

# **Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program – National Integrated Water Quality Program**

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***FY 2014 Request for Applications***

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: July 3, 2014**



**U.S. Department of Agriculture**

**National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

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

**Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program – National Integrated Water Quality Program**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under **10.303**.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on July 3, 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 **Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program – National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP) RFA**.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA requests applications for the Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program – National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP) for fiscal year (FY) 2014 to address critical agricultural water quality issues in the United States.

Pursuant to H.R. 3547, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, the amount available to support this program in FY 2014 is approximately \$4,000,000.

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

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

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

Section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) (7 U.S.C. 7626), as reauthorized by Section 7306 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246), authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a competitive grants program that provides funding for integrated, multifunctional agricultural research, extension, and education activities. Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this program, the Secretary may award grants to colleges and universities [as defined by section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3103)], as amended, on a competitive basis for projects that address priorities in United States agriculture and involve integrated research, education, and extension activities, as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB).

Section 7129 of the FCEA amended section 406(b) of AREERA (7 U.S.C. 7626(b)), adding Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities (HSACUs) as eligible entities for competitive funds awarded under this authority (see Part III.B. for more information).

NIFA will administer the Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program by determining priorities in U.S. agriculture through broad-based Agency stakeholder input, in response to the USDA Research, Education and Economics (REE) Strategic Action Plan, the USDA Strategic Plan, national stakeholder discussions such as Gold et al. (2013, <http://ciwr.ucanr.edu/files/172750.pdf>) and in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB). The RFA will be developed each fiscal year based on these established priorities and approaches to solving the critical agricultural issues. While the overall approach to solving critical agricultural issues, priorities, or problems will be through an integration of research, education, and extension activities within each individual program, component RFAs, depending on the priority addressed, may request applications that are research, education, or extension only, or a combination thereof.

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

The goal of the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP) is to contribute to the improvement of the quality and conservation of our Nation's water resources through research, education, and extension activities. Projects funded through this program will work to solve water resource problems by advancing and disseminating the knowledge base available to agricultural, rural, and urbanizing communities. Funded projects should lead to science-based decision making and management practices that improve the quality and quantity of the Nation's water resources in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing watersheds.

The NIWQP directly aligns with the 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 3 – Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (SUBGOAL 3A. Water Availability: Quality and Quantity; SUBGOAL 3B. Landscape-Scale Conservation and Management) by:

1. Funding research, education and extension to expand and/or elevate existing, and encourage new, federal partnerships to promote water conservation at farm, watershed and landscape scales in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing communities, and help to adjust to the impacts of climatic variability;
2. Funding integrated activities that will foster a farm/landscape/watershed scale approach that encourages place-based agricultural water management and sustains U.S. natural resources, agriculture, and rural communities in the face of competing water demands;
3. Continue work with water conservation efforts with a focus on socio-economic research and extension to increase adoption of appropriate practices and technologies (including alternative crops) to achieve increased water conservation at the farm/landscape/watershed scale; or
4. Funding research and decision-support tools to maintain water availability and safety in a changing global environment.

The NIWQP is intended to promote advances in U.S. food, agriculture and forestry. Agriculture, however, is increasingly worldwide in scope and reach. To attain the NIWQP's goals for U.S. food and agriculture, applicants may include international partnerships or engagement in proposals, as appropriate. Applicants are asked to keep in mind that while international activities supported by the NIWQP may contribute to global food security, as described in the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Global Food Security Initiative ([www.feedthefuture.gov](http://www.feedthefuture.gov)); and may contribute, and to solutions for natural resource and sustainability issues, any international activity proposed under the NIWQP such as partnerships, exchanges, training, travel, etc., must first and foremost support the NIWQP's U.S. domestic program goals. Applicants must clearly describe and demonstrate how international activities proposed in applications submitted to the NIWQP will contribute to and support advances in U.S. agriculture.

