

# Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA)

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## FY 2014 Request for Applications

**Application Deadline: March 7, 2014**

**RIIA Program:**

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**NIFA Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-RIGP-004414**

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 10.308 Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas.**



U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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

**RESIDENT INSTRUCTION GRANTS PROGRAM FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INSULAR AREAS**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.308, Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on March 7, 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 Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) RFA.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA requests applications for the Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) for fiscal year (FY) 2014. This program is designed to strengthen the capacity of Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas to carry out resident instruction, curriculum, and teaching programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences to improve their ability to meet their unique needs. NIFA is currently operating under temporary appropriations as part of the Continuing Resolution (CR) providing funds through January 15, 2014. Based on the current CR, NIFA anticipates the amount available for support of this program in FY 2014 is \$900,000. Adjustments will be made to program allocations once the FY 2014 appropriations are finalized.

This notice identifies the objectives for RIIA-funded projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for this grant.

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## **PART I - FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

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

The Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) program is administered under the provisions of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Section 7501 of Public Law 107-171) as reauthorized in Section 7143 of Public Law 110-246, which amended the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) by providing for a program of resident instruction grants for insular areas (7 U.S.C. 3363). Funds will be awarded to individual eligible institutions of higher education in Insular Areas (Insular Area Institutions) to carry out teaching and education programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences.

The eight insular areas are: American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

### **Background**

In July 2008, the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, and Department of Energy asked the National Research Council's Board on Life Sciences to convene a committee to "... *examine the current state of biological research in the United States and recommend how best to capitalize on recent technological and scientific advances that have allowed biologists to integrate biological research findings, collect and interpret vastly increased amounts of data, and predict the behavior of complex biological systems.*" The committee produced a report entitled "New Biology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Ensuring the United States Leads the Coming Revolution," and a set of recommendations that recognize the most effective leveraging of investments would come from a coordinated, interagency effort to encourage the emergence of a New Biology to address broad and challenging societal problems.

That committee outlined four broad societal challenges in food, environment, energy, and health that could be addressed by the New Biology. The four challenges are: (1) *Generate food plants to adapt and grow sustainably in changing environments;* (2) *Understand and sustain ecosystem function and biodiversity in the face of rapid change;* (3) *Expand sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels;* and (4) *Understand individual health.*

Furthermore, the RIIA program integrates the following 2008 Farm Bill Priority Areas: Plant Health and Plant Production; Renewable Energy, Natural Resources and Environment; Animal Health and Animal Production; Food Safety, Nutrition and Health; Agriculture Systems and Technology; and, Agriculture Economics and Rural Communities.

**USDA NIFA Response:** Building upon the four "New Biology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" challenges and the 2008 Farm Bill Priority Areas, NIFA has re-focused its mission to direct agricultural sciences research, education, and extension programs on addressing the following **Five Priority Areas:**

1. **Food Security and Hunger;**
2. **Climate Change;**
3. **Sustainable Bioenergy;**
4. **Childhood Obesity; and**
5. **Food Safety.**

The RIIA is a NIFA-administered competitive grants program with a focus on improving formal, postsecondary agricultural sciences education. Guided by critical societal issues laid out in the “New Biology for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” report, the Farm Bill Priority Areas as well as the 5 compelling NIFA Priority Areas, RIIA-funded projects ensure a competent and qualified workforce to serve the food and agricultural sciences system. At the same time, funded projects improve the economic health and viability of rural communities through the development of degree programs emphasizing new and emerging employment opportunities in agriscience and agribusiness. Finally, funded projects are also focused on addressing the national challenge to increase the number and diversity of students entering other agriculture related science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines (i.e., having an agricultural sciences workforce representative of the Nation’s population).

The RIIA Competitive Grants Program aligns with the USDA Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan ([http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA\\_REE\\_Action\\_Plan\\_02-2012\\_2.pdf](http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_02-2012_2.pdf)), and specifically addresses Goal 6 – Education and Science Literacy, by recruiting, cultivating, and developing the next generation of scientist, leaders, and highly-skilled workforce for food, agriculture, natural resources, forestry, environmental systems, and life sciences to out-educate our global competitors.

Therefore, applications submitted to this grants program must state how the funded project will address the two **RIIA Grant Program Goals**:

1. To increase the number and diversity of students who will pursue and complete a 2- or 4-year postsecondary degree in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences, or other STEM fields closely related to the food and agricultural sciences, and for FY 2014, encourage study in areas that contribute to any of the stated priorities; and
2. To enhance the quality of postsecondary instruction and faculty development in order to help meet current and future national food and agricultural sciences workplace needs.

## **B. Purpose and Priorities**

1. Applicants to the RIIA program are reminded of a closely related competitive grants program administered by NIFA for eligible Insular Area Institutions: The Distance Education Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (DEG). As separate programs under their respective authorization and appropriation and RFA, applicants are advised to coordinate RIIA and DEG project applications to ensure overall coordinated project objectives and to efficiently integrate proposed teaching and evaluation assessment practices for both projects.
2. RIIA projects must focus on any of the five NIFA Priority Areas listed above in Part I. A.

