

Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program (TCRGP)

MODIFICATION: On page 2 and 6 (1/8/2016). Updated Appropriation Language.

FY 2016 Request for Applications (RFA)

Application Due Date: February 25, 2016 by 5:00 pm Eastern Time

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): 10.227

Program Name Code: TCRGP

Program Code: ZY

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-TCRGP-005536

Funding Amount: Approximately \$1.7 Million

Note: Eligibility is restricted to 1994 Land-Grant Institutions as named in the 2014 Farm Bill. Award range is \$65,000 to \$220,000.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

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

TRIBAL COLLEGES RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.227.

DATES: Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 25, 2016**. 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. Comments will be considered for the next TCRGP RFA, if applicable, and will be used 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 Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program (TCRGP) for fiscal year (FY) 2016 to conduct agricultural research that addresses priority concerns of tribal, regional or national significance.

The amount anticipated to be available for support of this program in FY 2016 is approximately \$1.7 million.

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

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Legislative authority for the Tribal College Research Grant Program is contained in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601 note) which amends the Equity in Educational Land Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note). In accordance with the statutory authority, subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary of Agriculture may award competitive grants to 1994 Land Grant Institutions (hereinafter referred to as 1994 Institutions) to conduct agricultural research that addresses high priority concerns of tribal, national or multi-state significance. Section 7404 of the Agricultural Act of 2014, P.L. 113-79, added additional eligible partners to the authorization for the TCRGP. Please see Part III A., Eligible Applicants, for a description of these changes.

B. Purpose and Priorities

NIFA is soliciting applications for the Tribal College Research Grant Program. The primary intent of the TCRGP grant opportunity is to help develop 1994 applied research capacity and to provide a research experience for American Indian students to better prepare them for higher education opportunities. TCRGP specifically addresses the goals of the USDA Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Action Plan under Goal 6 – Education and Science Literacy, by providing educational and training opportunities to tribal college students. Projects may address REE goals 1-7, depending on the research focus. Please refer to the Research, Education, and Economic Action Plan (Revised 2014) USDA Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan

http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_03-2014.pdf. Furthermore, this grant program specifically addresses the NIFA strategic Goal 1 (Science), by ensuring the development of human capital, communities, and a diverse workforce through research, education, extension and engagement programs in food and agricultural sciences to support a sustainable agriculture system (Sub-goal 1.7)

(http://nifa.usda.gov/about/pdfs/strat_plan_2014.pdf) NIFA is soliciting applications which support the purpose of the TCRGP to:

- Enhance the institutional infrastructure and faculty expertise in planning and carrying out appropriate applied research projects that address concerns and needs of tribal and reservation communities;
- Forge better institutional and faculty collaborations with other Land Grant Institutions as well as with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and other research institutions of higher learning;
- Address the food, agricultural, natural resources, and human sciences concerns of reservation communities through scientific inquiry and discovery; and
- Give American Indian students better prospects for employment and educational achievement by engaging them in laboratory and field research in the food, agricultural and natural resource sciences.

Special Notice: Leadership Skills Development:

The development of leadership skills, knowledge, and abilities are necessary for preparing students for agricultural and related careers in private sector, government and academia. Educational applications must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to ensure that students are equipped with both technical and leadership abilities upon graduation.

Specific activities may include:

- Developing practical applications to increase understanding of leadership roles, including critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills, ethics and professionalism, and working in teams,
- Connecting the academic classroom experience with daily leadership roles and organizational activities,
- Providing opportunities for research mentoring and shadowing, or
- Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for NIFA support of this program in FY 2016 is approximately \$1.7 million. 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 the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see

<http://fms.treas.gov/index1.html>.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2016, you may submit applications to TCRGP as one of the following types of requests:

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

Resubmitted application. This is an application that has previously been submitted to TCRGP 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 due date, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the appropriate research option to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

New Discovery Research Option:

New Discovery projects should demonstrate research complexity that could lead to an enhancement in scientific knowledge, and problem-solving of relevant issues. Applicants are expected to inherently possess robust research capacity and faculty expertise to conduct scientific inquiry. Proposed projects are expected to meet the standards of scientific rigor recognized by the greater research community. Research undertakings should be at a level where results may help solve problems of a regional, or national level. Data and results should be of a quality appropriate for submission to a peer-reviewed journal. New Discovery projects are also expected to offer meaningful research involvement for 1994 students.