If international activities (e.g., partnerships, exchanges, travel, etc.) are proposed, applicants must describe indicators that will be used to assess those activities. Appropriate indicators include but are not limited to those posted at the U.S. Government's Feed the Future Global Food Security Initiative web site ([www.feedthefuture.gov/progress](http://www.feedthefuture.gov/progress)). Additional guidance and suggested examples for possible international partnerships linked to this RFA are provided in the NIWQP Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) (<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/waterqualityicgp.cfm> ).

NIFA is soliciting applications for the NIWQP under the following areas:

1. Farm, Landscape and Watershed Scale Projects (Program Area Code 110.J); and
2. NIWQP Synthesis Project (Program Area Code 110.H).

**In each Program Area, projects are solicited to address specifically those topics identified in the program areas described below. It is essential that applicants read the descriptions carefully when preparing applications.**

For the duration of the award, Project Directors (PDs) funded from the NIWQP are expected to participate in an annual Project Director's meeting. Reasonable travel expenses to the NIFA NIWQP Project Director's meeting may be requested as part of the project budget. Reasonable travel expenses to NIFA may also be claimed in order to present project findings to NIFA leadership.

### **C. Program Area Description**

#### **Farm<sup>1</sup>, Landscape<sup>2</sup> and Watershed<sup>3</sup> Scale Projects (Program Area Code 110.J)**

Applications are solicited for projects that promote locally focused solutions to farm/landscape/watershed scale water resource issues in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing watersheds.

#### **All proposals submitted to this section of the RFA MUST:**

- Be conducted at a farm, landscape or watershed scale;
- Be integrated across research, education, and extension with specific objectives for each;
- Include a detailed plan and accompanying budget for evaluation of project activities and outcomes throughout the duration of the project;
- Address at least one (1) of the two (2) following priority areas:

#### **Priorities for Fiscal Year 2014 are:**

1. Key to reducing drought impacts on agriculture and drought preparedness is the recognition of threshold indicator values that tie the levels of drought severity with appropriate responses to maintain agricultural production. These indicators or triggers are used to determine drought aid and eligibility. Thus sustainable production under highly variable moisture conditions requires readily understandable, scientifically sound drought triggers at appropriate temporal and spatial scales and specific to local production systems and conditions. Applicants must develop the science behind the most appropriate drought triggers and provide an understanding of the connection between trigger levels and drought management responses or decisions. This priority seeks the development of a trigger or triggers and appropriate science based management decisions, practices and/or responses with broad applicability across the states and territories of the U.S.; or

2. This priority is to aid decision making so as to optimize the allocation of water use between productive and environmental uses. Optimal use of water would simultaneously consider the nexus of the environment, ecosystem services and the demands of associated urbanizing lands and agriculture. The goal of this priority area is to provide estimates of the economic value of water across different uses. Economic valuation depends not only on quantity but other

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<sup>1</sup> Contiguously managed by one entity

<sup>2</sup> A Mosaic of interacting ecosystems

<sup>3</sup> Combines more than one hill slope, more than one channel

competing demands such as quality, location, reliability of access, and time of availability. Applicants should identify how values of water affect water use decision-making and what are the implications for water availability from those decisions. The approaches to estimating water values should reflect the various uncertainties associated with future weather and climate conditions. Quantifying the value of water will provide valuable signals to agricultural producers, rural communities and policy makers to aid decision-making for allocating agricultural water use across consumptive or non-consumptive uses. These uses include agricultural production enterprises for domestic consumption and international export, allied economic activity throughout the watershed, in-stream flow values, recreation and aesthetic values.

Projects should focus on biophysical, social, economic, and behavioral practices needed to improve both the adoption and maintenance of practices intended to improve water availability for agriculture.

**Projects should:**

- (a) Demonstrate a substantial potential to enhance
  - The long term knowledge base;
  - Existing opportunities for leveraging; and
  - Active public and private sector participation.
- (b) Take advantage of the participatory research, education, and extension opportunities engendered by watershed restoration and continued watershed management; and/or
- (c) Focus on farms/landscapes/watersheds where the project will better inform policy makers in developing the most equitable local and state-wide strategies for water availability improvement.

**Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Project at the Farm, Landscape or Watershed scale:**

An Integrated Project for the NIWQP includes **ALL three** functions of the agricultural knowledge system (*i.e.*, research, education, and extension) within a project, focused around a problem or issue. The functions addressed in the project should be interwoven throughout the life of the project and act to complement and reinforce one another. The functions should be interdependent and necessary for the success of the project and no more than two-thirds of the project's budget may be focused on a single component. Integrated projects require stakeholder engagement at different stages of the project:

- a) The proposed **research** component of an integrated project should address knowledge gaps that are critical to the development of practices and programs to address the stated problem.
- b) The proposed **education** (teaching and teaching-related) component of an Integrated Project should develop human capital relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. An education or teaching activity is formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as

faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

Educational activities may include any of the following: conducting classroom and laboratory instruction and practicum experience; faculty research internships for curricula development; cutting-edge agricultural science and technology curriculum development; innovative teaching methodologies; instructional materials development; education delivery systems; student experiential learning (student led-research; internships; externships; clinics); student learning styles and student-centered instruction; student recruitment and retention efforts; career planning materials and counseling; pedagogy; faculty development programs; development of modules for on-the-job training; providing knowledge and skills for professionals creating policy or transferring to the agriculture workforce; faculty and student exchanges; and student study abroad and international research opportunities relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. Educational components must address one or two of the following key strategic actions:

- Train students for Associate, Baccalaureate, Master's or Doctoral degrees; and/or
- Prepare K-12 teachers and higher education faculty to understand and present food and agricultural sciences.

These projects should synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results. Note that routine use of graduate students and postdoctoral personnel to conduct research is not considered education for the purposes of this program.

c) The proposed **extension** component of an Integrated Project should conduct programs and activities that deliver science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions. Program delivery may range from community-based to national audiences and use communication methods from face-to-face to electronic or combinations thereof. Extension Projects may also include related matters such as certification programs, in-service training, client recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative instructional methodologies appropriate to informal educational programs.

Extension activities may address, but are not limited to, the following key strategic actions:

- Support informal education to increase food, agricultural, and health literacy of youth and adults;
- Promote science-based agricultural literacy by increasing understanding and use of food and agricultural science data, information, and programs;
- Build science-based capability in people to engage audiences and enable informed decision making;
- Develop new applications of instructional tools and curriculum structures that increase technical competency and ensure global competitiveness;
- Offer non-formal learning programs that increase accessibility to new audiences at the rate at which new ideas and technologies are tested and/or developed at the community-scale; and



- Develop programs that increase public knowledge and citizen engagement leading to actions that protect or enhance the nation's food supply, agricultural productivity, environmental quality, community vitality, food security and/or public health and well-being.

These projects should synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results. Please note that research-related activities such as publication of papers or speaking at scientific meetings are not considered extension for the purposes of this program. Integrated Projects aim to resolve today's problems through the application of science-based knowledge and address needs identified by stakeholders. Integrated Projects clearly identify anticipated outcomes and have a plan for evaluating and documenting the success of the project. These projects should lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group. Integrated Project applicants are encouraged to review [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated\\_background.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated_background.html) for additional information on integrated programs, including tips for writing Integrated Project applications and an example of an integrated application. Those interested in submitting Integrated Project applications are encouraged to contact the Program Contact to discuss the anticipated project parameters and outcomes to ensure the application content appropriately meets the requirements of an Integrated Project.

**Proposed Budget Request:**

Total project budgets for these two priorities may not exceed \$660,000 for up to three years.

**NIWQP Synthesis Project (Program Area Code 110.H)**

Applications are being solicited for a project that will synthesize the scientific understanding and accomplishments made through NIFA's portfolio of funded water projects over the last one and a half decades. Projects may include all themes covered by these projects, or may select a major theme or themes that emerge from this portfolio. The synthesis project should develop critical science questions that address how NIFA-funded research, education, extension, and integrated projects have increased knowledge of agricultural water issues and how well these projects helped move communities closer to solutions for local water problems. Working from this information, the project should propose possible strategies moving forward for a program that is effective in solving water issues, including identification of key priority water topics for NIFA to address in the future.