3. **Focus:** All RIIA-funded projects should focus on improving the quality of academic instruction within the postsecondary system in order to recruit and retain a greater number of qualified and diverse graduates who are either: (a) capable of entering the agricultural sciences workforce with occupational competencies expected by employers; or, (b) encouraged to pursue an advanced degree in disciplines supporting the five NIFA Priority Areas. ‘Academic instruction’, as used in the previous sentence, includes improving curricula, faculty competencies, and interactions with other academic institutions or employers to increase student recruitment and retention levels in order to meet the demands of a changing U.S. agricultural sciences workforce. Educational Need Areas explained in Part I. C.2., provide further, specific project focus.
4. **Scale:** All RIIA-funded projects should seek to address a greater number of prospective students or qualified faculty, and demonstrate the potential for adoption by other academic institutions to address similar challenges. Projects should also maximize available educational resources, encourage inter-institutional partnerships, and reduce duplication of efforts especially in areas of faculty expertise, course offerings, and transfer or articulation agreements between institutions, all to enhance students’ interests and abilities to pursue advanced degrees. Project Types explained in Part II. C., provide further, specific encouragement to scale up a funded project to create greater impact.
5. **Impact:** All RIIA-funded projects should seek to create measurable impacts. Impacts are defined as anticipated benefits to the target project audience. Impacts should be measurable. Measuring impacts begins with a comprehensive Project Evaluation Plan that includes developing assessment instruments. The Project Evaluation Plan explained in Part I.C.3., provides further, specific guidance on the importance of developing a compelling impact.

The purpose of the RIIA grants program is to promote and strengthen the ability of eligible institutions in the Insular Areas (see definition in Part VIII, E.) to carry out education within the broadly defined food and agricultural sciences and related disciplines. For purposes of this program, the term “food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences” means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in the food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities relating to the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, utilization, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, and inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, family and consumer sciences, rural human ecology, rural economic, community, or business development, and closely allied disciplines.

In 2014, RIIA-funded projects encourage each eligible academic institution to identify and address their respective priority education opportunities within and among their colleagues or employees in addressing any of the five NIFA Priority Areas. An application submitted to this grants program should propose the individual institution’s comprehensive and coordinated activities to address that challenge or opportunity. RIIA-funded project activities should

demonstrate an impact on increasing the number of students who pursue a higher degree within agriculture-related STEM disciplines, and should improve student learning and retention. These activities could include, but are not limited to, developing, evaluating, and disseminating:

- Educational materials for any postsecondary course, laboratory, or related curricula that encourage study in areas that contribute to any of the five NIFA Priority Areas;
- Instructional delivery methods to improve student retention of academic content; and/or
- Professional development approaches to improve the capacity of faculty and teaching assistants to provide effective and updated instruction.

RIIA-funded project activities should support the creation and adaptation of learning materials and teaching strategies to operationalize what we know about how students learn. Many of these concepts are identified in the National Research Council's publication: *How People Learn*, available at [http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=9853](http://books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=9853). Projects should also promote faculty expertise and encourage widespread implementation of educational innovation. This solicitation especially encourages projects with the potential to transform classroom practices at the institutional level, to address current understanding of how students learn most effectively, and in response, how faculty adopt instructional approaches.

The intent of a RIIA-funded project is to make a significant impact on the challenge or opportunity being addressed, with the expectation that major portions of the impact will be sustained after NIFA funding ends. Project design should reflect an awareness of the diversity of the STEM education community, and the project should include mechanisms for impacting a significant proportion of this community. Projects are expected to encourage broad participation of students in agricultural STEM disciplines. All projects should be grounded by concepts documented in relevant background literature promoting innovations in education and student learning, and show an awareness of relevant prior experience and personnel adequacy in those areas.

Educational instrumentation and related equipment requests are appropriate expenses in this grants program. However, such purchases must directly support the specific student learning outcome proposed by this grant application. Convincing documentation and justification for such expenses are required in the grant application.

While research and extension activities may be included in a funded RIIA project, the primary focus must be to improve teaching within a degree-granting program.

**By authorizing and funding this program, Congress expects RIIA projects to:**

- 1. Produce measurable impacts aligned with RIIA program goals and encourage study in areas that contribute to any of the NIFA Priority Areas;**
- 2. Promote innovative, educational practices within the food and agricultural sciences that improve how students learn; and,**
- 3. Include a rigorous evaluation component to assess when project outcomes are met.**

Essentially, your application must convince a peer panel of a compelling educational challenge; clearly indicate how your methodology is both unique and with merit; offer significant promise of adoption by others; and the expectation that impacts will continue once grant funds end.

**Applicants are strongly encouraged to:**

1. Engage a sponsoring private organization or State or Federal agency to leverage grant funds and/or contribute towards overall goals and objectives of the funded project. These may include opportunities for student internships, faculty mentoring, curriculum development, and other partnership activities. Potential USDA agencies may include the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development Agency (RD), the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Economic Research Service (ERS), Forest Service (FS), Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Risk Management Agency (RMA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).
2. Refer to a 2009 white paper on Human Capacity Development prepared by the Academic Programs Section of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities. Copies of the white paper entitled “Human Capacity Development: The Road to Global Competitiveness and Leadership in Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (FANRRS),” can be found at:  
<http://www.aplu.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=1639>.

