

## **FY - 2021 Food Safety Outreach Competitive Grant Program (FSOP)**

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Applications are due April 1, 2021 at 5pm EST**

**1. Are PD's on previously awarded FSOP and Regional Center projects eligible to apply for this program?**

Regional Center Project Directors and previously awarded FSOP (Community Outreach and Collaborative Education and Training) Project Directors are eligible to submit as PD's in FY2021.

**2. Can we include another collaborating institution that is not in the same region?**

YES.

**3. Are all members of the project team required to attend a Project Director meeting?**

A Project Director must attend an annual meeting. Other team members may attend as funds allow.

**4. How does USDA-NIFA define "niche" audiences?**

Niche audiences are identified and justified by the applicant. Examples of niche audiences may include, but are not limited to, Amish, Hmong, Vietnamese, Somali, Burmese farmers, migrant workers and/or non-English speakers or other groups where there may be cultural or language barriers.

**5. Can multiple PDs apply from the same organization? Are they eligible under a single funding category (community or collaborative education and training opportunity)?**

Project Directors are eligible to submit one application to the program. Multiple applications across priority areas by the same Project Directors will not be reviewed by the panel.

**6. Are small farmers that sell their produce to markets such as Whole Foods, eligible to apply for this program?**

Yes

**7. Can you explain the matching requirement?**

The Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 removed the matching requirements on NIFA competitive grants imposed under the Agricultural Act of 2014. Therefore, there are changes to the matching requirements awarded in 2019. For FY 2021, NIFA does not require matching support for the Food Safety Outreach Program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

**8. Does an existing food safety program include a master food safety advisor program or a master gardener program?**

Yes, those may be considered existing food safety education programs.

**9. Is it possible to apply as both Community Outreach Project and Collaborative Education and Training Opportunity (in a single state) with a similar topic?**

Applicants may only submit one application to the program as the Project Director.

**10. What are the main goals of the NIFA/ FSOP program?**

The purpose of the program is to provide customized food safety education to specific audiences affected by the guidelines established under FSMA, specifically small and mid-sized farms, beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged farmers, small processors, veteran farmers or ranchers and small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers.

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**11. Many small farms will not be covered by or will be exempt from the FSMA regulation. Will there be any grant funding available to large farms that actually have to comply with FSMA?**

The purpose of the program is to provide customized food safety education to specific audiences affected by the current guidelines established under FSMA, specifically small and mid-sized farms, beginning farmers, socially disadvantaged farmers, small processors, and small fresh fruit and vegetable merchant wholesalers.

**12. Are producers and growers that contribute to a mobile farmer's market eligible for this grant?**

Yes

**13. If most of the farmers we work with are exempt from FSMA, should training materials still primarily address compliance with FSMA, or can it be more general such as GAPs training?**

Training materials should address compliance with FSMA.

**14. Is the program limited to produce farmers and processors?** No. For example, projects can include fisheries and cheese processors.

**15. Will there be any preference given in the selection of awards to applicants from minority serving universities?** We always support and encourage applications from Minority Serving Institutions, but there are no provisions written into the legislation to provide preference.

**16. What are the implementation timeframes for projects at the community outreach and collaborative education and training opportunities project categories?**

The community outreach projects within two (2) years, and the collaborative education and outreach projects within three (3) years.