Key Questions applicants **MUST** address for this priority include:

- What are the critical findings of the NIFA Water Portfolio (since fiscal year 2000)?
- How effective have integrated (research, education, and extension) projects been at moving stakeholders (e.g., water managers) closer to solutions for water management issues in rural, agricultural, and urbanizing watersheds?
- Are there synergies that have developed among national, regional, and watershed scale projects resulting in improved leveraging of resources and accelerated movement toward solutions?
- Working from the analysis, what water quality and quantity issues should NIFA address as science priorities in the future and what are the best means to address those issues through research, education, and extension efforts?

**In addition, all proposals submitted to this priority (synthesis) MUST:**

- Review the effectiveness of NIFA- water funded projects and NIFA water programs (using targeted interviews and in-depth data collection and analysis) to create change in water resource management in rural, agricultural, and urbanizing watersheds;
- Summarize and describe lessons learned and outcomes from projects funded through the NIFA Water Portfolio;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of national, regional, and watershed scale approaches to promote solutions for agricultural water resource problems;
- Produce science-based knowledge that informs the identification of science priorities to enhance the effectiveness of future NIFA-funded research, education, and extension programs on agricultural water resources;
- Describe examples where the NIFA Water Portfolio funding mechanisms have worked synergistically or where they have failed to develop synergies;
- Meet with stakeholder groups as appropriate;
- Include a plan for delivering results of the synthesis to NIFA, the science community, and relevant stakeholder groups (e.g., water managers) and other partner organizations; and
- Include a detailed management plan including a timeline of products resulting from the synthesis.

**Proposed Budget Request-**

The total project budget may not exceed \$750,000 for up to three years for this priority.

**The NIWQP strongly encourages applicants for ALL Program Areas to consider engaging ONE or MORE of the following audiences to help meet the long-term outcomes of capacity building, youth engagement and enhancing the ability for adoption of new technologies as described in Subgoal 3A of the USDA REE Strategic Action Plan.**

**Engaging eXtension Communities of Practice:**

The NIWQP encourages projects that develop content and programs suitable for delivery through the Cooperative Extension System's eXtension Initiative. Funds may be used to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (CoP) or to form a new CoP focused on water-related subjects. Projects must align with the eXtension vision, mission, and values. A letter of acknowledgement from eXtension is required, and a letter of support may be required from one or more of the Communities of Practice. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057>.

**Engaging Youth Audiences:**

NIWQP strongly encourages projects that lead to measureable, documented changes in behaviors, actions or conditions for 4-H or other youth audiences in out-of-school time programs. Proposed programs must adhere to the principles of experiential learning and provide young people the opportunity to engage in real-life learning opportunities. Representatives from 4-H or other youth organizations should be partners in the development of the youth elements of

the proposal. For more information about the 4-H youth development program and Science, Healthy Living and Citizenship mission mandates, visit: [Programs | 4-H](#).

**Engaging Consumer Audiences:**

NIWQP encourages projects that focus on consumer needs for education and behavior change related to household, lawn, and garden practices that may adversely impact water resources in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing watersheds and related aquifers. Projects that advance consumer understanding of the ecological impact of water use in agricultural products or ecosystem services from agricultural production also are encouraged: (see [http://pdf.wri.org/esr\\_definitions\\_of\\_ecosystem\\_services.pdf](http://pdf.wri.org/esr_definitions_of_ecosystem_services.pdf))

**Support for International Activities:**

Agricultural water resources issues addressed in this program reflect the broader spectrum of international water issues. This program encourages international partnerships, linkages, and exchanges where a clear explanation is provided as to how they will contribute to U.S. national water resources priorities. However, investigators should recognize that such international partnerships, linkages, and exchanges are expected to be a small proportion of the total funding provided through this program.