NIFA encourages innovative proposals with the potential for national impact to serve as models for other institutions.

Project applications should be guided by the recommendations for change as reported in the National Academy of Science 2009 publication entitled, *Transforming Agricultural Education for a Changing World*. This report recommends that academic institutions with undergraduate programs in agriculture implement the following nine steps to better meet the needs of students, employers, and the broader society. For information on the full report, please refer to [http://dels.nas.edu/ag\\_education/report.shtml](http://dels.nas.edu/ag_education/report.shtml) and click on recommendations. The list of recommendations is as follows:

- Implement Strategic Planning;
- Broaden Treatment of Agriculture in the Overall Curriculum;
- Broaden the Student Experience;
- Prepare Faculty to Teach Effectively;
- Reward Exemplary Teaching;
- Build Stronger Connections among Institutions;
- Start Early K-12 Outreach;
- Build Strategic Partnerships; and
- Focus Reviews of Undergraduate Programs in Agriculture.

## C. Program Area Description

### 1. Program Scope

Beginning in 2014, funded projects focus on enhancing and strengthening the capacity of each eligible individual Insular Areas institution to carry out its delivery of teaching, learning, and faculty development (including distance education and articulation agreements, student and faculty exchanges, and expanded career planning activities) in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences.

### 2. Educational Need Areas

Each project must focus on an Educational Need Area listed below, and applications must demonstrate how the chosen Need Area will help achieve RIIA Program Goals from Part I, A, above. Individual institutions must identify its own Need Area and provide a narrative response to Part IV.B.3. Field 8.

Applicants must address the following items within specified sections of the ‘R&R Other Project Information’ Form (Part IV, B.3.):

1. Within the Project Narrative (Part IV, B.3.Field 8.1.b.), identify and describe at least one Educational Need Area (Part I, C.2.) for each institution submitting an application, and explain how this Educational Need Area supports the two RIIA Program Goals listed above.
2. Within the project’s Evaluation Plan (Part IV, B.3.Field 8.2.d.), document how Project Accomplishments (products, results, impacts, etc.) will be published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. Applicants are encouraged to develop a project web page as part of their dissemination activities. Applicants are also encouraged to develop a non-campus review committee to evaluate their progress and termination reports. This activity will help maximize the quality of the content within these reports.

Note: Applications must include an Evaluation Plan (Part IV, B. 3. Field 8, 2 d) for each Educational Need Area selected. This Plan should indicate how success in completing the program objectives within the chosen Need Area will be measured. Therefore, choose only the Need Areas that are relevant to and within the resources of the institution in order for a rigorous Evaluation Plan to be developed.

**Educational Need Areas** for the RIIA program are:

**(1) Curricula Design, Materials Development, and Library Resources.** The purpose of this initiative is to promote the development of courses of study and degree programs, new and improved curricula, and instructional materials and technology; to enable the acquisition of library resources including books and journals relating to food and agricultural sciences; and to stimulate the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects, new research on teaching and learning theory, and new applications of knowledge. The overall objective is

to increase the quality of, and continuously renew, the academic programs of Insular Area Institutions in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences.

**(2) Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching.** The purpose of this initiative is to advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications in a field; expanding competence in innovative technologies and new methods to deliver instruction; developing new skills in a field of science or education including student advising skills; or pursuing graduate-level study in a field related to the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences.

Each faculty recipient of support for developmental activities must be an “eligible participant” as defined in Part VIII, E. Definitions.

**(3) Instruction Delivery Systems.** The purpose of this initiative is to encourage the development and use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs, while simultaneously addressing the unique geographical challenges of Insular Area Institutions. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: conducting needs assessments of institutional academic and technological capacities; developing inter-institutional and inter-disciplinary partnerships and collaborations that deliver instruction in ways that maximize program quality and reduce unnecessary duplication; assisting faculty to incorporate alternative instructional methodologies and technologies that respond to differences in student learning styles; and helping institutions in the consideration and implementation of innovative instructional techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems in response to advances in knowledge and technology.

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

**(5) Student Experiential Learning.** The purpose of this initiative is to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs that provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: preparing future graduates to advance knowledge and technology that enhance quality of life, conserve resources, and address community and economic development issues. Projects should focus on advancing student problem-solving, decision-making and communication skills, and improving real-life technological expertise. Activities may include, but are not limited to: field-based internships; laboratory research; work-study practicum experiences; study abroad opportunities; and participation with faculty in professional conferences.

**(6) Student Recruitment, Retention, and Educational Equity (including the provision of student financial assistance).** The purpose of this initiative is to enhance educational equity for students from under-represented groups, and to strengthen student recruitment and retention programs that ensure the future strength of the Nation's scientific, professional, and technical work force in the food and agricultural sciences. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: initiating new projects (or supplementing current efforts) in order to attract and increase the numbers of students from under-represented groups to attend college in order to prepare them for careers as food and agricultural scientists, professionals, and technicians; agricultural and science literacy programs at the high school level to attract students to college and careers in the food and agricultural sciences; mentoring programs and other initiatives for student retention; and the provision of student financial support to attend college.

