

# Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative

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## *2014 Request for Applications*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 8, 2014**



**U.S. Department of Agriculture**

**National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**ORGANIC AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND EXTENSION INITIATIVE**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.307, Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on May 8, 2014**. 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 to: Policy and Oversight Division; Office of Grants and Financial Management; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: [Policy@nifa.usda.gov](mailto: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 Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative RFA.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA requests applications for the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative for fiscal year (FY) **2014** to solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research, education and extension activities. OREI funds research, education and extension programs that enhance the ability of producers and processors who have already adopted organic standards to grow and market high quality organic agricultural products. NIFA anticipates the amount available for support this program in FY 2014 will be approximately \$20 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for **OREI** projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a **OREI** grant.

\*\*\*\*\*Please Read\*\*\*\*\*

**Important Information Regarding Organic Agriculture Research and  
Extension Initiative Policies and Procedures**

\*\*\*\*\*Please Read\*\*\*\*\*

- Notice of Intent to Submit an Application: Prospective applicants are asked to email a notice of Intent to Submit an application by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 11, 2014. The notification of intent to submit is not required and does not enter into the review of a subsequent application. The information it contains will be used by program staff to plan the review process. This email should include the following information:
  1. Descriptive (draft) title of proposed research
  2. Name of the Project Director and Institution name
  3. Names of other potential co-Project Directors and their affiliations, if applicable
  4. Priority area(s) addressed (see Part I (B) for specific details)
  5. Likely type of application and project (defined in Part II, Section C)
  6. Subject line of email should read: OREI – Intent to Submit
  7. E-mail should be sent to [organicprograms@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:organicprograms@nifa.usda.gov)
  
- Education activities will be eligible for funding this year.
  
- Research, Education and Extension Planning Grants will be offered this year.

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## **PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority and Background**

Section 7211 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79) amended section 1672B of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade (FACT) Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925b). The FACT Act, as amended, authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB), to make competitive grants to support research, education, and extension activities regarding organically grown and processed agricultural commodities for eight legislatively-defined goals (see Part I, B. of this RFA).

The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative directly aligns with the Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan (<http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDAREEEActionPlan02-2102Final.pdf>) and specifically addresses: Goal 1 – Local and Global Food Supply and Security, Subgoals 1A, 1B, 1D (which focus on Crop Production, Health, Outreach and Markets); Goal 2 - Responding to Climate and Energy Needs, Subgoal 2A (which focuses on Climate Variability); Goal 3 – Sustainable Use of Natural Resources, Subgoal 3A (which focuses on Water); Goal 5 – Food Safety; Goal 6 – Education and Science Literacy; and Goal 7 – Rural Prosperity/Rural-Urban Interdependence by supporting systems-based research to enhance the sustainability of food production, including environmental, economic, and social factors.

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The OREI seeks to solve critical organic agricultural issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research, education and extension activities. The purpose of this program is to fund high priority research, education and extension projects that will enhance the ability of producers and processors who have already adopted organic standards to grow and market high quality organic agricultural products. Priority concerns include biological, physical, and social sciences, including economics.

The OREI has eight legislatively-defined goals. Applicants are encouraged to develop proposals that give consideration to as many of the following legislatively-defined goals as feasible:

1. Facilitating the development and improvement of organic agriculture production, breeding, and processing methods.
2. Evaluating the potential economic benefits of organic agricultural production and methods to producers, processors and rural communities.
3. Exploring international trade opportunities for organically grown and processed agricultural commodities.
4. Determining desirable traits for organic commodities.
5. Identifying marketing and policy constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture.

6. Conducting advanced on-farm research and development that emphasizes observation of, experimentation with, and innovation for working organic farms, including research relating to production, marketing, food safety, socioeconomic conditions, and farm business management.
7. Examining optimal conservation and environmental outcomes relating to organically produced agricultural products.
8. Developing new and improved seed varieties that are particularly suited for organic agriculture.

