title the attachment “Expected Outcomes” in the document header and save file as ‘Expected Outcomes.’ Please use a format, similar to what is provided below, to submit expected impacts and attach it as the last page of the application.

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**Recommended Format for Submitting Expected Impacts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Project Function: (Choose one)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EDUCATION:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total expected impact during entire grant period</th>
<th>Expected Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of farmers to be served</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of products to be developed for students through grant funds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curricula</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment/retention programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential learning opportunities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of collaborations to be developed between institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of faculty attending professional development:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbaticals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of individuals who indirectly will benefit from the projects</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the curriculum/instrumentation,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in the program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Total number of students to be directly supported by grant
Scholarships
   Fellowships
   Assistantships
   Internships
   Research experiences
Number of underrepresented students to be supported during the grant period
Number of women students to be supported during the grant period
Number of students who will graduate as a result of the grant during grant period
Number of students who will complete advanced or additional degree programs as a result of the grant (graduate, professional)
Number of students who will complete internships and other experiential learning during the grant-period
Number of students who will complete international experiential learning as a result of this grant
Number of students who will complete post-doctoral experiences as a result of this grant

c. Field 12. Add Other Attachments.

**Non-Land Grant College of Agriculture (NLGCA) Certification.** PDF Attachment.
Applicants claiming exemption from the new matching requirements as NLGCA, must attach the NLGCA certification letter they requested and received from NIFA. Title the attachment ‘NLGCA Certification’ and save file as ‘NLGCACertification’. To request certification as an NLGCA, complete the form at [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/form/form.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/form/form.html). Note that certification can take up to 30 days from submission of request form.

See Part III Section 3.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for NIFA attachment specifications.

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.

c. Matching Funds
If you conclude that matching funds are not required as specified under Part III, B. Cost-Sharing or Matching, you must include a justification in the Budget Narrative. We will consider this justification when ascertaining final matching requirements or in
determining if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements.

For grants that require matching funds as specified under Part III, B., the Budget Narrative should include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Written verification means:

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

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

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

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

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

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

**C. Submission Dates and Times**

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

While the checklist should be used to check the application for completeness, the application should be checked for the following required item(s). This is not an exhaustive list of required items; it only serves to highlight items that may be overlooked. The list includes:

- Logic Model
- Management Plan
- Current and Pending Support

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

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

**Collaboration Projects Deadline:** February 9, 2016  
**Standard Projects Deadline:** February 10, 2016  
**Strengthening Projects Deadline:** February 12, 2016

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.

**Applications that miss these deadlines will not be considered for funding.**

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 application 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 an application number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.
D. Funding Restrictions

1. Use of Funds for Facilities

Under the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program, the use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility is not allowed. With prior approval, in accordance with the cost principles set forth in OMB Circular No. A-21, some grant funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations, or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching spaces in order to carry out a funded project. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must demonstrate that the alterations, renovations, or repairs are incidental to the major purpose for which a grant is issued.

2. Indirect Costs

Section 715 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113235) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. When preparing budgets, you should limit your request for the recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of your 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.

E. Other Submission Requirements

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

For information about the status of a submitted application, see Part III., section 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.
PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

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

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

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

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

Applications will move directly to a panel review once the initial screening confirms these meet all of the administrative requirements.

1. Potential for Advancing Quality of Education; Significance of the Problem (30 points).

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences by strengthening institutional capacities to
meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals, USDA’s Goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing educational equity, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, and potential for adoption by other institutions.


This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, logic model, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. Emphasis is placed on the quality of educational or research support provided to the applicant institution through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project.

3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building (20 points).

This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its teaching or research capacity. Elements include the institution’s commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic or research enhancement, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support.

4. Key Personnel (15 points).

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts and dissemination of these findings.

5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (10 points).

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority Educational Need Areas.

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. Each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by the HSI Education Grants Program for a period of three years.
PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the NIFA awarding official shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions at 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E.

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum:

(1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to which the director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;

(2) Title of project;

(3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;

(4) Identifying award number and the Federal Agency Identification Number assigned by NIFA;

(5) Project period, specifying the amount of time NIFA intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;

(6) Total amount of financial assistance approved for the award;

(7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;

(8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;

(9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and
(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These may include, but are not limited to, the ones listed on the NIFA web page - http://nifa.usda.gov/federal-regulations.

NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide—a compendium of basic NIFA policies and procedures that apply to all NIFA awards, unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary is available at http://nifa.usda.gov/policy-guide.