(b) Note: NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under these authorities to address any Need Area may not be used for the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities (i.e., greenhouses, laboratories, or other structures).

(c) Projects must be innovative and promote and strengthen academic instruction or activities that lead to completion of a student's formal degree. Your project should have broad-based applicability beyond a single course or an individual instructor. Equally valued are projects between an academic institution and employer(s) of that institution's graduates to better prepare students to meet increasingly more scientific, technical and professional workforce needs. Academic instructions that can be coordinated by articulation agreements with the applicant and either secondary, or 2- or 4-year postsecondary colleges and universities to increase academic program quality are also strongly encouraged. Successful projects should also have a positive impact on large numbers of students and on activities that achieve cost-effective economies of scale in meeting the two Program Goals.

(d) Each student recipient of monetary support for education costs or developmental purposes must be enrolled at an eligible institution and must be a U.S. citizen or national as defined in Part VIII, E. Definitions, for an "eligible participant".

(e) Stipends to support students' experiential, academic learning activities outside of the traditional classroom are permitted (as long as such activities are clearly related to a student's degree program and not extracurricular). Stipends may be requested for materials or supplies to facilitate a student's broad exposure to research/field techniques and methodologies, as well as for reasonable travel expenses and per diem related to student educational experiences (e.g., field trips, data collection, and scientific meetings) directly supporting this funded project. In order for the students to be provided a stipend, they must be currently matriculating in the institution(s) where the projects are being implemented.

(f) Project design should reflect an awareness of the diversity of the STEM education community, and the project should include mechanisms for impacting or including a significant proportion of this community. Projects are expected to encourage broad participation of students in agriculture-related STEM disciplines.

(g) Funded project outcomes are expected to continue after NIFA funding ends (See Dissemination and Continuation Plans section #4, below).

### **3. Evaluation Plan**

All projects, regardless of the scope or program component they address, must have an evaluation plan that includes both a strategy for monitoring the project as it evolves (to provide feedback to guide these efforts), as well as a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the project in achieving its goals and for identifying positive and negative findings when the project is completed.

The complexity of the evaluation will depend on the scope of the project. Grantees are encouraged to obtain an independent evaluation to secure appropriate documentation of the project's outcomes and impacts. Such efforts should be led by knowledgeable and experienced individuals. As a guide, up to 10 percent of grant funds may be used to support this purpose.

In addition to measuring progress toward achieving specific project outcomes, the Evaluation Plan (see Part IV, B.3. Field 8.2.d) must also include a strategy for assessing how the project advances the two RIIA Program Goals. It should state the overall goal of the project, identify the measurable objectives, and indicate the outcome measures that will determine the success of the project and the relevance of these to the RIIA Program goals. At a minimum, project assessment should indicate a projected number of students or faculty impacted by the project as a result of the proposed activities as one assessment measure.

The following suggested evaluation examples are derived from the Department of Education's Report of the Academic Competitiveness Council, May 2007, Federal STEM Goals and Metrics, Education Undergraduate National Goals and Metrics.

*To demonstrate progress toward increasing the number of graduates, the following metric is suggested: first provide baseline data for the year preceding the grant award showing the number and/or percentage of students who declare and/or complete a major program of study of agriscience or agribusiness within your unit; and second, provide similar data for the final year of the grant and include an assessment of the impact of your project on changes from the baseline data. List the expected number of students benefiting from this project and their level of education, a table is recommended.*

*To demonstrate progress toward increasing the quality of instruction, the following metric is suggested: first provide baseline data for the year preceding the grant award showing the current number and/or percentage of graduates who either graduate and pursue a vocation in the food and agricultural sciences, or who pursue advanced degrees within the food and agricultural sciences; and second, provide similar data for the final year of the grant and include an assessment of the impact of your project on changes from the baseline data.*

Suggested resources to obtain quantitative, baseline, student enrollment, degrees granted, and employment data for comparison purposes, postsecondary institutions may find appropriate information in the Food and Agricultural Education Information System (FAEIS) at:

<http://faeis.ahnrit.vt.edu/> , and from the publication: *Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Renewable Energy, and the Environment United States, 2010-2015* at: <http://www.ag.purdue.edu/usda/employment/pages/default.aspx>. Other, similar source(s) may also be consulted.

Applications should include elements of a logic model detailing the activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. This information may be provided as a narrative or formatted into a logic model chart. The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used in developing projects before writing the proposal. Two additional pages are allowed for this information. See Part IV.B.3, b. (Field 12) for details on where to attach this information in the application. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat\\_plan\\_logic\\_models.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html).

Additional Resources for Project Evaluation:

- NSF 02-057: The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation, a basic guide to quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods for educational projects  
<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm>
- Field-Tested Learning Assessment Guide (FLAG): This Web site is designed for Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology Instructors who are interested in new approaches to evaluating student learning, attitudes, and performance. It has a primer on assessment and evaluation, classroom assessment techniques, discipline-specific tools, and resources – all in a searchable, downloadable database, copy and paste the link into an address bar on Internet Explorer <http://www.flaguide.org/>
- American Evaluation Association. Online Resources  
<http://www.eval.org/p/cm/>

#### **4. Dissemination & Continuation Plans**

Include in the project's Dissemination Plan (see Part IV, B.3. Field 8.2.e) a description of how the applicant plans to communicate project accomplishments (products, results and impacts, etc.) to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. This may include educational journals or other professional discipline publications and presentations at regional or national conferences and workshops, including any scheduled Project Director's Conference (see Part VI, D).