The OREI is particularly interested in research, education and outreach projects that will assist farmers and ranchers with whole farm planning by delivering practical research-based information. Applicants should describe how the results of their research, education and extension programs will improve the ability of growers to develop the Organic System Plan required for certification. Organic systems fieldwork must be done on certified organic land or on land in transition to organic certification, as appropriate to project goals and objectives. Refer to the USDA National Organic Program ([www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop)) for organic production standards. For FY 2014, special emphasis will be given to research, education and extension relating to management of diseases, insect pests and weeds in specific regions, such as the southern region, where organic acreage is demonstrably increasing and yet the region remains deficient in terms of numbers of certified and exempt organic farms, compared to nationwide averages. This priority applies to all project types described in Part II, C. of this RFA.

**Priorities for FY 2014: Proposals addressing any of the legislatively defined goals listed above will be accepted for consideration by panels. In FY 2014, priority will be given to proposals in the following areas (1-8 below):**

1. Conduct advanced on-farm crop or livestock research and development that emphasize observation of, experimentation with, and innovation for organic farms, including production, marketing and socioeconomic issues. These issues could include both identification of factors reducing yields, efficiency, productivity, and economic returns on organic farms and the economic and socioeconomic contributions of organic farming to producers, processors and local communities.
2. Develop and demonstrate educational tools for Cooperative Extension personnel and other agricultural professionals who advise producers on organic practices. Applications bringing end-users together with OREI-funded research, education and extension teams are encouraged. Coordination of the development of online content with eXtension and the eOrganic Community of Practice is strongly encouraged.
3. For both plant and animal-based organic products: evaluate, develop and improve allowable post-harvest handling, processing and food safety practices to reduce toxins and microbial contamination, while increasing shelf-life, quality and other economically important characteristics.

4. Strengthen organic seed systems, including seed and transplant production and protection, plant breeding and selection for organic production. Breeding and selection characteristics for organic systems may be different from those in conventional systems. Goals of organic seed systems proposals can include, but are not limited to: disease and pest resistance, stress tolerance, quality and yield improvement, and genetic mechanisms to prevent inadvertent introduction of GMO traits through cross-pollination.
5. Explore technology that meets the requirements of the National Organic Program and that can control weeds and pests while maintaining healthy water resources. Specifically, develop, improve and evaluate systems-based integrated pest management programs to address pest and pest-related problems for organically grown crops. Systems-based evaluations can include the safety and efficacy of allowable pest management materials and practices. Proposals addressing management of diseases, nematodes, weeds and insect pests in the Southern Region are especially encouraged.
6. Develop or improve systems-based animal production, animal health and pest management practices, especially in the areas of nutrition, grazing, and pasture and confinement requirements to improve animal productivity, health and welfare while retaining economic viability.
7. Catalog, characterize and/or select animal genotypes and breeds adapted to organic systems. This would include, but is not restricted to: identification of and selection for pest and disease resistance; health and performance under organic pasture and feed regimens; and performance in small, mixed or innovative farming operations.

Clinical trials investigating animal health issues need not be conducted in a certified organic setting unless animal management could play a pivotal role in the response of the animal to the proposed intervention. For example, animals that have been raised under organic standards should be used to compare pasture-raised animals to those from a confined animal feeding operation.

OREI strongly encourages applicants to develop partnerships that include collaboration with: (1) small- or mid-sized, accredited colleges and universities; (2) 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, Hispanic-serving institutions, and/or other institutions that serve high-risk, under-served, or hard-to-reach audiences; and/or (3) international partnerships, linkages, and exchanges that contribute to solving or solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems in the United States.