Project periods may not exceed three years (36 months). The maximum amount for a New Discovery project with minimal student involvement is \$200,000 per project period (not per year).

The maximum amount for a New Discovery project with significant student involvement (five or more students) is \$220,000 per project period (not per year).

Capacity-Building Research Option:

Capacity-Building projects emphasizes the development of existing research capacity through projects that focus on enhancing research infrastructure, instrumentation, and faculty expertise. Projects should embrace scientific research methodology with an aim to addressing problems within tribal, reservation, or American Indian communities that can lead to best practices for use with 1994 Land Grant Institution Extension or Education activities.

Project periods may not exceed three years (36 months). The maximum amount for a Capacity Building Research project is \$85,000 per project period (not per year).

Student Research Experience Option:

Student Research Experience projects emphasizes the development of student researchers. Projects may consist of individual or group student research investigations. The focus should be on providing students with a rich understanding and appreciation of planning and implementing research projects that utilize scientific methodology and approach some level of applied problem-solving. Projects should include experiential learning activities that stimulates students interest in the food, agricultural and natural resources sciences, and prepares them to achieve success at four-year and graduate higher education institutions.

Project periods may not exceed three years (36 months). The maximum amount for a Student Research Experience project is \$65,000 per project period (not per year).

Note on Student Participation:

Projects in all three research options must contain a student component. NIFA will only make an award if this requirement is clearly demonstrated in the application. Projects should include significant 1994 student participation appropriate to the level of proposed research.

Partnership Requirement:

With the passage of the 2014 Farm Bill, all funded TCRGP projects must contain a collaborative agreement with at least one of the following:

- The Agricultural Research Service (ARS) of the Department of Agriculture
- At least one 1862 or 1890 land-grant college or university (not another 1994 Institution)
- At least one Non-Land-Grant College of Agriculture (NLGCA) (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977) (see requirements and list of certified NLGCA at http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/pdfs/nlgca_colleges.pdf)

- At least one forestry school funded under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program. The partner must be the McIntire-Stennis funded department. It cannot be with another entity at the institution.

D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

See <http://nifa.usda.gov/responsible-and-ethical-conduct-research> for further information.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by Tribal Colleges or Universities designated as 1994 Institutions under the Equity Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note, as amended). Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the implementation 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.

The 34 qualifying institutions are as follows:

Aaniiih Nakoda College	Bay Mills Community College
Blackfeet Community College	Cankdeska Cikana Community College
Chief Dull Knife College	College of Menominee Nation
College of the Muscogee Nation	Dine' College
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College	Fort Peck Community College
Haskell Indian Nations University	Ilisagvik College
Institute of American Indian Arts	Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College
Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College	Leech Lake Tribal College
Little Big Horn College	Little Priest Tribal College
Navajo Technical University	Nebraska Indian Community College
Nueta, Hidatsa and Sahnish College	Northwest Indian College
Oglala Lakota College	Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College
Salish Kootenai College	Sinte Gleska University
Sisseton Wahpeton College	Sitting Bull College
Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute	Stone Child College
Tohono O'odham Community College	Turtle Mountain Community College
United Tribes Technical College	White Earth Tribal and Community College

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

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

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov 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) 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-TCRGP-005536

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

The Project Summary:

- ❖ Should not exceed one typed page;
- ❖ Must state the type of application (new or resubmission);
- ❖ Must state the project research option (New Discovery Research, Capacity Building Research or Student Research Experience);
- ❖ Must indicate the science subject areas to be addressed;
- ❖ Must include the names and affiliated organizations of all PDs, Co-PDs and other collaborators, including visiting scholars; and
- ❖ Must include the title of the project – should be descriptive of the work to be undertaken

Expected Outcomes – PDF Attachment to ‘Field 12’

Complete this table with the heading “Expected Outcomes” and name the file ExpectedOutcomes.pdf” Please use a format, similar to what is provided below, to submit expected impacts.