**Continuation Plan:** Applicants are also expected to include a statement describing how project outcomes are expected to continue after NIFA funding ends. This Plan should include expected outputs and how these will become institutionalized in the curriculum. Also, describe any strategies for adapting or expanding these outputs for a larger audience. Provide details of these changes, what are the expected outcomes, and the targeted audience who benefits from this project.

## **PART II-AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

NIFA is currently operating under temporary appropriations as part of the Continuing Resolution (CR) providing funds through January 15, 2014. Based on the current CR, NIFA anticipates the amount available for support of this program in FY 2014 is \$900,000. Adjustments will be made to program allocations once the FY 2014 appropriations are finalized.

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**

The following three Application Types may be submitted to the RIIA program:

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

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

**(3) Re-submitted application.** This is an application that had previously been submitted to the RIIA program only, 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 Type**

#### **Regular Project**

In FY 2014, each eligible institution may submit a maximum of one RIIA Regular Application. All applicants must meet the eligibility criteria as described in Part III of the RFA.

An eligible institution may submit a regular project application for project activities undertaken principally on behalf of its own students or faculty, and managed primarily by its own personnel. In a Regular Project, the applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners (See award size limit below in item E).

#### **D. Project Duration**

A project application may request funding for a project period from 18 to 36 months duration. The project start date should not occur prior to August 2014.

#### **E. Number and Size of Grant Awards**

NIFA reserves the right to fund applications based on the number and merit of applications received. NIFA estimates that, if awarded in FY 2014, maximum funding for a Regular Project application may not be greater than \$110,000.

Based on the project scope and budget of all applications selected for awards, the actual, individual grant amounts awarded by NIFA under this Grants Program may differ from the funds requested by the applicant. In such cases, revised budgets and revised plans of work may be required by NIFA before an award is made.

#### **F. Award Limitations per University System**

An eligible university system may receive up to two grant awards per competition. Institutions receiving a grant under this program in any one competition are eligible to receive RIIA grants in subsequent years. Receiving a grant under any other authority does not affect eligibility for this RIIA grants program.

#### **G. 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**

Applications may only be submitted by eligible institutions. For the purposes of the RIIA grants program, an eligible institution means an institution of higher education, as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1995 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)), that's located in an Insular Area and that has a demonstrable capacity to carry out teaching and extension programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences. Individual Land Grant colleges and universities, and other institutions that have secured Land Grant status through Federal legislation, and which are located in Insular Areas are automatically eligible for awards under the RIIA grants program as direct individual applicants.

The eight insular areas are: American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

The following criteria must also be met by eligible applicants to this grants program:

#### **1. Branch Institutions of a State System:**

For the purposes of the RIIA program, the individual branches of a State university system or public system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree granting institutions are treated as separate, individual institutions eligible to apply for and receive awards, provided they otherwise satisfy the definition of "eligible institution" as specified above.

#### **2. Independent Branch Campuses:**

Independent branch campuses of individual institutions may apply for and receive grant awards under this program, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of "eligible institution" as specified above. An "independent branch campus" means a unit of a 2-year or 4-year institution of higher education that is geographically apart from the main campus, is permanent in nature, offers courses for credit and programs leading to an associate or bachelor's degree, and is autonomous to the extent that it has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization and its own budgetary and hiring authority.

#### **3. Certification of Eligibility:**

At the time of application, each primary applicant will be required to certify that it is an eligible institution as defined by this RFA. A non-Land Grant institution must submit a letter signed by the institution's Authorized Representative (AR) certifying that it meets the requirements of an "eligible institution" as defined in Part III A paragraphs 1 and 2 above. The AR must also certify the institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus:

(a) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;

(b) Is legally authorized by the State in which it is located to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;

(c) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; and

(d) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

All eligible institutions must demonstrate that they have a significant commitment to higher education programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences and to each specific subject area for which grant funds are to be used.

Eligibility documentation must be submitted as part of the applicant's Project Narrative. See Part IV, B.3, Field 8.

#### **4. Fiscal Agents:**

If an institution cannot accept Federal funds directly, it must submit a letter stating that it will accept the award, but that funds must be administered through a fiscal agent. This agent must be identified in the letter from the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by a representative of the fiscal agent organization. The letter should include the fiscal agent's point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. Both the fiscal agent and the applicant institution must submit complete management information (see Part V, D.). Nevertheless, the legal recipient of the award must be an eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system. Examples of fiscal agent arrangements include, but are not limited to the following scenarios:

(a) A State university system or a public system of higher education may apply on behalf of an eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution in its State. In such cases, the State system will act as fiscal agent for the eligible institution under a Regular Project award to advance the purposes of the RIIA grants program.