NIFA expects applicants to consult with organic producers and/or processors before developing project applications. Producers and/or processors should play an important role in developing project goals and objectives; in implementing the plan; and in evaluating and disseminating project results and outcomes. Prospective applicants with little training or experience in developing and implementing research, education and outreach projects should consult with appropriate researchers, educators, extension workers or consultants. Projects must involve work that is viewed by stakeholders as both necessary and important. There is an expectation that a local and/or regional advisory panel will inform the program throughout its life, including

ongoing identification and prioritization of research, education and extension objectives. An outcome-oriented plan for disseminating information derived from project work must be an integral part of the project. This information delivery plan should consider a number of delivery systems and methods. The metrics for evaluating research, education and extension outcomes should be clearly described and appropriate to project goals.

The following websites may be useful in developing OREI applications:

- National Organic Program ([www.ams.usda.gov/nop](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop)) and National Organic Standards Board ([www.ams.usda.gov/nosb](http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb));
- NIFA Organic Agriculture ([www.nifa.usda.gov/organicagriculture.cfm](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/organicagriculture.cfm))
- eOrganic Section of eXtension: [www.extension.org/organic\\_production](http://www.extension.org/organic_production)
- 2009, 2010 and 2011 OREI, Specialty Crop Research Initiative (SCRI) and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE) Grantsmanship Workshops and NIFA Grantsmanship Workshops: [www.nifa.usda.gov/business/training/cpworkshops\\_past.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/training/cpworkshops_past.html)
- 2007 census of Agriculture, 2008 Organic Production Survey factsheet: [http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online\\_Highlights/Fact\\_Sheets/Practices/organics.pdf](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Fact_Sheets/Practices/organics.pdf)

The OREI encourages use of multiple extension delivery methods, including face-to-face meetings and tours, farmer-to-farmer mentoring, print publications and social media, as appropriate to project goals. In creating web-based electronic content however, project directors (PDs) are encouraged, but not required, to coordinate their efforts with eXtension, the national land grant university and extension web initiative, and the eOrganic Community of Practice (CoP). Extensive opportunities for collaboration, networking, integration of research, education and extension, and stakeholder engagement are offered within eXtension and the eOrganic CoP.

Information on eOrganic is available at: [eOrganic.info/](http://eOrganic.info/) and [http://extension.org/organic\\_production](http://extension.org/organic_production). Applicants wishing to develop electronic content on organic agriculture for eXtension are encouraged to coordinate with eOrganic either to form a new eOrganic group or to contribute to an existing group. Applications should demonstrate that the proposed new electronically delivered content will not duplicate or overlap with existing materials and that appropriate resources are budgeted for development and delivery of the new materials, as detailed below. Proposals incorporating eXtension should include funds to support core CoP functions (e.g., community development, editorial management, Ask-an-Expert, outreach, evaluation) and development of project-specific content for publication to eXtension. Budgets should include supporting funds for both core and project-specific functions.

Contact the leader of eOrganic to explore options for collaboration early in the proposal development process to allow sufficient time for collaborative development of the plan of work and budget, as well as time to obtain letters of collaboration from both eXtension and eOrganic. Coordination with eXtension and eOrganic is not required in the creation and posting of OREI electronic content. However, proposals that do include substantial collaborative activities, such as content development or posting, must document prior arrangements through letters of collaboration and the inclusion of appropriate budgets from eXtension or eOrganic.

**Please see the following links for more information:**

**eXtension Home Page:** <http://about.extension.org/>

**eXtension Background:** [www.extension.org/main/about](http://www.extension.org/main/about)

**eOrganic Home page:** [eOrganic.info/](http://eOrganic.info/) and [www.extension.org/organic\\_production](http://www.extension.org/organic_production).

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

NIFA anticipates the amount available for support this program in FY 2014 will be approximately \$20 million. 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 Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method\\_of\\_payment.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method_of_payment.html).

### **B. Types of Applications**

In FY 2014, you may submit applications to the **OREI** Program as one of the following two types of requests:

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

(2) **Resubmitted application**. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the OREI 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**

The following four types of projects are being requested for the OREI in FY 2014. See the table at the end of this section for project periods, anticipated grant types, and suggested maximum funding requests.