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

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

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

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Dr. Irma Lawrence
Title: National Program Leader
Unit: Division of Community and Education
Location: 4444 Waterfront Center
Phone: (202)-720-2082
Fax: (202) 720-4924
Email: ilawrence@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contacts –

Mr. Duane Alphs
Title: Team Leader, Branch II, Team II
Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management
Location: 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Stop 2201
Phone: (202)-401-4326
Fax: (202) 401-6271
Email: dalphs@nifa.usda.gov

Ms. Rochelle McCrea
Title: Team Leader, Branch II, Team I
Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management
Location: 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Stop 2271
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, this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

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

Education (or teaching) activity is formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters. Project activities should include student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

Educational and general expenditures means the total amount expended by an institution for instruction, research, public service, academic support (including library expenditures), student services, institutional support, scholarships and fellowships, operation and maintenance expenditures for the physical plant, and any mandatory transfers that the institution is required to pay by law.

Educational Need Areas means the specific area(s) of educational focus identified in the solicitation for applications and addressed by the applicant’s application. Educational Need Areas are derived from statutory language authorizing the grants program and
specific Educational Need Areas are targeted for funding support in the request for applications.

**Eligible institution** means an institution of higher education:

1. that has an enrollment of needy students as defined in this section;
2. except if waived by the Secretary of Education, the average educational and general expenditures of which are low, per full-time equivalent undergraduate student, in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student of institutions that offer similar instruction;
   - that is legally authorized to provide, and provides within that is legally authorized to provide, and provides within the State, an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree; or that is a junior or community college as defined in this section;
3. that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or that is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation;
4. that meets such other requirements as the Secretary of Education may prescribe; and
5. that is located in a State.

The term eligible institution also applies to any branch of any institution of higher education, described by the definition of an eligible institution, that by itself satisfies the requirements contained in clauses (1) and (2) of the definition of an eligible institution.

For purposes of determining whether an institution is an eligible institution, the factor described under clause (1) of the definition of an eligible institution shall be given twice the weight of the factor described under clause (2) of the definition of an eligible institution.

**Eligible participant** means an individual who: (1) Is a citizen or national of the United States, as defined in this section; or (2) Is a citizen of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau. Where eligibility is claimed on the basis of owing permanent allegiance to the United States, documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to USDA upon request.

**Full-time equivalent students** means the sum of the number of students enrolled full time at an institution, plus the full-time equivalent of the number of students enrolled part time (determined on the basis of the quotient of the sum of the credit hours of all part-time students divided by 12) at such institution.
Hispanic-Serving Institution means an institution of higher education that:
(1) is an eligible institution as defined in this section; and
(2) at the time of application, has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students.

Institution of higher education means an educational institution in any State that:
(1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing a secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
(2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
(3) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
(4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
(5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary of Education has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

Junior or community college means an institution of higher education that:
(1) admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located and who have the ability to benefit from the training offered by the institution;
(2) does not provide an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor’s degree (or an equivalent degree); and
(3) provides an educational program of not less than 2 years in duration that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; or offers a 2-year program in engineering, mathematics, or the physical or biological sciences, designed to prepare a student to work as a technician or at the semiprofessional level in engineering, scientific, or other technological fields requiring the understanding and application of basic engineering, scientific, or mathematical principles of knowledge.

Nonprofit as applied to a school, college, university, agency, organization, or institution means a school, college, university, agency, organization, or institution owned and operated by one or more nonprofit corporations or associations, no part of the net earnings of which inures, or may lawfully inure, to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

Plan of Work means a detailed, step-by-step description of how the applicant intends to accomplish the project’s objectives. At a minimum, the Plan of Work should include a
time line of major activities to be undertaken, descriptions of protocols and procedures to be followed, an explanation of how resources will be acquired and used, and an outline of the qualifications and responsibilities of all key project personnel.

**Strengthening project application** means an application for a project: (1) where the applicant institution will be the sole entity involved in the execution of the project; or (2) which will involve the applicant institution and one other entity, but where the involvement of the other entity does not meet the requirements for a Collaboration Project application as defined in this section.

**Underrepresented** means proportionate representation as measured by degree recipients that is less than the proportionate representation in the general population--(i) As indicated by (A) The most current edition of the Department of Education's Digest of Education Statistics; (B) The National Research Council's Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities; or (C) Other standard statistical references, as documented by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary on a case-by-case basis.
APPENDIX A FOR PROJECT EVALUATION AND REPORTING

Need areas that you might be addressing in your proposed project are listed below. Underneath the need areas are ways for you to quantify the products and individuals served by the projects. Ways in which to quantify your impact are listed too. To answer these impacts and outcomes questions, consider using valid and reliable methodology (i.e., pre/posttest instruments and surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.). It would be best to present this information in your application - “what you intend to do” - and your annual and final reports “what you have done).”

