

Supplemental and Alternative Crops Competitive Grants Program

FY 2015 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 17, 2015

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

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

SUPPLEMENTAL AND ALTERNATIVE CROPS COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.200.

DATES: Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 17, 2015**. 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 via e-mail to: 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 Supplemental and Alternative Crops Competitive Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Supplemental and Alternative Crops Competitive (SACC) Grants Program for fiscal year (FY) 2015 to significantly increase crop production and/or acreage by developing and testing superior germplasm, improving methods of planting, cultivation, and harvesting, and transferring new knowledge to producers (via Extension) as soon as practicable.

Pursuant to H.R. 83, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015, NIFA anticipates the amount available for support of this program in FY 2015 will be approximately \$768,000.

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

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Pursuant to Section 1473D of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 USC 3319d(c)) reauthorized by Section 7122 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), is authorized to make competitive grants to colleges and universities, other Federal agencies, and private sector entities to conduct fundamental and applied research related to the development of new commercial products derived from natural plant material for industrial, medical, and agricultural applications.

B. Purpose and Priorities

Among supplemental and alternative crops, the United States does not produce enough canola to meet its consumption needs. Germplasm resources and knowledge gaps must be filled, including: 1) Development of varieties of canola adapted to address emerging issues of importance to U.S. agriculture; 2) Research on methods of establishment, planting, cultivation, harvesting, and processing canola; and 3) Transfer of such applied research to on-farm practice as soon as practicable.

In FY 2015, the SACC program will support the development of canola as a viable supplemental and alternative crop in the United States. Proposals submitted to this program should be comprehensive and integrated in nature. The proposals must include stakeholder input in priority setting, project development and implementation, and national coordination of research. Priority will be given to applications that provide evidence of multi-state cooperation and will use the expertise and resources of other Federal agencies, and land-grant colleges and universities.

The goal of the SACC program is to significantly increase canola production by developing and testing superior germplasm, methods of planting, cultivation, and harvesting, and then transferring new knowledge to producers as soon as possible. This requires communication of outcomes to end-users and stakeholders.

Project Directors Workshop: It is the intent of the SACC program to require successful applicants to attend at least one Project Director Workshop during the term of their project. This workshop will typically be held in Washington, D.C., in conjunction with other related grant programs or may be in conjunction with the Canola Board meeting. For the purposes of budget development, applicants are required to request funds for attendance to at least one such workshop (see Part IV, B, 6.).

C. Program Area Description

Program Name: Canola Research

Program Code: HW

Modern canola is a versatile crop with major uses in human and animal food, industrial applications, and biofuels. Canola was developed by Canadian researchers and Canada remains a major producer. Current work is directed towards adapting this useful crop to diverse growing regions in the United States. The SACC program will support projects that develop and test superior canola germplasm; improve methods of planting, cultivation, and harvesting; and promptly transfer new knowledge to producers via extension.

All proposals must provide a description and budgeted plan for the release of research results (e.g., data, germplasm, cultivars, genetic resources) that is compliant with the *Research Terms and Conditions* that govern **USDA NIFA-funded projects in the areas of plant breeding, genetics and genomics**, especially p. 5 (Genetic Resources from Outside of the U.S); pp. 6-8 (Patents and Inventions including Plant Variety Protection); and pp. 10-12 (Release of Animal or Plant Genome Sequence Data and Distribution of Animal or Plant Genomic Resources, and the Release or Distribution of Plant Germplasm). These terms and conditions can be found at: http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/policydocs/rtc/agencyspecifics/nifa_1113.pdf

The projects must include a well-defined plan for dissemination of extension activities. The SACC program 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 Canola. Any eXtension activities included in the project must align with the eXtension vision, mission, and values. A letter of acknowledgement from eXtension must also be included in the application as well as a letter of support from one or more of the Communities of Practice if appropriate. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057>.