- (1) **Integrated Project Proposals**: Integrated project applications must include at least two of the three functions of the agricultural knowledge system (Research, Education, and Extension). Awards will be made as standard grants or under certain circumstances, NIFA may determine that it will support continuation grants. See footnotes at the end of this section for definitions. In 2014, extension-emphasis proposals are especially encouraged. Every OREI proposal must have clear and documented integration of at least two functions (research, education and/or extension) as part of the project. That integration needs to be evident and explicit. To accommodate projects differing in scope, two tiers of integrated project proposals are offered. However, projects with similar content and same investigators may not be submitted under both Tier 1 and Tier 2.

- a. **Tier 1.** Proposals addressing program priorities with Suggested Maximum Funding Requests of \$2,000,000.
- b. **Tier 2.** Proposals addressing program priorities with Suggested Maximum Funding Requests of \$750,000. All eligible applicants may submit under Tier 2, but small, mid-sized and minority-serving institutions and young scientists are particularly encouraged.

(2) **Conference and Analytical Proposals:** Conference proposals support workshops or symposia bringing together scientists and others, including end-users, to identify research, education or extension needs, update information, or advance understanding of organic issues and problems using a systems-based approach. Conferences intended to provide current information to farmers and ranchers should be held in conjunction with meetings regularly attended by organic producers and processors to the extent possible and should occur within 12 months of award start date. Conference awards cannot exceed \$50,000, and are usually not renewable. **In addition, in 2014 Evaluation (Analytical) Projects resulting in conferences, symposia and/or analytical products detailing the impact of NIFA (and predecessor agency) Organic Research since the inception of the program in 2002 are encouraged.** Either the overall impact of research, education and extension funded by this program, or the impacts of research in a particular area, such as dairy, fruit, grains or plant breeding, may be documented. If the proposal includes both an analytical product and a conference, the total request can go up to \$100,000 and a 1 year no-cost extension is allowed. The proposal should clearly indicate that an analytical component is included if the request is more than \$50,000.

(3) **Research, Education and Extension Planning Proposals:** Planning proposals provide assistance in the development of high quality future OREI proposals. Priority will be given to applicants who: (1) demonstrate limited resources for submitting large grant applications, (2) articulate anticipated benefits from the proposed planning activities, and (3) present evidence that future applications submitted for OREI projects will have a high probability of success. Applicants are encouraged to budget for planning meetings that bring together scientists, end-users and technology providers. Applicants should detail the types of participants who will be invited in order to document that planning meeting participants represent a broad range of expertise. Research, Education and Extension Planning Proposal awards cannot exceed \$50,000, and are not renewable. Funding of a planning proposal is not a guarantee that the resulting application will be funded by NIFA. All proposals resulting from Planning Grants will be reviewed by the panel using the same standards as all other proposals. It is expected that planning activities supported by this program will occur within 12 months of award start date.

Applicants should decide the project type best suited to the objectives of their proposed project and develop a budget that fits the objectives. The suggested maximum funding requests are intended only as a guide and some degree of deviation will not result in a failure to review the proposal.

Project Types		Project Periods	Anticipated Grant Types	Suggested Maximum Funding Requests
Integrated Project Proposal	Tier 1	2 to 4 years	Standard* or continuation**	\$2,000,000
	Tier 2	2 to 4 years	Standard* or continuation**	\$750,000
Conference Proposal		1 year	Standard	\$50,000
Planning Proposal		1 year	Standard	\$50,000
Integrated Organic Program Analytical Proposals (can be combined with Conference proposal, but this is not required)		1 year	Standard	\$50,000, or \$100,000 if combined conference and analytical proposals

**\*A standard grant is an instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period without any statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date.**

**\*\*A continuation grant is an instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, funds are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the Federal government and the public. NIFA is under no obligation to award a continuation grant. In no case, however, can the total funding period exceed 5 years.**

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

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR) is critical for excellence, as well as public trust, in science and engineering. Consequently, we consider education in RCR essential to the preparation of future scientists. In accordance with sections 2, 3, and 8 of 7 CFR Part 3022, institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Per award terms and conditions, grant recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and to support the conduct of the training.