**Support for Minority Serving Institutions:**

NIWQP encourages projects that increase the participation of 1890 and 1994 Land-grant institutions, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs). Participation can be through proposals submitted by faculty and staff from the 1890, 1994, HSI, or HSACU institutions or through arrangements that include faculty and students in applicable projects with other institutions.

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

Pursuant to H.R. 3547, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, the amount available to support the NIWQP in FY 2014 will be approximately \$4,000,000.

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method\\_of\\_payment.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/method_of_payment.html).

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

In FY 2014, applications may be submitted to the NIWQP as one of the following types of requests:

**(1) New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the NIWQP Program. All new applications will be reviewed 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, and additionally 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 appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

**(3) Resubmitted application.** This is an application that had previously been submitted to the NIWQP Program but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

**(4) Resubmitted renewal application.** This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. In addition, this is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to the NIWQP Program but not funded. Therefore, PDs must provide a Progress Report as required under the Project Narrative, Part IV, and must respond to the previous review panel summary as required under Response to Previous Review, Part IV. Resubmitted renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate areas

to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

### C. Project Types

The following are NIFA funding estimates for FY 2014, number of awards anticipated, maximum project budgets, and acceptable project periods for each of the program areas within the NIWQP.

<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Funding Estimate FY 2014</b>	<b>Number of Anticipated Awards FY 2014</b>	<b>Maximum Project Maximum Budget</b>	<b>Acceptable Project Period</b>
Farm/Landscape/ Watershed Scale Projects – Program Area Code 110.J	\$3,250,000	3-5	\$660,000	1-3 years
NIWQP Synthesis Project – Program Area Code 110.H	\$750,000	1	\$750,000	1-3 years

### D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

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

Note that the training referred to herein shall be either on-campus or off-campus training. The general content of the ethics training will, at a minimum, emphasize three key areas of research ethics: authorship and plagiarism, data and research integration, and reporting misconduct. Each institution will be responsible for developing its own training system, as schools will need flexibility to develop training tailored to their specific student needs. Grantees should consider the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program for RCR (<https://www.citiprogram.org/rcrpage.asp>). Typically this RCR education addresses the topics of: Data Acquisition and Management - collection, accuracy, security, access; Authorship and Publication; Peer Review; Mentor/Trainee Responsibilities; Collaboration; Conflict of Interest; Research Misconduct; Human Subject Research; and Use of Animals in Research.

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Colleges and universities including but not limited to 1862, 1890, 1994 Land-grant Institutions and Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU) (as defined in section 1404 of NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3103) are eligible to submit applications for the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP). Section 1404 of NARETPA was amended by section 7101 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246) to define Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs) (see Part III, B. and Part VIII, E. for more information), and to include research foundations maintained by eligible colleges or universities.

For the purposes of this program, the terms “college” and “university” mean an educational institution in any state which (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 a bachelor’s degree or any other higher degree is awarded; (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Applications also may be submitted by research foundations maintained by eligible colleges or universities. 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.

### **Eligibility under the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP)**

Pursuant to section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA), 7 U.S.C. 7626, Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grant Program, all four year HSIs are eligible to apply for a grant under the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP). Two year HSIs, however, may be eligible to apply only upon a determination by NIFA that the institution offers an associate or other accredited degree programs in agriculture-related fields. To seek an eligibility determination for grants under this RFA, two year HSIs may submit a one-page request to NIFA certifying that they are a Hispanic-serving institution, as defined in section 502 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1101a), and providing a justification that they do offer associate or other accredited degree programs in agriculture-related fields. Eligibility determinations are valid for FY 2014 only and must be renewed every FY. HSIs that seek a determination of eligibility may submit a request before the application due date to Dr. Irma Lawrence, NIFA National Program Leader, directly or as a PDF attachment to the SF-424-R&R application package submitted through Grants.gov.

Additional questions on HSACU eligibility can be addressed to Dr. Irma Lawrence, HSI National Program Leader, Division of Community and Education, at [ilawrence@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:ilawrence@nifa.usda.gov), (202) 720-2082, or via fax (202) 720-3398.