The SACC program directly aligns with the Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan (http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_03-2014.pdf) and specifically addresses: Goal 1 – Sustainable Intensification of Agricultural Production, Subgoals 1A, 1B, and 1C (which focus on Crop Production, Health, Genetics, Genomics, Genetic Resources, and Biotechnology); Goal 2, Responding to Climate and Energy Needs, Subgoal 2A. Responding to Climate Variability; and Goal 4. Nutrition and Childhood Obesity. SACC is aligned with the NIFA Strategic plan (http://nifa.usda.gov/about/pdfs/strat_plan_2014.pdf), and specifically addresses Strategic Goal 1 (Science), by advancing our Nation's ability to achieve global food security and fight hunger (Subgoal 1.1). The SACC program aligns with the USDA Strategic Plan (<http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/sp2014/usda-strategic-plan-fy-2014-2018.pdf>), and specifically addresses; Strategic Goal 3, Help America Promote Agricultural Production and Biotechnology Exports as America Works to Increase Food Security; Objective 3.1, Ensure U.S. Agricultural Resources Contribute to Enhanced Global Security.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

Pursuant to H.R. 83, the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015, NIFA anticipates the amount available for support of this program in FY 2015 will be approximately \$768,000.

The funds will be awarded through a grant. 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 to 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://fms.treas.gov/index1.html>.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2015, you may submit applications to the SACC Program as one of the following four types of requests:

(1) New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the SACC 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) Resubmitted application. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the SACC 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 SACC 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 the areas to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

Requests for funding of an individual application may not exceed \$210,000. Pursuant to section 1472(c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 USC 3318(c)), project periods may be up to five years; however, if applicants receive funding for a five-year project period, the agency will not be able to grant any extension of time for those projects. Priority will be given to applications that provide evidence of multi-state cooperation and will use the expertise and resources of other Federal agencies and land-grant colleges and universities.

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 2 CFR Part 422, 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 documentation 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 colleges and universities (as defined in section 1404 of NARETPA, 7 U.S.C. 3103), other Federal agencies and private sector entities. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

NIFA requires matching support for this program. In accordance with section 1492 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3371), as added by section 7128 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), for grants awarded after October 1, 2014, the recipient of an award from this program must provide funds, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both, from sources other than funds provided through such grant in an amount that is at least equal to the amount awarded by NIFA. The matching funds requirement does not apply to grants awarded:

1. To a research agency of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); or
2. To an entity eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program (as defined in section 251(f)(1)(C) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994, 7 U.S.C. 6971(f)(1)(C)), including a partner (see Part VIII, E. Definitions for definition of partnership) of such an entity.

Entities eligible to receive funds under a capacity and infrastructure program and exempt from the matching funds requirement include:

- a. 1862 Land-grant Institutions, including State Agricultural Experiment Stations receiving funding under the Hatch Act of 1887;
- b. 1890 Land-grant Institutions;
- c. 1994 Land-grant Institutions;
- d. Recipients of Continuing Animal Health and Disease, Food Security, and Stewardship Research, Education, and Extension Program Funds — Capacity and Infrastructure Program (CIP);
- e. Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU);
- f. Insular Area Schools Eligible to Receive Funds from the Distance Education/Resident Instruction Grant Programs;
- g. Recipients of McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program Funds;
- h. Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) – (for exemption from the new matching requirement, these applications must include NLGCA certification. Instructions for requesting certifications are available at: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/form/form.html> , and for attaching the certification to the application in Part IV, C. 3. c. of this RFA.

- i. Recipients of funds under a program established under section 1417(b) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)), including: (1) 1890 Institution Teaching, Research, and Extension Capacity Building Grants Program; (2) Higher Education Challenge Grants Program; (3) Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program; and (4) Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Grants Program.

A proposal submitted in response to this RFA may indicate that the work will be completed by multiple entities as a collaborative partnership. All partners must have a substantial involvement in the project throughout the life of the project. If a partnership among multiple entities is proposed, the proposal must clearly identify the following:

- 1) A narrative of each entity's clearly established role in the project;
- 2) How each entity involved as a partner on the project will contribute to execution of project objectives, determination of experimental design, development of the project work plan and time table, and submission of collaborative, timely reports; and
- 3) A comprehensive project budget that reflects each entity's financial or third party in-kind contribution (see section 2 of 7 CFR 3430 or section 96 of 2 CFR part 200) to the total project budget costs.