Note that the training referred to herein shall be either on-campus or off-campus training. The general content of the ethics training will, at a minimum, emphasize three key areas of research ethics: authorship and plagiarism, data and research integration, and reporting misconduct. Each institution will be responsible for developing its own training system, as schools will need flexibility to develop training tailored to their specific student needs. Grantees should consider

the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program for RCR (<https://www.citiprogram.org/rcrpage.asp>). Typically this RCR education addresses the topics of: Data Acquisition and Management - collection, accuracy, security, access; Authorship and Publication; Peer Review; Mentor/Trainee Responsibilities; Collaboration; Conflict of Interest; Research Misconduct; Human Subject Research; and Use of Animals in Research.

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

The following entities are eligible to apply for and receive a grant under this program.

1. State agricultural experiment stations;
2. Colleges and universities;
3. University research foundations;
4. Other research institutions and organizations;
5. Federal agencies;
6. National laboratories;
7. Private organizations or corporations;
8. Individuals who are United States citizens or nationals; or
9. A group consisting of two or more of the entities described in subparagraphs (1) through (8).

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.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

#### **(1) General Requirement**

The Secretary shall require the recipient of a grant under this section to provide funds or in-kind support from non-Federal sources in an amount at least equal to the amount provided by the Federal Government. See R&R Budget section regarding matching funds, Part IV, B. 6. of this RFA for more details.

#### **(2) Waiver**

NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement specified in the above paragraph for a grant if NIFA determines that (a) the results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or (b) the project involves a minor commodity, the project deals with scientifically important research, and the grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement. Projects involving organic agriculture may qualify for a waiver under “b” above.

## **PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

### **A. Notice of Intent to Submit an Application Instructions**

Prospective applicants are asked to email a notice of Intent to Submit an application 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 11, 2014. This notification is not required and does not enter into the review of a subsequent application. The information it contains will be used by program staff to plan the review process. It will not be used for screening for project appropriateness or applicant eligibility, nor will feedback be offered.

This email should include the following information:

1. Descriptive (draft) title of proposed research
2. Name of the Project Director and Institution name
3. Names of other potential co-Project Directors and their affiliations, if applicable
4. Priority area(s) addressed (see Part I (B) for specific details)
5. Likely type of application and project (defined in Part II, Section C)
6. Subject line of email should read: OREI – Intent to Submit
7. E-mail should be sent to [organicprograms@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:organicprograms@nifa.usda.gov)

### **B. 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 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.** Item 2. below mentions the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains additional explanatory language regarding the registration process.

#### **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-ICGP-004510** 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](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Grants.gov iPortal: Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self-service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7 am - 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

See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

## **B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

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

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III section 3. of the guide. **ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW.** 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).

Grants.gov provides online tools to assist if you do not own PDF-generating software. You will find PDF conversion software at <http://test.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/pdf-conversion-software.html>.

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

### **1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**

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

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

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

### **3. R&R Other Project Information Form**

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

**a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract.** The Abstract is limited to **250 words**. The abstract should be concise and informative and include the relevance of the project to the goals of the OREI. Conference and Planning proposals should state the objectives of the conference, symposium, workshop, or planning activity as well as the proposed location and probable date(s).

See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

### **b. Field 8. Project Narrative.**

**For Integrated Project Proposals:** The Project Narrative section may not exceed a total of 21 single- or double-spaced pages, including figures and tables. The Introduction may not exceed 6 pages, and the rest of the Project Narrative may not exceed 15 pages.

**For Conference, Analytical and Planning Proposals:** The Project Narrative section may not exceed a total of 7 single- or double-spaced pages, including figures and tables. Proposals with both conference and analytical components may not exceed 14 pages.

