



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

NIFA's Centers of Excellence (COE) Designation



BIOENERGY, CLIMATE,
AND ENVIRONMENT

FOOD PRODUCTION
AND SUSTAINABILITY

YOUTH, FAMILY,
AND COMMUNITY

FOOD SAFETY
AND NUTRITION

INTERNATIONAL
PROGRAMS

Shing Kwok, National Program Leader, NIFA

USDA NIFA

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



2014 Farm Bill and Centers of Excellence

- The Farm Bill requires that NIFA recognize Centers of Excellence (COE) in research, extension, and education in the food and agricultural sciences. The legislation calls for the agency to give priority in funding to applications from COE in its research and extension competitive grant programs.
- Eligibility is broad, application must include one of the following: state agricultural experiment stations; colleges and universities; university research foundations; other research institutions and organizations; Federal agencies; national laboratories; private organizations, foundations or corporations; or individuals.
- Per RFA instructions, applicants self identify COE on the last page of their Project Narrative of their application (**same page limit as non COE applicants**)



2014 Farm Bill and Centers of Excellence

- Programs offering COE in FY 2016:
 - Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) – Foundational Program and Challenge Areas
 - Aquaculture Research
 - Biomass Research and Development Initiative
 - Biotechnology Risk Assessment Research Grants (BRAG) Program
 - Children, Youth, and Families at Risk
 - Crop Protection/Pest Management
 - Farm Business Management and Benchmarking
 - Farm Safety and Youth Farm Safety Education and Certification
 - Methyl Bromide Transition
 - Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative
 - Organic Transition Program
 - Rural Health and Safety Program
 - Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI)



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- To be designated as a COE, applicants must justify:
 - The ability of the COE to ensure coordination by reducing unnecessarily duplicative efforts regarding research, teaching, and extension.
 - The ability of the COE to leverage resources by using public-private partnerships among agricultural industry groups, institutions of higher education, and the federal government.
 - The capability of the COE to implement teaching initiatives to increase awareness and effectively disseminate solutions to target audiences through extension activities.
 - The ability COE to increase the economic returns to rural communities by identifying, attracting, and directing funds to high priority agricultural issues.
 - COE applicants should describe proposed efforts to improve teaching capacity and infrastructure at colleges and universities.



2014 Farm Bill and Centers of Excellence

- Use of COE in panel ranking:
 - Priority in funding will be provided after all eligible applicants have been competitively peer reviewed, and ranked in accordance with program's standard evaluation criteria.
 - NIFA will effectively use the COE prioritization as a "tie breaker."
- More info:
 - <http://nifa.usda.gov/centers-excellence-webinars-and-listening-sessions>
 - <http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/centers-excellence-frequently-asked-questions>



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Questions?