(b) A research foundation or other, similar foundation established and maintained by an eligible, individual institution to facilitate the application and management of externally funded grant awards may apply on behalf of its eligible, parent institution. In such cases, the foundation will act as fiscal agent for the eligible, individual institution under a Regular Project award to advance the purposes of the RIIA grants program.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply to this RIIA grants program provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline may result in the

application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

**B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

NIFA does not require matching support for this program, and matching resources will not be a factor in the review process as evaluation criteria.

## PART IV-APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### A. Electronic Application Package

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

#### New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, we recommend that the 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-RIGP-004414** 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. **Complete all applicable fields. The following additional information may be helpful:**

**Field 2. Date Submitted and Applicant Identifier** – This field is provided for the Applicant’s use if they have an internal tracking system they would like to use in tracking applications they have submitted. This field is not required.

**Field 3. Date received by State and State Application Identifier** – This is not applicable for RIIA applications; these fields do not need to be completed.

**Field 5. Applicant Information** – This must be the legal name of eligible Insular Area academic institution (See Part III. A. Eligible Applicant). If a fiscal agent will be involved (see Part III. A.5.), do not list that organization in this field. **Official correspondence will be directed to either the Project Director (Field 14) or the Authorized Representative (Field 19).**

**Field 8. Type of Application** – Only ‘New’, ‘Renewal’ or ‘Resubmitted’ applications are permitted.

**Field 12. Proposed Project Start Date and End Date** – A project’s duration should normally be at least 12 months (to allow time for assessment and evaluation) and no more than 36 months. Project Start Date should not occur before August 2014.

**Field 15. Estimated Project Funding –Total Estimated Project Funding** - Amount of Federal funds requested (See Part II. E, for maximum award amounts that should be entered in this field, i.e., Regular Project applications no greater than \$90,000 each. The minimum amount may be lowered if one or more Regular Project(s) are funded.

**Field 20. Pre-application** – Not applicable to the RIIA program. No attachments needed.

### **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**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V. 4 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. **Complete all applicable fields. Note: If a ‘Yes’ response is provided for Fields 1, 2, or 4.a, the applicant must provide the necessary assurances prior to an award being made.**

#### **a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)**

Include the following underlined text along with your responses:

- List the Project Title;

- List the Project Director, and any Co-Project Director(s) (include institutional affiliation for each);
- Project Type: Regular;
- Total Funds Requested: List total Federal funds requested for this application;
- List the project’s primary NIFA Priority Area;
- List the project’s primary Educational Need Area (Part I, C.2.);
- List the project’s primary Discipline or field of study targeted: (e.g., list one or more subject areas that are the focus of this project, including, as an example: animal sciences, tropical horticulture, marine science/aquaculture, food safety, human nutrition, etc.);
- List the anticipated number of students to be served by the project (i.e. participating in a learning opportunity, using the developed curriculum or instrumentation, scholarship/fellowships, etc.);
- List the overall application’s Summary Text. Provide a very concise (approx. 250 word) summary to include the following underlined elements in the Project Narrative:
  - Purpose: What is the major problem your project will address?
  - Audience: Who are the intended beneficiaries? Who will be impacted?
  - Products: What will be produced?
  - Outcome/Impact: What is the intended result (consequence) of your project? Describe the primary benefits to the intended target audience. Note: Outcomes/impacts should be measurable and should be included in the project’s Assessment/Evaluation Plan. These should demonstrate whether or not these benefits were achieved (See Field 8 2.c. below).

**b. Field 8. Project Narrative – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)**

**PLEASE NOTE:**

The Project Narrative for a **Regular Project** application (see Part II, C.) shall not exceed 20 double-spaced pages of written text and up to a maximum of five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum 25-page limit has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Reviewers are instructed not to review material in excess of this limit. See Note below for Field 8 Project Narrative.

The **Project Narrative** in this Field 8 attachment contains the major description of your project. It follows this program’s Evaluation Criteria (Part V. B). Accordingly, provide your responses in the following format: include the Certification of Eligibility statement, followed by your responses to each of the elements as identified below. In your responses, include the following underlined text to assist reviewers in assessing your response to each of the required elements.

Certification of Eligibility: i.e., AR certification that the primary applicant organization is an “eligible institution.”

1. Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education; Significance of the Problem:
  - a. Identification of Educational Problem and Project Impact. Briefly summarize: (1) the specific educational problem (or opportunity) to be addressed; (2) the project’s target objective(s). (What change in education is proposed?); (3) the anticipated project audience; and, (4) the anticipated, overall project impact (Impacts are anticipated project *benefits* that will improve the quality of food and

agricultural sciences education. Note: Your *impacts* should be changes you can measure at the project's conclusion).

Note: Previous Award Accomplishments and Relation to Proposed Project: If the applicant has received previous funding from this grants program, you must update (summarize) that project's accomplishments to date. Indicate how objectives of this proposed project will complement objectives from your past award.

- b. Project Justification. Explain your project's chosen Educational Need Area (Part I.C.2). Justify how this Need Area will support your project objectives. Where appropriate, include how the project will specifically improve science, technology, engineering, and mathematical (agriculture-related STEM) capabilities of students. Will your project impact large numbers of students? How many students? Does your project have the potential for adoption by other institutions?
- c. Institutional Long-range Goals. Explain how the project's objectives align with the institution's long-term (5-10 year) goals.
- d. Innovation. Describe any creative, innovative approach your project will use to improve the quality of food and agricultural sciences education, solve an education problem, or advance equal opportunity for all students, particularly as they apply to your institution.
- e. Multidisciplinary and/or Problem-based Focus. Indicate how the project is relevant to multiple disciplines within food and agricultural sciences education, or within other academic disciplines. Will the project enhance students' understanding of complex agricultural systems?

