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# **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program**

**Grant Applicant Webinar  
April 30, 2014**



# Outline of Webinar

1. Program Basics
2. Administrative Requirements
3. Application Process
4. Evaluation and Review
5. Tips for Success



# Program Basics

- The 2014 Farm Bill has made available \$19.2 million in FY 2014 for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP).
- Funding is only for education, training, outreach and mentoring of beginning farmers and ranchers in entering, establishing, building and managing successful farm and ranch enterprises.
- The recipients must be a collaborative, State, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities, which may include: state cooperative extension service; community-based and nongovernmental organization; college or university (including institutions awarding associate degrees); or any other appropriate partner.



# Three Categories in FY 2014

- **Standard Projects** - to provide local and regional training, education, outreach and technical assistance
  - Up to \$250,000 per year for up to 3 years
- **Educational Enhancement Teams** – for evaluation, assistance and enhancement of beginning farmer and rancher education in the US
  - Up to \$250,000 per year for up to 3 years
- **Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse**
  - Up to \$200,000 per year for 5 years



# Standard Grant Topics

## 2014 Agriculture Act

- A. Basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices;
- B. Innovative farm, ranch, and private, nonindustrial forest land transfer strategies;
- C. Entrepreneurship and business training;
- D. Financial and risk management training (including the acquisition and management of agricultural credit);
- E. Natural resource management and planning;
- F. Curriculum development;

...continued on next slide



# Standard Grant Topics – cont.

- G. Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
- H. Resources and referral;
- I. Farm financial benchmarking;
- J. Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers;
- K. Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veterans;
- L. Farm safety and awareness; and
- M. Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.



# Good Practices - Standard Grants

## Know your audience

- Who and where are they and what do they need
- How will you engage, educate and assist them

## Propose a solid plan of work

- Ambitious yet achievable
- Most projects address more than one topic (production, marketing, financial)
- Many approaches, tailored to the needs of the audience

Focus on results: Enhance the number and success of beginning farmers and ranchers



# Educational Enhancement Team (EET) Projects

Assess and identify existing curricula and gaps

- Establish team with broad expertise
- Collect, synthesize, evaluate available curricula
- Evaluate training, outreach and mentoring programs

Develop curricula and train-the-trainers

- Develop curriculum to address the gaps for specific audiences
- Develop and deliver train-the-trainer programs

Collaborate with BFR educators for maximum impact

- BFRDP-funded projects and others
- BFRDP Clearinghouse



# Curriculum & Training Clearinghouse

## Maintain & enhance online library

- Materials developed through BFRDP and other sources

## Facilitate sharing, collaboration & use

- Collaborate with EET and Standard grantees
- Train & assist them to share & learn from each other

## Assist in Enhancing Outcome-Based Reporting

- Help grantees organize their results
- Disseminate information on successes

Note: Build upon previously-funded clearinghouse (link to its progress report is in Request for Applications)



# Funding Priorities

- Partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental, community-based or school-based agricultural educational organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach
- At least 5 percent of funds to projects that serve socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers, limited-resource farmers and ranchers, and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers
- At least 5 percent of funds to projects that serve beginning farmers and ranchers who are military veterans



# Major Changes from Previous Years

- Some changes to topical priorities
- Addition of school-based agricultural education organizations to partnership/collaboration priority
- New emphasis on veterans
- Coordination permitted with Agrability program in addressing the needs of veteran farmers & ranchers  
**Note: May 6 webinar will address veterans and socially-disadvantaged audiences in more depth**
- Indirect cost rate on standard grants is set at 10% (rather than up to 22%)



# Types of Applications

- **New**
- **Renewal** – Review includes previous performance and learning
- **Resubmitted** – Review includes how you address reviewers' comments on your previous proposal

Note: Renewal & Resubmitted may have a gap in time from prior project



# Developmental Grant: A Special Type of Standard Grant

- **Purpose**

- to sustain and enhance important collaborations; and
- to initiate and develop beginning farmer and rancher project ideas to lead to future program success

- **Eligibility**

- Organizations that have not previously received a competitive grant from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (or its predecessor, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service)



# Proposal Submission Requirements

- Applications require 25% matching
- Only electronic applications through [grants.gov](http://grants.gov) are accepted
- Need to follow all guidelines published in the Request for Applications
- Deadline of June 12, 2014 @ 5 p.m. eastern daylight time (EDT).