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

**When a grant provides a particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, the grant recipient is required to provide funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and/or in-kind contributions. See Part IV, B. - R&R Budget for further details.**

NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a grant if NIFA determines that:

- (a) Results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or
- (b) The project involves a minor commodity, the project deals with scientifically important research, and the grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.

## 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-ICGP-004527** 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 a.m. - 9 p.m. ET). Get help now!

Have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of agency you are applying to
- Specific area of concern

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

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

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

**Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III section 3. of the guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).**

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

**For any questions related to the preparation of an application,** review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable RFA. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract.** The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of the NIWQP. See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

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

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed twenty (20) pages of written text, figures and tables regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced. We have established this maximum of twenty (20) pages to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

(a) Introduction: Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed activities. Summarize the body of knowledge or past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed activity, including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. In addition, include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

- (1) Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders and to ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research, education, and extension programs;
- (2) Role of the stakeholders in problem identification, planning, and implementation and evaluation as appropriate;
- (3) Reasons for having the work performed at the proposing institution; and
- (4) Value of the proposed project activities and outcomes that extend beyond the boundaries of a single farm, landscape, watershed or state.

(b) Objectives: Include clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort in all proposals. Farm/landscape/watershed scale projects (Program Area Code 110.J) must include specific objectives for each function: research, education, and extension (as appropriate).

(c) Methods: Explicitly state the procedures or methods to be applied to the proposed effort. Include, but do not necessarily limit to:

- (1) Description of the proposed project activities in the sequence in which it is planned to carry them out;

- (2) Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project;
- (3) Kinds of results expected;
- (4) An indication of how the budget will be divided among the three integrated functions (research, education, and extension);
- (5) Means by which extension and education activities will be evaluated;
- (6) Means by which data will be analyzed and interpreted;
- (7) Details of plans to communicate results to stakeholders and the public;
- (8) Pitfalls that might be encountered; and
- (9) Limitations to proposed procedures.

(d) **Project Timetable:** Outline all important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant funding period. Include specific, measurable accomplishments for each year of NIWQP funding.

(e) **Progress Report:** For renewal applications and resubmitted renewal applications (as defined in Part II, B.), a progress report must be included within the page limitation set for the Project Narrative portion of the application.

(f) **Response to Previous Review.** This requirement applies to ALL "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." The addition of response to previous review should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

(g) In addition to the contents required above, applications proposing NIWQP Synthesis Projects (Program Area Code 110.H) must describe the roles and responsibilities of central coordinators and present a management plan for the administration of the project including facilitation of communication, planning, and annual report preparation.

#### **4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This section of the Guide includes information about the people who require a Senior/Key Person Profile, and details about the Biographical Sketch and the Current and Pending Support, including a link to a suggested template for the Current and Pending Support.

**5. R&R Personal Data** – As noted in Part V, 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award.

#### **6. R&R Budget**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

### **Matching**

If a grant provides a particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, the grant recipient is required to provide funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and/or in-kind contributions.

NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a grant if NIFA determines that:

- (a) Results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or
- (b) The project involves a minor commodity, the project deals with scientifically important research, and the grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.

If an applicant concludes that matching funds are not required as specified under Part III, B. Cost-sharing or matching, a justification should be included in the budget narrative. NIFA will consider this justification when ascertaining final matching requirements or in determining if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements.

For those grants requiring matching funds as specified under Part III, B., the budget narrative should include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Written verification means:

- (a) For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization (and the applicant organization ONLY if provided after submission of the application), which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation (the budget narrative must describe how the cash donation will be used on the project); (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period; and (6) whether the applicant can designate cash as the applicant deems necessary or the cash contribution has been designated to a particular budget item; and
- (b) For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization (and the applicant organization ONLY if provided after submission of the application), which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in kind contribution and a description of how the fair market value was determined; and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

The sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the proposal as part of the Budget Narrative. All pledge agreements must be placed in the proposal immediately following the summary of matching support.