All pages, including those with figures and tables, should be numbered sequentially. Applications exceeding the applicable page limitation **may not be reviewed**. These maximums have been established to ensure fair and equitable reviews.

**The Project Narrative must include all of the following:**

- (i) **Response to the previous panel review:** An application with substantive similarities to a prior, unsuccessful project should be presented as a resubmission. Resubmitted applications must provide a detailed response to the previous panel review. The response should be as concise as possible, but there is no limit to the number of pages that may be submitted. The response to the previous review **is not** counted against the page limit of the Project Narrative. A NIFA-issued proposal number *must* be included in the response to the previous review (also see instructions in section 2.8 of Part V of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide).
  
- (ii) **Executive summary and table of contents:** The project narrative is to start with the response to the previous panel review, if applicable, followed by the executive summary and table of contents. The executive summary and table of contents does not count toward the narrative's page limitation, but must include the following information in a combined executive summary and table of contents. Applications without an executive summary containing the following parts will **NOT** be considered for funding. Note that this section is in addition to and different from the Project Summary page.
  - 1. Project title.
  - 2. Project type (see Part II C. of this RFA).
  - 3. List the legislatively-defined goals being addressed (see Part I B. of this RFA), and provide an estimate of the percentage of effort/funds dedicated to each (sum of percentages should equal 100 percent).
  - 4. Indicate the approximate distribution of percentage of effort between research, education and extension.
  - 5. Program Staff – include name, title, affiliation, address, and e-mail for PD(s), Co-PD(s) and Key Personnel.
  - 6. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) describing the critical stakeholder needs addressed by the project and the project's long-term goals (provide cross-references to full descriptions in the narrative).
  - 7. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) of the outreach plan proposed by the project (provide a cross-reference to the full description in the narrative).
  - 8. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) describing potential economic, social, and other benefits (Who benefits and how will it be measured?).
  - 9. A brief summary (2-3 sentences) describing stakeholder engagement throughout the project (provide a cross-reference to the full description in the narrative).

**(iii) Introduction:**

1. Provide a clear statement of the long-term goal(s), the critical need(s) of organic agriculture being addressed, and supporting outreach objectives.
2. Describe how stakeholders were engaged to identify project goals and objectives, and as appropriate, how stakeholder involvement will continue.
3. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project.
4. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Documentation of prior research, education and extension activities in organic agriculture are particularly important. Applications should also demonstrate how duplication of effort with similar activities by others will be avoided.
5. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed work should be included in this section. All works cited should be referenced and attached at Field 9 on the Form, Bibliography & References Cited. Refer to Part V, 4.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. The Bibliography & References Cited is also a required section.

**(iv) Rationale and Significance:** Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project. The specific relationship of the project's objectives to one or more of the FY 2014 OREI priorities should be clear. These purposes and priority areas are described under Part I. B. Purpose and Priorities. Discuss novel or innovative aspects of the proposed project.

**(v) Approach:** Clearly state the activities proposed or problems being addressed. Describe the approaches to be used. Specifically, this section must include:

1. A description of the activities proposed, key personnel and institutional roles in those activities, and the timeline;
2. Methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods and why they were selected;
3. Expected results and outcomes, including how the project will contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of organic agriculture;
4. Means by which these results and outcomes will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted;
5. How results or products will be used;
6. Outreach plan (if appropriate): including science-based tools disseminated, participants involved in delivery, and how impacts will be measured, including the learning outcomes;
7. Pitfalls that may be encountered;
8. Limitations to proposed procedures; and
9. A full explanation of any materials, procedures, situations, or activities related to the project that may be hazardous to personnel, along with an outline or precautions to be exercised to avoid or mitigate the effects of such hazards. For work with organisms that might be perceived as potentially invasive species, indicate precautions to prevent spread or specific information on the context in which they are being used.

c) **Field 11. Other Attachments.** Any matching pledge agreements must be included as PDF attachments in this field.

