

Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program

Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 15, 2017

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

SMITH-LEVER SPECIAL NEEDS COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.500.

DATES: Applications must be received by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on May 15, 2017**. 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 six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: We, at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), seek your comments about this RFA. We will consider your comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we will 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 your written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this notice via email to Policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This email address is only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and *not* for requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program (SLSNCGP) for fiscal year (FY) 2017 to decrease the impact of disasters through cooperative extension programming. The anticipated amount available for NIFA to support these grants in FY 2017 is approximately \$462,000. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2017. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

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

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 3(b) & (c) of the Smith-Lever Act, Pub. L. No. 63-95 (7 U.S.C. 343) allows the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), to conduct competitive grant programs to State Extension Services at 1862 Land-Grant Institutions to support innovative, education-based approaches to addressing emergency preparedness and specific responses related to natural and human-made disasters.

B. Purpose and Priorities

There has been an increase in the number and severity of disaster type critical incidents, including but not limited to, earthquakes, tornadoes, wildfires, floods, hurricanes, drought, contagious diseases, invasive mosquito-borne diseases (i.e. Zika virus), and terrorist events. The purpose of the SLSNCGP is to support innovative, education-based approaches to addressing emergency preparedness and specific responses related to natural and human-made disasters. The SLSNCGP supports quality of life in communities across the United States by addressing disaster preparedness, response, and recovery in the context of food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. The SLSNCGP provides information and tools to the USDA, stakeholders, and collaborators to improve decision-making in handling disasters.

The Cooperative Extension Service (CES) has a major role in reducing the impact of disasters through outreach education, (i.e. cooperative extension programming). Funds will support innovative extension education initiatives that address risks, hazards and disasters. The SLSNCGP sponsors targeted projects that enable CES to assist in preparing for, providing an educational response to, and recovering from disasters. Some types of hazards and disaster-related events funded in previous years include uncertainties caused by losses of economic infrastructure, severe weather or other natural disasters, security breaches, human disease, or high consequence animal diseases and plant pests. The SLSNCGP increases awareness and capacity building of urban/rural communities' response to disasters by increasing individual, family, farms as well as, small business and community disaster preparedness through extension education, as well as through collaborations with other agencies and volunteer organizations.

The SLSNCGP aligns with the following:

- [USDA Strategic Plan for FY 2014-2018](#), Goal 1
- [2014 USDA Research, Education, and Economics \(REE\) Action Plan](#) Goal 2
- [NIFA Strategic Plan for 2014-2018](#), Goal 1 and
- NIFA's Family & Consumer Sciences Portfolio priorities in the areas of family well-being and community vitality.

NIFA is soliciting applications for SLSNCGP national, regional, multi-state, or state projects under the following areas:

- Education and technical assistance through inter-disciplinary disaster training programs and demonstration projects for problem solving, especially those which build upon already existing strengths, contribute to or expand the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) and/or eXtension educational materials related to disaster preparation, mitigation, response and recovery;
- Collaboration with federal, state and local agencies and other disaster relief organizations, which might include non-government organizations, to support education and service activities that enhance recovery of impacted rural communities, schools, businesses and agriculture-based activities;
- Long-range family, farm, and community planning projects that enhance implementation of programs that serve public needs in preparation for, during, and after disasters within impacted states and across impacted regions;
- Communication delivery of key information that meets end-users' needs in a timely fashion with consideration of potentially limited communication channels due to disaster situations;
- Education assistance to improve preparedness and response actions for the Zika virus in the United States by providing public education and extension outreach on communication and vector control and management, in collaboration with federal, state, and local agencies. Initiatives should use a risk-based, phased response approach for communication and vector control and management as described by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/public-health-partners/risk-based-prep.html> and <http://www.cdc.gov/zap/actionplan-template.html>. The focus of this RFA is not to request creation of new content, but to deliver effective public education and outreach messaging about Zika virus based on already existing information from the CDC.

C. Program Area Description

Program Area Code: *MB* (program code name is *ESNP Special Needs*)

Application Deadline: May 15, 2017 (5:00 p.m. ET)

Grant Type: Standard

Project Types: Extension Standard and Extension Planning

Program Area Contact: Beverly Samuel (202) 720-6059 or bsamuel@nifa.usda.gov

To be considered for funding, projects must support extension activities through at least one (1) of the following strategies:

1. Enhance national, regional, multi-state or state networks that add value to official information by delivering the information:
 - In a format appropriate to the situation and intended audience;
 - In a timely fashion; and

- Research-based.
2. Provide national, regional, multi-state, or state education and communications leadership to develop or add value to current educational materials regarding disaster issues, utilizing the proper distribution mix of the EDEN website, eXtension, related social media, and/or other outlets. This strategy could include materials targeted to underserved audiences (such as people who speak English as a second language, and individuals with low literacy).
 3. Improve national, regional, multi-state, or state stakeholder partnerships (which might include the public, governments at all levels, non-profit and/or volunteer organizations, academia, and/or industry) to decrease the impact of disasters through extension education.
 4. Deliver extension education to affected citizens and communities, in one or more states, to decrease the impact of a major declared disaster that occurred no more than 12 months prior to the application due date of this RFA.