# Restrictions on Funding

## Funding cannot be used:

- To purchase land, large machinery, animals
- For the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility
- To begin farming
- To set up Individual Development Accounts
- To conduct research



# Question Period # 1

## *Is this grant for you?*

- Is this what you want to do?
- Are you eligible?
- Do you have collaborative partners?
- Can you meet the June 12 deadline?



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# Administrative Requirements

## NIFA Awards Management Division



# Topics

- **Matching Regulations**
- **Programmatic Requirements**
- **Indirect (F&A) Costs**
- **Definitions**
- **Matching Documentation**
- **Matching Do's and Don'ts**
- **Summary**
- **Contact Information**



# Programmatic Requirements

- **Program requires 25% match in cash, in-kind or third-party contributions**
- **Grant funds may only be used for education, training, outreach and mentoring of beginning farmers and ranchers.**



# Programmatic Requirements

- **Federal or matching funds may not be used:**
  - **For the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility.**
  - **To buy land or purchase equipment to start farm or ranch businesses**
  - **To match Individual Development Account funds**
  - **For research activities**



# Indirect (F&A) Costs

- **Maximum amount allowable:**
  - **10% of Total Federal Funds Awarded for Standard Grants or 22% for an EET or Clearinghouse proposal OR**
  - **Federally approved negotiated rate**
    - **Whichever is the lesser dollar amount**



# Indirect (F&A) Costs

- **A Federal rate must be in place**
  - **No Rate? A rate may be negotiated with the submission of appropriate documentation**
  - **This may take up to a year**



# Definitions

- **Cash Matching**: The recipient's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the recipient by non-Federal third-parties
  - **Examples**: The recipient's cost to purchase materials for use on the project; Salaries for staff time committed to project; project-related travel for staff



# Definitions

- **In-Kind Contribution**: The value of non-cash contributions of property or services.
  - **Examples**: Project-related use of facilities, use or donation of equipment, supplies, and other non-expendable property.



# Definitions

- **Third Party Matching: Any contribution to the project by an organization other than the recipient.**
  - **Can include cash or in-kind contributions.**



# Matching Documentation

- Recipient Matching Documentation:
  - Letter of Commitment signed by the Authorized Representative (AR) may be required if matching information was not included in, or changed from what was in the original proposal
    - Must include the total dollar amount of the commitment, the dates of involvement (project period), and title of project



# Matching Documentation

- **Recipient Matching Documentation (cont'd):**
  - **A separate Budget Justification should be included with the required detailed information on matching costs**
    - **How are matching funds being spent?**



# Matching Documentation

- Third-Party Contributions:
  - **Cost-sharing commitments by a Third-Party must include Pledge Agreement from the contributing organization's AR, counter-signed by the recipient organization's AR.**
    - **Counter-signature not required if submitted with the proposal through Grants.gov application**
  - **Pledge Agreement should also state whether the matching is cash or in-kind**



# Matching Documentation

- **A separate Pledge Agreement is required for each donor organization and must:**
  - **Be submitted on donor organization letter head with the name, address, and telephone of organization**
  - **Include the signature and title of the donor Organization's AR**
  - **Include a statement whether the donation will be cash or in-kind and provide cost details**



# Matching Documentation

- **Pledge agreements must :**
  - Include the title of project for which the donation is being made
  - State the total dollar amount or good faith estimate of the donation
  - Include a statement the donation will be made during the grant period of (dates) or include the dates the donor organization will be involved



# Matching Documentation

- **Third Party Cash Contributions:**
  - **Project costs to be incurred and paid by the Third Party**
    - **Include information on how the funds will be spent (i.e. salary, travel, materials and supplies – provide details on costs)**



# Matching Documentation

- **Third Party Cash and In-Kind Contributions:**
  - Recipient organization should show third-party contributions in “Other Direct Cost” section of the budget and budget narrative
  - If recipient organization is using the third-party cash match to pay for own expenses (i.e. salaries, travel, etc.) details on how funds are being spent must be provided
    - Same level of details required as for Federal funds.



# Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Entire amount of required matching must be secured at time of award**
- **No “contingencies” allowed (i.e. Pending approval, submission, or earning)**



# Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Cannot be used as matching for another Federal project or program**
- **May not be provided by another Federal agency**
- **Must be for costs that are normally allowable under the Program and the applicable cost principles - OMB Circulars A-21 or A-122**
- **Must be for costs incurred specifically for project during project period**



# Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Unrecovered indirect costs may NOT be used as matching**
- **Funds provided from another organization for another, similar project cannot be used as matching**
- **Volunteer time should be valued at normal and customary rate for service provided**
  - **Provide documentation or references on how these rates were determined**



# Matching Do's and Don'ts

- Value of loaned or donated equipment should not exceed its fair rental or market value
- The value of equipment previously purchased by, or donated to the recipient may not be used as matching
  - The purchase or donation must be specifically for the project



# Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Value of donated space or land (usage) should not exceed the fair rental value of comparable space or land as established by an independent appraisal of similar space in the same area.**
  - **Value is not based on purchase price**



# Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Provide references or documentation of how space or land usage was valued**
- **Charging for use of equipment, space, or land would not be allowed if organization does not normally charge for usage**



# Matching Do's and Don'ts

- **Charging for use of office space would not be allowable if organization has a negotiated indirect cost rate or a billing rate which includes the cost of the space in the indirect cost pool**



# Summary

- **It is important that all matching is documented with letters of commitment and cost justifications for both recipient and Third-party donors.**
- **The sources and amounts of all matching should be summarized as part of the budget justification as a separate narrative**
  - **Do not combine the matching cost justification with the Federal funds justification**



# Summary

- **An award cannot be issued until all required matching has been verified as allowable, reasonable and secured.**
- **Some matching may be deemed unallowable during the review process requiring additional matching resources.**
- **Projects not meeting the matching requirement will not be funded.**



# Questions?

## Team Leaders:

**Duane Alphas: 202-401-4326 or [dalphs@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:dalphs@nifa.usda.gov)**

**Rochelle McCrea: 202-401-2880 or [rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov)**

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**Bruce Mertz: 202-401-5062 or [bmertz@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:bmertz@nifa.usda.gov)**

## Branch Chiefs:

**Susan Bowman: 202-401-4324 or [sbowman@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:sbowman@nifa.usda.gov)**

**Adriene Woodin: 202-401-4320 or [awoodin@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:awoodin@nifa.usda.gov)**



# Application Process

- **Register with Grants.Gov – Right Away!**  
[http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp)
  - This process can take weeks to complete
- **Check on Computer essentials**
  - Adobe Acrobat – only .pdf is accepted
  - High speed connection – universities, county extension or libraries.
  - Read the Request for Applications on NIFA website
- **See Webinar recording**
  - Everything You Want to Know About Grants.gov
  - <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html>



# Application Process

## Download the Application Package

Linked to Funding Opportunity Number on our web page

<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/beginningfarmersandranchers.cfm>



### Grants

#### Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP)

Beginning farmer education for adult and young audiences in the United States can be generally traced back to the advent of the 1862 and the 1890 Morrill Land Grant Acts. But for the first time, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub .L. No. 110-234, Section 7410), appropriated \$75 million for FY 2009 to FY 2012 to develop and offer education, training, outreach and mentoring programs to enhance the sustainability of the next generation of farmers. The Agriculture Act of 2014 provided an additional \$20 million per year for 2014 through 2018. The reasons for the renewed interest in beginning farmer and rancher programs are: the rising average age of U.S. farmers, the 8% projected decrease in the number of farmers and ranchers between 2008 and 2018, and the growing recognition that new programs are needed to address the needs of the next generation of beginning farmers and ranchers.

#### Special Notation

[More Beginning Farmer and Rancher Competitive Grants Program Information](#)

#### Who Is Eligible to Apply

- Other or Additional Information (See below)
- Unrestricted (See Eligibility Description)

#### More Information on Eligibility

The recipient must be a collaborative, State, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities, which may include: state cooperative extension service; community-based and nongovernmental organization; college or university (including institutions awarding associate degrees); or any other appropriate partner. Others may be eligible to apply. Please refer to Part III of the current BFRDP Request for Applications for complete eligibility requirements.