CURRICULUM, MATERIALS, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Products and Individuals Served:
Please identify: Program, course, curriculum, instructional materials
Please identify: on campus instruction, distance education
# of courses developed
# of modules developed
# of degree programs developed
   If applicable, degree level ____
# of certification programs developed
# of credits/credit hours
# of students enrolled in new course/degree program
# of students using technology/materials derived from project
# of degrees conferred in new program

Outcomes and Impacts:
Does the curriculum, materials, or programs developed/changed affect students’ interest, engagement, or learning in the food and agriculture sciences?
To what extent do other institutions adopt the program or curriculum developed?

SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTATION FOR TEACHING

Products and Individuals Served:
Type of instrumentation obtained: lab equipment, computers, lab supplies, printed materials, books
   Other (please specify): _______
# of individuals using instrumentation within department
# of individuals using instrumentation outside of department

Outcomes and Impacts:
Does the new scientific instrumentation affect students’ interest, engagement, or learning in the food and agriculture sciences?

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Products and Individuals Served:
# of faculty supported to attend or participate in the following training or developmental activities:
- Degree or certification programs
- Workshops
- Experiential learning opportunities
- Professional meetings
- Sabbaticals/Visiting Scholar Programs
- Other (please specify):   _______

**Outcomes and Impacts:**
Does the faculty development opportunities supported by the grant affect faculty competencies in teaching food and agriculture sciences?

**STUDENT EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

**Products and Individuals Served:**
Location of activity: on campus, off campus, both

# of experiential learning opportunities at the following locations:
- Businesses
- Organizations/non-profits
- Academic institutions
- USDA agencies
- Federal agencies other than USDA
- State/local government
- International
- Other (please specify)___________

# of experiential learning opportunities:
- Internships
- Research opportunities
- International/ study abroad
- Peer mentoring
- Volunteer opportunities/community service
- Outreach/extension activities
- Other (please specify)___________

# of publications (i.e., journal, newsletter articles or other media)
- Citations: ___________

# of products (i.e., webpages, games, etc.)
# of presentations (i.e., oral or posters)

**Outcomes and Impacts:**
Do the experiential learning opportunities developed affect students’ interest, engagement, or learning in the food and agriculture sciences?
COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

Products and Individuals Served:
# of internal institutional partnerships
# of external partnering institutions
Please identify: government, business, academic institution, non-profit
    If academic institution, please specify: 1890, 1862, public non-land grant, 1994, MSI, HSI, private
Duration of partnership. From _______ to ________
# of shared courses
# of shared faculty
# of shared facilities

Outcomes and Impacts:
Does the collaborative activity affect students’ interest, engagement, or learning in the food and agriculture sciences?
Do the collaborative activities strengthen the capability of the institution to recruit, retain, and graduate students in the food and agriculture sciences?

STUDENT RECRUITMENT

Products and Individuals Served:
# of students contacted (include K-12)
# of students recruited in the current academic year
# of students enrolled as a result of recruitment efforts
# of underrepresented students recruited
Types of activities:
    a. institution field trips
    b. academic preparation workshops
    c. # of parent contacts

Outcomes and Impacts:
Do the techniques used in the project influence the number of students (or number of underrepresented students) recruited in comparison to recruiting techniques used prior?

STUDENT RETENTION

Products and Individuals Served:
# of students retained in the current academic year
# underrepresented students retained in the current academic year
# of tutoring hours
# of advisor hours

Outcomes and Impacts:
Do the techniques used in the project influence the number of students (or number of underrepresented students) retained in comparison to retention techniques used prior?
CONFERENCE PLANNING
Products and Individuals Served:
Conference type: regional, national, state, local
# of attendees
# of presenters
# of poster sessions
# of presentations given

Outcomes and Impacts:
Did the conference result affect attendees’ knowledge in the food and agriculture sciences?

INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS
Products and Individuals Served:
# of students using the new instructional delivery system
# of capstone courses developed
# of cooperative learning opportunities developed
# of service learning opportunities developed
# of case studies developed
# of online classes developed

Outcomes and Impacts:
Does the new scientific instrumentation affect students’ interest, engagement, or learning in the food and agriculture sciences?

RESEARCH PROJECTS
Products and Individuals Served:
# of participating students
# of participating faculty
# of participating institutions
# of conference poster presentations
# of conference talks
# of peer-reviewed journal articles
# of publications besides peer-reviewed journal articles
# of patents

Outcomes and Impacts:
What new discoveries were generated through this research project? What are the benefits and who will benefit?

EXTENSION PROJECTS
Products and Individuals Served:
Primary grant type: agriculture, youth, natural resources, nutrition/health
# of community members served (estimate):
# of farmer contacts
# of acres improved
# of youth contacts
# of youth clubs
# of community contacts
# of health and wellness activities
# of educational materials developed (i.e., CDs, brochures, etc.)

**Outcomes and Impacts:**
Did the project result in a change in knowledge or attitude by community members, youth, farmers, ranchers, or other extension personnel?