**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.

**Matching.** If an applicant concludes that the project meets the criteria for a waiver and wish to seek approval for a waiver (as specified under Part III, B.), **a justification should be included in the Budget Narrative.** NIFA will consider this justification when ascertaining final matching requirements. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements.

For those projects where a waiver is not sought, applications shall include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and fair market value of in-kind contributions) from third parties (non-federal sources) in an amount at least equal to the amount awarded by the Federal government. Written verification means:

For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation submitted on Donor Organization letterhead and signed by the authorized representative of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation; and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution submitted on Donor Organization letterhead and signed by the AR of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in-kind contribution including a basis for the estimate; and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

The sources and the amount of all matching support from outside the applicant organization should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application as a part of the Budget Justification attachment (see Field K on the Form R&R Budget).

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions; A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local, and Tribal Governments; A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations; 2 CFR Part 215, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-110); and the cost principles in the Federal Acquisition Regulation at 48 CFR 31.2 for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

### **Additional Budget Information**

For Conference Proposals: These budgets may include appropriate amounts for transportation and subsistence costs for participants and for other allowable costs. These awards cannot exceed \$50,000 and are not renewable. Include an itemized breakdown of all support requested in the Budget Justification (Field K. of the R&R Budget).

For Analytical and Integrated Project Proposals: Applicants for Integrated Project Proposal and Integrated Organic Program Analytical proposal types may request funds to attend at least at least one (Analytical Proposal) or two (Integrated Project Proposal) Project Director’s workshops during the term of their project. Sufficient funds should be requested and reserved during the course of the project for the PD to attend the workshops in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. In the early years of a multiyear project, participation could be in the form of a poster presentation and submission of an abstract. In the final year of the project, an oral presentation should be made, along with the submission of a written report. **The request for these funds should be clearly indicated in the Budget Justification** (Field K. of the R&R Budget).

Applicants for Conference and Planning Proposals are not required to attend the Project Director’s Workshop and do not need to include these funds in their budgets.

### **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 (i.e., enter “OREI”) and the program code (i.e., enter “113.A”).
- 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.

### **D. Submission Dates and Times**

**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 May 8, 2014**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

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

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

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

#### **E. Funding Restrictions**

NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act amended section 1462 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310), limited indirect costs to 22 percent of total Federal funds provided under the award. Therefore, the recovery of indirect costs on awards made by NIFA under this program area may not exceed the lesser of the institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

#### **F. 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 review panel will technically evaluate applications that meet these 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 to producers and the general public of each application.

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

Please note that for FY 2014, special emphasis will be given to integrated proposals (described in Part II.C. of this RFA) for research relating to management of diseases, insect pests and weeds in specific regions, such as the southern region, where organic acreage is demonstrably increasing and yet remain deficient in terms of numbers of certified and exempt organic farms, as compared to nationwide averages. Extension-emphasis integrated proposals are also emphasized in 2014. The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

#### **1. Proposal Relevance (50 points):**

##### **For Integrated Proposals and Extension Proposals:**

- (a) Documented need. Application includes documentation that the project is directed to current and likely future problems/challenges in organic agriculture. Application adequately addresses one of the FY 2014 OREI priorities referenced in Part I.B. or a legislative priority (15 points);
- (b) Stakeholder involvement. Application includes information on how stakeholders were selected and how their input was solicited and incorporated. There is an expectation that a local and/or regional advisory panel will inform the program throughout its life (10 points);

- (c) Outreach plan. Application includes a detailed outreach plan that includes deliverables and a description of how impacts will be measured. A description of the learning outcome metrics for training and educational activities should be included (10 points);
- (d) Potential for project to contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of organic production or marketing systems (10 points); and
- (e) Importance of the commodity or production system or importance of constraints (marketing/yield/pest/other) and resulting impacts on the production system. Potential for project to make a difference (5 points).