[Request for Application \(RFA\)](#) | Apply: [Electronic](#) | [Abstracts of Funded Projects](#)

<b>Solicitation Date (Opening)</b>	April 11, 2014
<b>Letter of Intent Due Date</b>	None
<b>Due Date (Closing)</b> <i>TBD</i>	June 12, 2014
<b>Estimated Total Program Funding</b>	\$19,200,000.00
<b>Range of Awards</b>	Unavailable
<b>Cost Sharing Requirements</b>	At least equal to 25 percent of Federal funds awarded
<b>For More Information Contact</b>	<a href="#">Jill Auburn</a>
<b>Funding Opportunity Number</b>	<a href="#">USDA-NIFA-BFR-004518</a>
<b>CFDA Number</b>	10.311
<b>Contact for Electronic Access Problems</b>	<a href="mailto:webcomments@nifa.usda.gov">webcomments@nifa.usda.gov</a>



# Application Process

- **Complete the Mandatory Documents**
  - Look like forms, but some also need pdf attachments (e.g., project narrative, project summary)
  - Annual and cumulative budgets must be provided
    - Separate budget forms for partners; budget narrative; required justification for matching; indirect cost limited to 10% for standard grants, 22% for other project types
  - Submit all information requested in RFA –
    - Grants.gov is for all federal agencies, many programs
    - Request for Applications (RFA) is specific to BFRDP



# Application Process – Contd.

## Prepare the project summary pages

- Crucial - helps reviewers grasp the essence of your proposal
- Follow the format



# Application Process – Contd.

- **Write components of the proposal**
  - Narrative – no more than 12 pages!
    - Introduction – need for the project, prior experience,
    - Objectives and outcomes
    - Approach - activities, outcomes, pitfalls, timeline
    - Target Audience
    - Personnel and Resources
  - Plan for Outcome Based Reporting
  - Management Plan
  - Collaborative Arrangements
  - Appendices



# Application Process – Contd.

- **Components, continued**
  - Matching Funds Documentation (Letters)
  - Resubmittal, Development, or Renewal attachments, if applicable
  - Senior/Key Person Information
  - Budget
    - separate form for each year & cumulative
    - Separate for each partner/subaward
  - Conflict of Interest list



# Application Process – Contd.

- **Submit electronically through [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)**
  - All attachments **MUST** be submitted in PDF
    - Check all documents after conversion to PDF
    - Attachments must be converted to PDFs prior to attaching, and not password-protected
    - Submit at least a week ahead of June 12, 2014 deadline
  - Grants.gov customer support:
    - 1-800-518-4726; M-F 7:00 am – 9 pm Eastern Time;
    - Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) .
    - Get a Case ID # if you are having submission problems.



# Question Period # 3

- Are there questions on the application process?



# Review Process: Pre-Acceptance

## Grants.gov screening

- Check package for errors before submitting using screen tool in grants.gov
- Expect acknowledgment within 2 days.

## NIFA screening

- Screening for Pdf, program priorities, mandatory forms, time periods, duration, budget, page limits, etc.
- Late submission will be rejected without review
- Contact NPL if you do not receive an email within 4 weeks of proposal acceptance by grants.gov or submission deadline
- Keep program updated of any change in email address.



# Competitive Review Process

- **Designed to be fair and unbiased**
  - Review by peers and other experts
    - provide written and/or verbal evaluations
  - Evaluation factors are very important
  - Only information in the application is used
- **Understanding the review process helps with preparation of a successful proposal.**



# Review Process – Contd.

## ■ Role of Panelist

- Review 15-20 proposals
- Provide constructive and unbiased evaluation
- Protect confidentiality
- Avoid Conflicts of Interest

## ■ Confidentiality

- Proposal content and identity of applicant
- Reviewer identity
- Reviews (shared with Project Director only)
- Panel proceedings



# Evaluation Criteria

- Relevancy
- Technical merit – clarity, workplan, innovation, outcomes/targets, adaptability, sustainability beyond life of grant, logical budget
- Achievability – probability of success
- Expertise and track record of applicants
- Adequacy of personnel, facilities, equipment
- Adequacy of management plan including evaluation, reporting and communication



# If you would like to be considered as a BFRDP reviewer:

- Send an email to [bfrdp@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:bfrdp@nifa.usda.gov)
- Put “reviewer” in the subject line
- Include:
  - A brief description of your experience and expertise with respect to BFRDP
  - Your full contact information (full name, organization, email, phone, regular mail)
  - Whether you plan to be on a proposal this year



# Question Period # 4

- Are there questions on the application review process?