Primary project need or strategy area/goal used (check all that apply):	
Production Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nutrition and Obesity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural Resources Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adaptation to Climate Change	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community and Economic Development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please name)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Total anticipated number of students to be involved in the research	TOTAL NUMBER OF Students:
A) Sub-total: Students doing research internships	TOTAL:

B) Sub-total: Students from the research collaborating institutions involved	TOTAL:

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 12 pages of written text including tables & figures, regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced. Applicants must ensure that page limit is not exceeded after converting to PDF format. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

Introduction: Include the following statement (s) of inquiry:

- Overall research objective of the institution consistent with a strategic plan or business plan of the 1994 or the department or college within which research is to be conducted.
- Hypothesis to be tested or Question or Discovery statement to be addressed.
- **Response to Previous Review (for resubmissions only)** – briefly discuss how the new proposal addresses previous panel comments.

In addition, summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities that relate to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. In addition, this section should include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

- Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders and to ongoing tribal, State, and Federal food and agricultural research, education and extension programs;
- The role of stakeholders in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation as appropriate; and
- The enhancement this funded project will add to the research capacity of the institution.

Methods: Explicitly state the procedures or methodology that will be used in the proposed project. This section should include but not necessarily be limited to, descriptions of:

- Research expertise and background of the PD and Co-PDs and relevance to project;
- Proposed project activities, listed sequentially in a time-line format;
- Research methodology that includes the experimental design techniques;
- Instrumentation to be used including evidence that measurements and data collection protocols will be taught and followed;
- Indicate how data will be analyzed or interpreted;

- Role to be played by the collaborating institution;
- Plans to communicate results to stakeholders, communities and the public;
- Discussion of possible limitations of the proposed procedures, obstacles or unintended issues and how they will be addressed;
- Evaluation plan that includes possible evaluators and their experience with tribal research evaluations; and
- For Student Research Experience Option only - include a separate paragraph that contains a “student research plan” outlining the expected benefit to the students, how many to be recruited, specific training to be undertaken and any mentoring roles of the 1994 or collaborating faculty staff.

Project Timetable: The proposal should outline all important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project.

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. NOTE:

- Applicants must submit budget for each year of the grant award (preferably three years) including a cumulative budget.
- Applicants must include separate budget pages for sub-awards to collaborating institutions for each year of the award including a cumulative budget.
- **The 1994 Land Grant must retain at least 70 percent of the total award amount**
- Use this on-line tutorial to answer budget questions: <http://nifa-connect.nifa.usda.gov/budget/>
- Budget amounts must follow the amounts indicated in the type of Research Option:
 - New Discovery Research - \$200,000, or \$220,000 for enhanced student participation
 - Capacity Building Research - \$85,000
 - Student Research Experience - \$65,000

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 “TCRGP”) and the program code (i.e., enter “ZY”). **MUST USE UPPER CASE.**
- 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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on February 25, 2016**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding except in the case of documented extenuating circumstances where the institution was unable to submit.

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 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.

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.

Grants.gov Help
1-800-518-4726
24/7 except on federal holidays
support@grants.gov
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>

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 institution Authorized Representative (AR) has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within **one** week 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. The Grants.gov application tracker can alert you to matters that may cause your application not reach NIFA. Using the tracker allows you to identify and address issues with your

Grants.gov application tracker
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/track-my-application.html>

application.

D. Funding Restrictions

In addition, the following costs, although not all-inclusive, are not permitted:

- Entertainment;
- Meals (except when provided to maintain the continuity of a meeting);
- Tickets to shows or sporting events;
- Alcoholic beverages;
- Costs associated with banquets and award ceremonies; and
- Incentives.

Indirect costs for 1994 Land Grants:

“Section 715 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided (or 42.857 percent of total direct costs) under each award. Similar language may be included in the FY 2016 appropriation, therefore, when preparing budgets, you should limit your request for the recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of your institution’s official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded. See Part V section 7.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further indirect cost information.”