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circular A-21 (2 CFR Part 220), Cost

Principles for Educational Institutions, for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs. **All contributions, including cash and third party in-kind, must meet the criteria included in section 23 of 7 CFR 3019, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations.”**

### **7. Supplemental Information Form**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- a. Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name and program code:

**Farm/Landscape/Watershed Scale Projects 110.J; or  
NIWQP Synthesis Project 110.H**

- b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

### **C. Submission Dates and Times**

**NO LETTER OF INTENT IS NECESSARY.**

**Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.**

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on July 3, 2014.** Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

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

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

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

## **D. Funding Restrictions**

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

Section 718 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (P.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:

Applications that are strong in all three areas (research, education and extension) and that address special emphasis areas identified in this RFA will be given priority to receive NIWQP funding.

1. Technical merit of all aspects of the application, including research, education, and extension components, as appropriate:
  - a. Adequacy and appropriateness of objectives for research, education, and extension, as appropriate;
  - b. Extent to which proposed work addresses identified stakeholder needs and water resource issues of concern;
  - c. Suitability and feasibility of methodology for conducting work;
  - d. Reasonability of time allocated for attainment of objectives;
  - e. Qualifications of key project personnel;
  - f. Institutional experience and competence in proposed area of work; and
  - g. Adequacy of available support personnel, equipment, and facilities.
2. Relevance of proposed project to NIWQP purpose (see Part I, B.):
  - a. Relationship of project objectives to national themes located at the National Water Program website ([www.usawaterquality.org](http://www.usawaterquality.org));

- b. Extent to which special emphasis areas are addressed;
- c. Transferability of project results or developed materials beyond the project scale;
- d. Evidence of necessary involvement from interdisciplinary teams;
- e. Extent to which partnerships with other institutions (Federal, State, other) are developed;
- f. Extent to which end users (both public and private) were/will be involved in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation;
- g. Probability of success of the project and potential opportunities to leverage NIFA funding;
- h. Quality of the evaluation plan for project activities and outcomes and appropriateness the budget for the evaluation plan; and
- i. Extent to which potential impact(s) can/will be documented.

3. Review criteria for specific program areas:

**Farm/Landscape/Watershed Scale Projects:**

- a. Degree of integration of research, education and extension;
- b. Inclusion of an interdisciplinary team that includes physical, chemical, biological and social scientists (as appropriate);
- c. Identification of the cause of water resource degradation;
- d. Suitability of scale;
- e. Likelihood that project will fill knowledge gaps that are critical to the development of practices and programs and improve the quality of the Nation's water resources;
- f. Identification of the appropriate audience or stakeholder group of interest (both public and private sectors) and effectiveness of plan to deliver an extension/outreach program that will lead to measurable outcome-oriented impacts (where appropriate);
- g. Appropriateness of farm/landscape/watershed-scale project plan (developed with input from key stakeholders) and likelihood that it will lead to measurable improvements in the watershed condition;
- h. Quality of monitoring and evaluation plans; and
- i. Inclusion of plans to evaluate the costs and benefits of best management practices (as needed).

**NIWQP Synthesis Project:**

- a. Extent to which ALL NIFA funded water resource projects (NRI, AFRI, SBIR, Multi-State, NIWQP) are included in the work plan;
- b. Degree to which lessons learned from existing programs are assessed and formulated into recommendations for future programs;
- c. Extent to which the project will inform research, education, and extension priorities for future programs on agricultural water resources;
- d. Effectiveness of the plan to deliver results to NIFA, stakeholders, and the scientific community;
- e. Appropriateness of the management plan;
- f. Evaluation of the effectiveness of integration in national, regional, and watershed scale projects; and



g. Evaluation of the synergies among national, regional, and watershed scale projects funded by the NIWQP.