If a proposal indicates that the work on the project will be completed by multiple entities as partners, and at least one entity is exempt from the matching requirement under #2 above, the entire project will be exempt from the matching requirement regardless of whether all entities involved are otherwise exempt. Any partner entity can serve as the lead entity on the project. All partners must be significantly involved in the project.

After proposals have been recommended for award, NIFA will determine if the submitted proposal and proposed division of work reflects substantial involvement of all entities involved. If a proposal is recommended for award to a lead entity not otherwise exempt from the matching requirement and the proposal does not reflect substantial involvement of at least one partner that is exempt under #2 above, then the matching requirement will apply. Exemption from the matching requirement for an entity not otherwise exempt is limited to the project for which it is a partner.

Waiver of Match - NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a recipient for one year with respect to a competitive grant that involves research or extension activities that are consistent with the priorities established by the National Agricultural Research, Education, Extension and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB) for the year involved. To determine whether proposed activities are consistent with the priorities of the NAREEEAB, please refer to the 2014 Research, Education and Economics Action Plan. Instructions for requesting a waiver are included in Part IV, B. of this RFA.

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 Project Director/Principal Investigator (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.** Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the registration process. Refer to item 2. below to locate the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide”.

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

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-OP-004976

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

Grants.gov iPortal (see <https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants>):

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

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. Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or that attachments are in PDF format; see Part III section 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. 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).

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
- 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 SACC Program. 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 18 pages of written text, regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced, including figures and tables. We have established this maximum (18 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

i) Introduction. A clear statement of the long-term goals and supporting objectives or research questions of the proposed project should be included. Clearly specify the high priority area of canola research and the methods for technology transfer (Extension). Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project, including the work of key project personnel. Describe the qualifications of key personnel, adequacy of facilities, including the national project management capability and capacity of the applicant institution. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed research should be included in this section.

ii) Rationale and Significance. Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed research as it relates to canola.

- Document the proposed priority-setting process and method of engaging stakeholder involvement. Include any national coordination of research.
- Describe the application in relation to potential long-range improvements in, and sustainability of, U.S. agriculture.
- Document priority-setting abilities, experience with stakeholder involvement in project development and implementation, and experience in national coordination of research.
- Describe multi-state cooperation, where applicable.
- Describe how this research will complement research being conducted by Federal agencies and land-grant colleges and universities.

- Discuss novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers.

iii) Approach. The activities proposed or problems being addressed must be clearly stated, and the approaches being applied clearly described, as they relate to canola. Specifically, this section must include:

- a description of the activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed;
- methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods;
- expected outcomes;
- means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted;
- uses for results or products; and
- a description of Extension activities as related to the proposal.

iv) Response to Previous Review. This is only required for applications previously submitted to the SACC Program, but not funded. Project directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page, title as “Response to Previous Review” and include as the first page of the Project Narrative. Please include previous proposal number, if possible. The one-page “Response to Previous Review” does not count against the 18-page limit of the Project Narrative.

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 you conclude that matching funds are not required as specified under Part III, B. Cost-Sharing or Matching, you must include a justification in the Budget Narrative. We 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 grants that require 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), must include: (1) The donor's name, address, and telephone number; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation (the budget narrative must describe how the cash donation will be used); (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.
- (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), must include: (1) The donor's name, address, and telephone number; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project; (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. .

Summarize on a separate page the sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant institution and place that information in the proposal as part of the Budget Narrative. You must place all pledge agreements in the proposal immediately following the summary of matching support.

Establish the value of applicant contributions in accordance with applicable cost principles. 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."**

Project Director Workshop

It is the intent of the SACC program to require successful applicants or a designee to attend at least one project director workshop during the term of their project. For the purposes of budget development, applicants are required to request funds for travel for attending at least one such workshop. The request for these funds should be clearly indicated in the budget narrative section of the application.

7. Supplemental Information Form

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

- a. **Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “**Canola Research**”) and the program code (i.e., enter “**HW**”). Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application.
- 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

Prior to electronic submission of the application via Grants.gov, it is strongly recommended that an administrative review be conducted to ensure that an application complies with all application preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review.