If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be written in this space.”

“The funding period will commence on the effective date cited in the award instrument. Any such limitation also applies to subcontracts made under awards subject to a funding period limitation.”

Special Notice Regarding Indirect Costs for Grantees and Subcontractors

All 1994 Institutions must have a valid Indirect Costs (IDC) rate agreement to receive indirect costs. Applicants may obtain an IDC rate agreement from the U.S. Department Health and Human Service. In most cases, first time applicants are encouraged to check with their business office as their institution typically has an IDC rate agreement already in place.

E. Other Submission Requirements

- A 'Cooperative Agreement' document between the 1994 Land Grant and a required research collaborator must be included as part of the submitted application package. The agreement must be signed by the Authorized Representative (AR) of both institutions. The Cooperative Agreement should:
 - Indicate the amount of funds, if any, to be sub-awarded to the collaborator;
 - Indicate that the 1994 will expend funds upon invoice from the collaborator;
 - Include a detailed scope of work for the collaborator that indicates the individuals to be involved, their role(s), and any deliverables by the collaborator; and
 - Indicate the role of the 1994 relative to the collaborator.
- A signed letter of support by a tribal representative indicating that the tribe understands the nature of any research to be conducted on tribal lands and concurs with this project's activities and locations of study.
- An IRB or an IRB exemption for human subject studies, if required.
- An animal welfare certification, if required (IACUC).
- An Expected Impact Table found in the 'Summary' portion of this RFA.
- Standard new application documentation including Conflicts of Interest, Project Summaries, Felony & Tax Delinquent Status, Current & Pending Support, and Organizational Information (NIFA-666). This applies to each Project Director (PD) and co-PD. Forms are available at <http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/application-support-templates>. Additionally, each PD or co-PD should submit a current CV or resume.

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

NIFA will evaluate each application in a 2-part process. First, applications are screened to ensure all administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA are included. Second, a technical peer review panel will evaluate and rank all applications that meet the administrative requirements.

Peer Reviewers are selected 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) Additional 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;
- (c) 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; and
- (d) Reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each proposed project to Indian Country, tribal producers and tribal communities.

When each peer review panel has completed its deliberations and agreed on a ranking of the applications, the TCRGP program staff will recommend that the project is:

- (a) Approved for support from currently available funds with no revisions,
- (b) Approved for support from currently available funds with minor or major revisions, or
- (c) Not recommended for funding due to low priority of the proposed project.

The TCRGP program staff reserves the right to negotiate with the submitting 1994 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

NIFA and the peer review panel will use the evaluation criteria below in the application review:

New Discovery & Capacity Building Options Review Point Scale:

Criteria	Points
Research Plan and Statement of Inquiry	10
Research Project Design	30
Research Project Personnel, Management and Facilities	15
Research Capacity Enhancement	10

Project Evaluation Plan	15
Appropriateness of Budget to the Proposed Activities	15
Quality of Application and Clarity of Writing	5
TOTAL	100

1. Research Plan and Statement of Inquiry:

- Is a research plan presented and is it appropriate to the level of research proposed?
- Is the plan integrated into a Land-Grant Mission or to the comparative advantage of the institution?
- Is there a hypothesis or statement of inquiry to be tested?
- Is the hypothesis or statement appropriate to the level of research proposed?

2. Research Project Design:

- Is there evidence of appropriate scientific rigor?
- Is there a clear and complete timeline?
- Is the experimental design adequately thought out and explained?
- Is the project adequately researched with appropriate references and citations?
- Are the data collection protocols, method of analysis adequately explained?
- Does the application indicate that instrumentation, protocols, and training will be employed?
- Is there a plan to communicate results to stakeholders, the Tribe, and the general public?
- Does the application anticipate any difficulties or barriers and provide plans to address them?
- If conducted as presented, does the project appear to have a likelihood of being completed in a timely fashion and resulting in useful information?
- Does the proposed project have a likelihood of leading to increased research capacity (human and institutional) at the home institution?