### **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 555, 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:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by NIFA;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time NIFA intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of financial assistance approved for the award;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);
- (10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annually each grantee must submit an electronic one (1) to two (2) page technical Summary of Work to Dr. James Dobrowolski, the NIFA National Program Leader for Rangeland and Grassland Ecosystems and Agricultural Water Security (see Part VII - Agency Contacts). Once a project is complete, the grantee is required to submit a Final Technical Report electronically to the NIFA National Program Leader. The Final Technical Report should summarize all work conducted and detail outcomes, accomplishments, and outputs of funded work. This report should not exceed 15 single-spaced, typed pages. Grantees also must participate in annual conferences or symposiums, organized on behalf of the NIWQP or the equivalent, where project results and outcomes are presented and discussed.

For informational purposes, the “Federal Financial Report,” Form SF-425, consolidates into a single report the former Financial Status Report (SF-269 and SF-269A) and the Federal Cash Transactions Report (SF-272 and SF-272A). The [NIFA Agency-specific Terms and Conditions](#) include the requirement that Form SF-425 is due on an **annual basis no later than 90 days following the award’s anniversary date (i.e., one year following the month and day of which**

**the project period begins and each year thereafter up until a final report is required). A final “Federal Financial Report,” Form SF-425, is due 90 days after the expiration date of this award.**

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT**

**Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:**

**Dr. James P. Dobrowolski, Technical Point of Contact and Team Lead**

Title: National Program Leader

Unit: Division of Environmental Systems;

Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment

Location: 3254 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 401-5016

Fax: (202) 401-1706

Email: [jdobrowolski@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:jdobrowolski@nifa.usda.gov)

**Dewell Paez, Program Specialist Point of Contact**

Title: Program Specialist

Unit: Division of Environmental System;

Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment

Location: 3175 Waterfront Centre

Phone: (202) 401-4141

Fax: (202) 401-1706

Email: [dpaez@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:dpaez@nifa.usda.gov)

**Other Team Members:**

Dr. Nancy Cavallaro

Title: National Program Leader

Unit: Division of Global Climate Change;

Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment

Location: 3279 Waterfront Centre

Phone: (202) 401-5176

Fax: (202) 401-1706

Email: [ncavallaro@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:ncavallaro@nifa.usda.gov)

Dr. Ray Knighton

Title: National Program Leader

Unit: Division of Environmental Systems;

Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment

Location: 3186 Waterfront Centre

Phone: (202) 401-6417

Fax: (202) 401-1706

Email: [rknighton@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:rknighton@nifa.usda.gov)

Mary Ann Rozum  
Title: National Program Leader  
Unit: Division of Environmental Systems;  
Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment  
Location: 3214 Waterfront Centre  
Phone: (202) 401-4533  
Fax: (202) 401-1706  
Email: mrozum@nifa.usda.gov

Dr. Robbin Shoemaker  
Title: National Program Leader  
Unit: Division of Agricultural Systems  
Location: 3332 Waterfront Centre  
Full Address and Directions  
Phone: (202) 720-5468  
Fax: (202) 401-1782  
Email: rshoemaker@nifa.usda.gov

Dr. Jeanette Thurston  
Title: National Program Leader  
Unit: Division of Food Safety  
Location: 2448 Waterfront Centre  
Phone: (202) 720-7166  
Fax: (202) 401-6071  
Email: jthurston@nifa.usda.gov

**Administrative/Business Contact –**

Duane Alphs  
Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management  
Location: 2152 Waterfront Centre  
Phone: (202) 401- 4326  
Email: dalphs@nifa.usda.gov

Rochelle McCrea  
Team Leader, Team I  
Unit: Branch II  
Location: 2160 Waterfront Centre  
Phone: (202) 401-2880  
Fax: (202) 401-6271  
Email: rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov

## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Access to Review Information**

We will send copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

### **B. Use of Funds; Changes**

#### **1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

#### **2. Changes in Project Plans**

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all changes in approved goals or objectives prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests be approved for changes that are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel, prior to effecting such changes.

d. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not federal funds are involved, prior to instituting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed any applicable statutory limit or expiring appropriation limitation. The terms and conditions of award include information about no-cost extensions of the award and when ADO's prior approval is necessary.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes, if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of



amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

### **C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **D. Regulatory Information**

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

### **E. Definitions**

Please refer to [7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Financial Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions](#), for applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.