## 2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages:

- a. Plan of Operation and Methodology. How do you plan to administer the project to ensure efficient and effective results?
- b. Timetable. Identify all important project milestones and dates (performance targets that indicate when project goals will be met) as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination, and closeout.
- c. Products, Results and Measurable Outcomes. Outline your project's expected products/results and their outcome (impact) on strengthening food and agricultural sciences education.

### **(Important Note: Make sure to differentiate among the three terms:**

“Products” may be actual *items or services* acquired with funds, e.g., “...developed three, new Web-based courses;” “Results” are *accomplishments* related to the products, e.g., “...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours;” and “Outcomes/Impacts” are the *benefits* to your audience, e.g., “...an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of

those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, Web-based course materials.” Outcomes/impacts are the consequences of your project and the most critical elements in your Evaluation Plan. They are a measure of the results by comparison to what might have happened in the absence of the funded project. They answer the question: “So what?”)

d. Evaluation Plans. How will you know when anticipated products, results and measurable outcomes are achieved? Describe your assessment methods. Also, discuss the strategies and metrics for evaluating progress toward meeting the two Program Goals identified in Part I, B. This section should clearly indicate how you plan to measure outcomes/impacts.

e. Dissemination Plans. How do you plan to publicize your project’s outcomes/impacts? Identify target audiences and explain communication methods to disseminate project results and products.

f. Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts. Explain how the project will maximize partnership and collaborative efforts to strengthen food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences education (e.g., involvement of faculty in related disciplines at the same institution, joint projects with other educational institutions from K-12 and higher, or cooperative activities with business or industry). Provide evidence of support via letters from key partners involved in the project.

### 3. Institution Capability and Capacity Building:

a. Institutional Commitment and Capability. Demonstrate how the institution is committed to ensure completion of this project.

b. Institutional Resources. Document that necessary institutional resources (administrative personnel, facilities, equipment, and/or materials), and other appropriate resources, will be made available to the project.

c. Academic Enhancement. Document how this project will improve teaching and education at the institution (including any partner institutions). Include how any project performance target(s) identified above (2.b., Timetable) will be incorporated into academic instruction at the institution.

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

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

**Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources -** (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format).

If needed, describe the types, location, and availability of instrumentation and physical facilities necessary to carry out the work proposed. If special academic, private or government laboratories or facilities are being used, include a letter in the application from the authorized representative of the facility describing the proposed arrangements and availability. This letter should be included as a part of Other Attachments, see Field 12 below.

**Field 11. Equipment Documentation -** (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format).

Equipment purchased must be fully justified under this section. Note: Equipment, as previously defined, is normally not funded in this grant program. Other purchases under \$5,000 (e.g., computers, laboratory materials, etc.) are described, instead, in the Budget Justification section under the ‘Materials and Supplies’ line item.

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

- **Response to Previous Review -** PDF Attachment. 1-page limit. Title the attachment as ‘Response to Previous Review’ in the document header and save file as ‘Response\_to\_Previous\_Review’. This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II, B. “Types of Applications”. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page, titled, “RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW”. If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.
- **Appendices to Project Narrative –** PDF Attachment. Title the attachment as ‘Appendices’ in the document header and save file as ‘Appendices.’ Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.
- **Documentation on Certification of Eligibility,** e.g. “Designation as an Eligible Institution,” “Notice of Award Letter,” or AR certification that the organization is eligible – PDF Attachment. Demonstration or Certification of Eligibility requires each primary applicant to demonstrate or certify that it is an eligible institution under this grants program (see Part III, A. 4.)
- **Logic Model – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as ‘Logic Model’ in the document header and save file as ‘Logic Model.’

**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. Complete **all applicable fields**.

Also, **you must attach** ‘Current and Pending Support’ information (see NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide p. 33, item 5.3, for guidelines and information format) for each senior/key person identified above. **Note: Even if no other funding is currently reported under the ‘Active’ section of this attachment, you must still list information for this grant application under the ‘Pending’ section of this attachment for each senior/key person identified above. The total time commitment for both active and pending projects cannot exceed 100 percent.**

**5. R&R Personal Data - Complete all applicable fields.** 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. If you choose to submit this optional form, please **DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**

**Field H. Indirect Costs –**

Section 718 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (Division A of Pub. L. 113-6) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution’s official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

**Field K. Budget Justification – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)**

**Regular Project awards are no more than \$110,000 each.** The minimum amount may be lowered if one or more Regular Project(s) are funded.

(a) Provide a Budget Justification that reflects each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget justification for the entire project.