3. Research Project Personnel, Management and Facilities:

- Is there evidence of a qualifying research collaborator?
- Is there adequate documentation of partnership as required in the RFA?
- Does the project indicate the consultation with the Tribal or Reservation government and does it include a signed letter of support?

4. Research Capacity Enhancement:

- Is there a statement on probability of capacity enhancement at the 1994 institution?
- Is it reasonable and likely to be achieved?

5. Project Evaluation Plan:

- Is there an evaluation plan and is it in alignment with the proposed budget?
- Is the evaluation methodology appropriate and data-based?
- Are impacts anticipated and quantitative metrics indicated?

6. Appropriateness of Budget to the Proposed Activities:

- Does the proposed budget support the planned activities?
- Is the budget complete and free of errors?
- Are budget line-items consistent with a research project?

7. Quality of Application and Clarity of Writing:

- Is the application well written, organized, and free of errors?
- Are the required forms included, signed, and complete?

Student Research Experience Option - Review Point Scale:

Criteria	Points
Research Plan and Statement of Inquiry	10
Research Project Design	15
Research Project Personnel, Management and Facilities	20
Research Capacity Enhancement	10
Project Evaluation Plan	15
Appropriateness of Budget to the Proposed Activities	15
Quality of Application and Clarity of Writing	5
Student Plan	10
TOTAL	100

1. Research Plan and Statement of Inquiry:

- Is a research plan presented and is it appropriate to the level of research proposed?
- Is the plan integrated into a Land-Grant Mission or the comparative advantage of the institution?
- Will students be introduced to the concepts of testing a hypothesis or statement of inquiry?
- Will students be introduced to the concept of ethics and research?
- Will students be introduced to the relevance of culturally appropriate research and evaluation?

2. Research Project Design:

- Is there evidence of appropriate scientific rigor for undergraduate research?
- Is there a clear and complete timeline?
- Does the individual student project show evidence of an experimental design?
- Will the research be conducted accordingly with the project's objectives and include the appropriate references and citations?
- Are the data collection protocols and method of analysis adequately explained?
- Does the application indicate that instrumentation, protocols, and training will be employed?

- Is there a plan to have students communicate their projects and results?

3. Research Project Personnel and Management:

- Is there evidence of a qualifying partnership?
- Is there adequate documentation of partnership as required in the RFA?

4. Research Capacity Enhancement:

- Is there a statement on the probability of capacity enhancement at the 1994 institution?
- Is it reasonable and likely to be achieved?

5. Project Evaluation:

- Is there an evaluation plan and is it in alignment with the proposed budget?
- Is the evaluation methodology appropriate and data-based?
- Are impacts anticipated and quantitative metrics indicated?

6. Appropriate Budget:

- Does the proposed budget support the planned activities?
- Is the budget complete, clear, and free of errors?
- Are there line items that appear to be not applicable in conducting the proposed research?

7. Quality of Application:

- Is the application well written, organized, and free of errors?
- Are the required forms included, signed, and complete?

8. Student Plan:

- Does the application contain a plan to raise the level of research experience of students?
- Does the plan appear to be reasonable?
- Is there evidence that applicant (PD) has researched undergraduate research best practices?
- Is there evidence that students can be recruited and will participate?

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. See http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/competitive_peer_review.html for further information about conflicts of interest and confidentiality as related to the peer review process.

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 pre-award 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. Each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by TCRGP 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 re-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 may include, but are not limited to, the ones listed on the NIFA website at <http://nifa.usda.gov/federal-regulations>.

NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide—a compendium of basic NIFA policies and procedures that apply to all NIFA awards, unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary is available at <http://nifa.usda.gov/policy-guide>.

Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

Please refer to Part II, C. for more information.

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> for information about NIFA award terms). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those, if any, will be identified in the award.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Tim Grosser

Title: National Program Leader

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: 202-690-0402

Email: tgrosser@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contact –

Susan Bowman

Title: Branch Chief

Unit: Awards Management Division

Location: 2240 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 720 - 2082

Fax: (202) 401-6271

Email: sbowman@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 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.

F. Materials Available on the Internet

<http://nifa.usda.gov/program/nifa-tribal-programs>