**For Conference, Analytical and Planning Proposals:**

- (a) Demonstrated need. Justification of conference and analysis proposed. Application adequately addresses one of the 2014 OREI priorities referenced in Part I.B. (15 points);
- (b) Adequacy of background research. Listing of recent meetings, outreach activities or analytical products on the same subject with dates and locations for conferences or other data products for analytics (10 points);
- (c) Stakeholder involvement. Application includes names and organizational affiliations of the chair and other members of the organizing committee or planning team members, including information on how stakeholders were selected, how their input was solicited and incorporated, and a description of their future involvement in the project (10 points);
- (d) Quality of proposed program (or agenda) for the conference activity, including a listing of scheduled participants, their institutional affiliations, and a description of their expertise. For analytical products, a description of the purpose, the method of developing the product, and the intended use. Particular emphasis should be placed on a description of how impact of the programs being analyzed will be assessed. (10 points); and
- (e) Potential for the project to make a difference (5 points).

**2. Proposal Quality (50 points): (All Project Types)**

- (a) Conceptual adequacy. Application clearly states objectives and how they will be achieved within the timeframe, scope and budget of the proposed project (10 points);
- (b) Approach. The proposed method and approach are appropriate to project objectives (15 points);
- (c) Involvement of appropriate, relevant expertise (5 points);
- (d) Experience of key project personnel (5 points);

(e) Appropriateness of budget (5 points);

(f) Feasibility, probability of success (5 points); and

Adherence to guidelines: For proposals involving eXtension and eOrganic, this includes adherence to the guidelines on incorporating these into proposals, such as inclusion of supporting letters and budgets (5 points).

### **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. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, we determine the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 1801 Robert Fulton Drive, Suite 340, Reston, VA, 20191. Phone: (888) 349-7715. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, are kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process, to the extent permitted by law; therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

### **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 preaward 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).

## **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 15 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 (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR), 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 whom 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 assigned by NIFA;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time NIFA intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of financial assistance approved for the award;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

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

### **C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

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

2 CFR Part 220—Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (OMB Circular A-21).

2 CFR Part 225—Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87).

2 CFR Part 230—Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122).

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

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

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

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

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21, A-87, and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225 and 230), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3016—USDA Implementation of Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR Part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—USDA Implementation of Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3022—Research Institutions Conducting USDA-Funded Extramural Research; Research Misconduct.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations.

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

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

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

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

#### **D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to NIFA's electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions. Details of annual and final technical reporting requirements also are included in the award terms and conditions.

PDs are required to attend at least two PD workshops at a location and time to be designated at a later date. Budget amount should be sufficient to attend the 2-day workshops in the Washington, DC area. In the early years of a multiyear project, participation may be in the form of a poster presentation and submission of an abstract. In the final year of the project, an oral presentation should be made and a written report submitted.

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

### **Programmatic Contacts:**

Dr. Mathieu Ngouajio  
National Program Leader  
Institute of Food Production and Sustainability, Plant Systems - Production  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA  
STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-2240  
Telephone: (202) 401-4895  
Fax: (202) 401-6488  
E-mail: [mngouajio@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:mngouajio@nifa.usda.gov)

Dr. Steve Smith  
National Program Leader  
Institute of Food Production and Sustainability, Animal Systems  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA  
STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-2240  
Telephone: (202) 401-6134  
Fax: (202) 401-1782  
E-mail: [sismith@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:sismith@nifa.usda.gov)

### **Administrative/Business Contacts:**

Duane Alphs  
Awards Management Division  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA; STOP 2240  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-2240;  
Telephone: 202-401-4362  
Email: [dalphs@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:dalphs@nifa.usda.gov)

Rochelle McCrea  
Awards Management Division  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA; STOP 2240  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-2240  
Telephone: 202-401-2880  
Email: [rmcrea@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:rmcrea@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 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), 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.

Organic System Plan means a plan of management of an organic production or handling operation that has been agreed to by the producer or handler and the certifying agent and that includes written plans concerning all aspects of agricultural production or handling described by the National Organic Program.