The Budget Justification should follow a standard spreadsheet format (‘Budget Line Item’ = row; ‘Budget Year’ and ‘Cumulative Project’ = columns) including a detailed, itemized breakdown of each of the line item categories reported on the R&R Budget form. This Budget Justification attachment provides a more detailed, itemized breakdown for each budget line item reported on the R&R Budget form (i.e., itemize your complete list of ‘Materials and Supplies’ showing per unit costs and number of units to be purchased, etc.). Include a description for each requested budget line item found on the R&R Budget form (i.e., total budget amount reported on the R&R Budget form should equal the total budget amount reported on the Budget Justification attachment).

(b) Matching: NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

**7. Supplemental Information**

Complete all applicable fields. 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 Code -**

- For the ‘Program Code Name’ field, enter the text: “Resident Instruction Grants Program in Insular Areas.”
- For the ‘Program Code’ field, enter: “AA-Q.”

**Field 8. Conflict of Interest List - (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)**

See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template. Include this one-page attachment even if your responses to the questions are “NA.”

**C. 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 COB on **March 7, 2014 (5 p.m. Eastern Time)**. 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, please contact the Program 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.**

**D. Funding Restrictions**

The use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility is not allowed under this program. With prior approval, and in accordance with the cost principles set forth in OMB Circular No. A-21, some grant funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations, or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching or research spaces in order to carry out a funded project. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must demonstrate that the alterations, renovations, or repairs are essential to achieving the major purpose of the project. Grant funds may not be used for endowment investing.

Section 718 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (Division A of Pub. L. 113-6) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for

recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

#### **E. Other Submission Requirements**

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

For information about the **status of a submitted application**, see Part III., section 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

## **PART V-APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. General**

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

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

#### **1. Potential for Advancing Quality of Education/Significance of the Problem (30 points).**

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

#### **2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages (25 points).**

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

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

This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its teaching or research capacity. Elements include the institution's

commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic or research enhancement, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support.

#### **4. Key Personnel (15 points).**

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

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

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating inter-institutional sources and necessary outside collaborators; the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority educational or research need areas.

### **C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

During the peer evaluation process, we take extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. 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 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations (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, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to which the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring re-competition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;
- (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 Grant Programs--General Grant 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**

Annual project reports must contain data to document the outputs and outcomes and will need to be collected by the grantee. A specific format for these reports will be provided on an annual basis by NIFA. Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual summary reports to NIFA's new singular grant and formula project reporting web-based REEport 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.

Approximately 1-2 months before the annual accomplishment report/final technical report is due, program staff will send out a list of suggested output and outcome measures that PDs can report on each year. All scholarships/fellowship (e.g. NNF, MSP, AFRI Fellows) and capacity building/learning and engagement programs (SPECAs, HEC, Tribal Equity, ANNH, Insular Areas, 1890s, and HSI) will have the same suggested output and outcome measures to report annually.

**Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the terms and conditions of the award (see Part VI, B.9. for a link to view the NIFA award terms and conditions).**

**Project Directors Conference**

During the tenure of a grant, Project Directors must attend the annual joint DEG/RIIA Project Directors Meeting/Conference , if offered, in Washington, D.C., or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, future directions for education reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in your application’s travel expenses.

## **PART VII-AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact – Dr. Salei’a Afele-Faamuli; National Program Leader; Division of Community and Education; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; STOP 2251; 1400 Independence Ave, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2251; Telephone: (202) 720-0384; Fax: (202) 720-2030; E-mail: [sfaamuli@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:sfaamuli@nifa.usda.gov).

Administrative/Business Contacts –

Bruce Mertz; Team Leader, Team I, Office of Grants and Financial Management, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; STOP 2271 Washington, DC 20250-2271; telephone: (202) 401-5062; fax: (202) 401-6271; email: [bmertz@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:bmertz@nifa.usda.gov).

Sondra Watkins: Team Leader, Team II, Office of Grants and Financial Management, National Institute of Food and Agriculture; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; STOP 2271 Washington, DC 20250-2271; telephone: (202) 401-4249; fax: (202) 401-6271; email: [swatkins@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:swatkins@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 Federal Assistance Programs—General Award Administrative Provisions](#), for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

Educational Need Area means the specific area(s) of educational focus identified in the RFA and addressed by the applicant's application. Educational Need Areas are derived from statutory language authorizing the grants program and specific Educational Need Areas may be targeted for priority funding support in the RFA.

Eligible institution means an institution of higher education, as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1995 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)), that is located in an Insular Area as defined in this section, and that has a demonstrable capacity to carry out teaching and extension programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences. Land-grant colleges and universities in Insular Areas are automatically eligible institutions. The term eligible institution also applies to any branch of any institution of higher education that by itself satisfies the requirements contained in the definition of an Insular Area Institution, including:

- (1) The individual branches of a State university system or public system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree granting institutions, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of an eligible institution;

(2) Independent branch campuses of individual institutions, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of an eligible institution; or

Eligible participant means an individual who is a citizen or national of the U.S. as defined in this section.

Independent branch campus means a unit of a 2-year or 4-year institution of higher education that is geographically apart from the main campus, is permanent in nature, offers courses for credit and programs leading to an associate or bachelor's degree, and is autonomous to the extent that it has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization and its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Institution of higher education means an educational institution in any State that:

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

Insular Area Institution means an institution of higher education as defined in this section that is located in an Insular Area.

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