# Successful Proposals...

- Are well written, succinct and logical
- Have all the information requested
- Include thorough review of other projects
- Address an important problem – target audience
- Take an innovative approach
- Are well designed and detailed plan of identifying, recruiting and delivering education
- If successful, would have a big impact on new farmers
- Have a strong management plan



# Successful Proposals, continued

- Provide data on prior experience and success
- Have partners who are clearly involved and included in budget
- Have a good plan for evaluation and outcome based reporting
- Consider the needs of special audiences [not needed in all applications; see May 6 webinar]
  - Beginning farmers and ranchers who are military veterans
  - Beginning farmers and ranchers who are limited resource, socially disadvantaged, or farm workers



# Don't Make These Errors!

- Missing parts, not in pdf, or over the page limit: all are **fatal errors** that will get your proposal **rejected!**

## Common Proposal Criticisms

- Matching not documented
- Poorly written and presented
- Too vague and unfocused
- Project Director lacks experience/expertise



# Common Proposal Criticisms, contd.

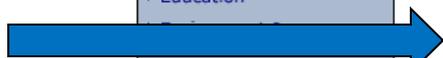
- Insufficient review of other projects
- Insufficient justification for the project
- Cannot be completed in time frame
- Lack letters from consultants, partners, etc.
- Target audience not identified or justified
- No prior experience serving this audience
- Weak management plan
- Unlikely to have an impact



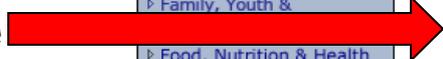
www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html

The screenshot shows the NIFA website's 'Grants' page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About Us, Grants, Forms, Newsroom, Help, and Contact Us. Below this is a search bar and a 'Browse by Subject' menu. The 'Grants' section is highlighted in orange. The main content area is titled 'Beginning Farmer and Rancher Competitive Grants Program' and includes information for 2014 applicants, program details, reviewer information, and results and impacts.

Grants.gov webinar



Funding oppty page



More useful info



You are here: [Home](#) / [Funding Opportunities](#) / [More Beginning Farmer and Rancher Competitive Grants Program Information](#)

## Grants

### Beginning Farmer and Rancher Competitive Grants Program

#### Information for 2014 applicants:

Please use the following resources when preparing an application to the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP). We have two upcoming webinars to discuss the 2014 Request for Applications (RFA) as well as webinar recordings on grant writing tips and using Grants.gov.

- [UPCOMING Webinar – General RFA introduction, April 30, 2-4pm \(EST\)](#)
- [UPCOMING Webinar – For applicants with special audiences \(includes veterans, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, and farm workers\), May 6, 2-4pm \(EST\)](#)
- [Webinar recording – Everything You Want to Know About Grants.gov](#)
- [Webinar recording – Grant Resources for Community and Faith-based Organizations](#)
- [Access the Request for Applications on the BFRDP Funding Opportunity page](#)

#### Program Details:

- [Program Synopsis](#)
- [Memo re: Agriculture Act of 2014 and BFRDP funds](#)

#### Reviewer Information:

- [Directions to Waterfront Centre](#)
- To be considered as a potential reviewer, please send an email message with your contact information and area(s) of expertise to: [bfrdp@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:bfrdp@nifa.usda.gov)
- [Electronic Peer Review System \(PRS\)](#)
- [Reviewer Responsibilities](#)

#### Results and Impacts



## Question Period #5

- General questions and comments:
  - Regarding FY 2014 applications???
  - Stakeholder input on the FY 2014 RFA can be emailed to the National Program Leaders or to [Policy@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:Policy@nifa.usda.gov) – by June 30, 2014.
  - Please check website for regular updates:  
<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html>



# Contact Information for NIFA Staff

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Susan Bowman ([sbowman@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:sbowman@nifa.usda.gov), 202-401-4320)

# Contact Information for Grants.gov

- 1-800-518-4726; M-F 7:00 am – 9:00 pm Eastern Time
- Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)
- Get a Case ID # if you are having submission problems.