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 p.m. Eastern Time on April 17, 2015.** 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

Section 716 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (P.L. 113-76) 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. Funds awarded under this program 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

The statutory time limitation for awards issued under this authority is five years. No award may exceed this statutory time limitation. Any costs being charged to this award must be incurred within the project period. Any such limitation also applies to the subcontracts made under awards subject to a funding period limitation.

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 technical review panel will evaluate applications that meet the administrative 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 of each application to producers and the general public.

When each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, SACC Program staff will recommend that the project: (a) be approved for support from currently available funds or (b) be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

SACC Program reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

General criteria to be used to award applications: Value 50%

- Documented priority setting abilities, experience with stakeholder involvement in project development and implementation, and experience in national coordination of research.
- Description of the stakeholder processes by which priorities of the proposal were identified.
- Documented experience with collaborative, comprehensive research on canola.
- Demonstrated capability to implement a technology transfer (Extension) component.

Specific criteria to be used to award applications: Value 50%

1. Scientific Merit of the Application for Research: Value 25%

- Novelty, innovation, uniqueness, and originality.
- Documented program to transfer knowledge gained from this research.
- Clarity and delineation of objectives.
- Adequacy of the description of the undertaking and suitability and feasibility of methodology.
- Probability of success of project.
- Degree of comprehensiveness and integration.
- Likelihood that the proposed project will fill knowledge gaps.

2. Qualifications of Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities, and Project Management Capability: Value 25%

- Qualifications of individual or team to conduct the proposed project, including performance record.
- Qualifications of individual or team to conduct the technology transfer (Extension) component of proposed project, including performance record in this field and in this area.
- Description of how this research will complement research being conducted by Federal agencies and land-grant colleges and universities.

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).

E. Application Disposition

An application may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the application; however, withdrawn applications normally will not be returned. One copy of each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by SACC Program for a period of three years.

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, 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 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 and the Federal Agency Identification Number assigned by NIFA;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time NIFA intends to support the project without requiring additional competition 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 the ones listed below.

2 CFR Part 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

2 CFR Part 400 —USDA implementation of 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

2 CFR Part 415 – USDA General Program Administrative Regulations.

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.

2 CFR Part 180 and Part 417--OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-Wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and USDA Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension.

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

2 CFR Part 416—USDA General Program Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

2 CFR Part 418—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.

2 CFR Part 421—USDA Implementation of Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).

2 CFR Part 422—Research Institutions Conducting USDA-Funded Extramural Research; Research Misconduct.

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).

44 U.S.C. 3541 et seq. (Pub. L. 107-347) - Federal Information System Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA), to improve computer and network security within the Federal Government. Applies to awardees if it will collect, store, process, transmit, or use information on behalf of NIFA.

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are to use REEport, NIFA's electronic, web-based inventory system to submit an initial project initiation which documents expected products and outcomes of the project. Additionally, annual progress report documenting realized project outcomes must be submitted to the electronic system. The web-based system facilitates an electronic workflow between grantees and NIFA for project accomplishments to be easily searchable and allows for public access to information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements, including those specific to the annual and final technical reports, are included in the award terms and conditions.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Pushpa Kathir

Title: Program Specialist

Unit: Plant Production

Location: 3157 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 401-5015

Fax: (202) 401- 4888

E-mail: pkathir@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contacts –

Bruce Mertz

Title: Team Leader, Branch I

Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management

Location: 2174 Waterfront Centre

Phone: (202) 401-5062

Fax: 202-401-2880

Email: bmertz@nifa.usda.gov

Sondra Watkins

Title: Team Leader, Branch II

Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management

Location: 2170 Waterfront Centre

Phone: (202) 401-4249

Fax: (202) 401-6271

Email: 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 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 2 CFR part 415, subpart C, 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.

Partnership requires that all partners have a substantial involvement in the project throughout the life of the project. If a partnership between multiple entities is proposed, the proposal should clearly identify the following:

- 1) A narrative of each entity's clearly established role in the project;
- 2) How each entity involved as a partner on the project will contribute to execution of project objectives, determination of experimental design, development of the project work plan and time table, and submission of collaborative, timely reports; and
- 3) A comprehensive project budget that reflects each entity's financial or in-kind contribution to the total project budget costs.