NIFA intends to fund SLSNCGP projects to implement applied scientific programs that serve public needs in preparation for, during, and after disaster. Though national, regional, and/or multi-state efforts are a priority for categories 1-3, highly replicable single-state projects may be considered if they have a strong plan for transferring successful methods to other states. The SLSNCP will also fund the development of educational programs and demonstration activities focusing on disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. Successful projects in the past have helped extension educators, who normally do not have a disaster extension focus, to have a greater impact in this area. The most competitive proposals will provide educational and communication leadership across an optimized mix of these and other resources.

We welcome proposals that add new or build upon existing web-based educational materials on the EDEN website, <http://www.eden.lsu.edu>. We recommend that applicants contact the EDEN executive committee via the EDEN website during proposal formulation to solicit guidance on how best to interface with EDEN on the SLSNCP, and to secure a letter of support.

eXtension

NIFA encourages (but does not require) projects that develop content and programs suitable for delivery through eXtension (<https://extension.org/>). You may use funds to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (CoP)/Learning Networks (LN), or to form a new Learning Network(s) focused on disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery (pre-disaster, during and post disaster). Projects must align with the eXtension vision, mission, and values. You must have a letter of acknowledgement from eXtension; you may also need a letter of support from one or more of the Communities of Practice. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057>.

Behavioral and Social Sciences

Behavioral education and promotion of disaster preparedness is important in planning for resiliency. Incorporation of social and behavioral sciences is key for addressing many of the challenges facing communities, such as helping people plan for and mitigate disasters. Effective non-formal education programs and services in social and behavioral sciences promote and enhance disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery and in the long run increases community resiliency. Such initiatives can provide timely and adequate information to communities that lead to behavior change. The proposed Extension outreach program should include activities that integrate social and behavioral sciences in the program design and implementation. Extension educators and other relevant partners, supported by innovative communication platforms, can employ these programs and services to sustain disaster education activities that successfully protect and enhance vitality and resiliency of communities. SLSNCGP provides funding for such initiatives.

Extension outreach disaster education projects should include programs and activities that increase community leadership to address resiliency. Projects should promote increases in Extension professionals' capacity to engage in disaster education in communities, which includes using skills to collaborate, connect, communicate, and build community capacity in the context of disaster education.

NIFA's programs are intended to promote advances in U.S. food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. If appropriate, applicants to SLSNCGP may include international partnerships, or engagement in proposals. In doing so, applicants are to keep in mind that any international activity included in a proposal (e.g., partnerships, exchanges, training, and/or travel) must first and foremost support domestic SLSNCGP goals. In addition, applicants must clearly describe and demonstrate how international activities proposed in the application will contribute to and support the objectives and desired outcomes within the United States of America, while also benefiting the international partner(s).

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for NIFA support of this program in FY 2017 is approximately \$462,000. The funds will be awarded through a grant. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2017. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

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

The Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA. For more information see https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsservices/gov/pmt/asap/asap_home.htm.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2017, you may submit applications to the SLSNCGP as one of the following grant types of requests:

New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the SLSNCGP. All new applications must be submitted and received by the relevant due date and will undergo a competitive review process using the screening for administrative requirements and panel review based on evaluation criteria and selection process described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

Resubmitted application. This is an application that has previously been submitted to the SLSNCGP 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 applications, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

Standard

In FY 2016, projects ranged from appropriately \$12,000 to \$180,000 and have historically ranged from \$30,000 to \$120,000. However, the amount requested will vary depending on the geographic scope of the project (national, regional, multi-state, or state) and the urgency of the need(s) being addressed. Typical project periods range from one (1) to three (3) years. Applications are encouraged that specifically address one or more of the following five (5) key target areas:

1. Education and technical assistance;
2. Collaboration;

3. Long range family, farm, community and regional planning;
4. Communication delivery; and/or
5. Dissemination of credible, science-based information.

Planning

The budget for the planning activity, which has a maximum of one year duration, may include an appropriate amount for transportation and subsistence costs for participants and for other related costs. Planning awards of federal funds for this grant will not exceed \$15,000 and are not renewable. Include an itemized breakdown of all support requested in the Budget Justification (Field K. of the R&R Budget Fed/NonFed).

D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

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. Award recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training.

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

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by 1862 Land-grant Institutions in the 50 states and the U.S. territories, American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply, provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. NIFA encourages collaboration with the 1890 and 1994 Land-grant Institutions within and across state lines.

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

Pursuant to rules and policies governing Section 3(b) & (c) of the Smith–Lever Act as amended, “no allotment shall be made to a State under subsection (b) or (c), and no payments from the allotment shall be made to a State, in excess of the amount that the State makes available out of non-federal funds for cooperative extension work.”

To comply with the matching requirements of the SLSNCGP, applicants are required to provide 100 percent matching funds from non-federal sources for all proposed federal funds sought in the application. **In-kind and third party contributions are not allowed for this program; thus, all of the matching funds must come from the applicant institution (please note that sub-awards/partner match would be considered third party).** Grant awards cannot be issued until all required matching has been documented and verified. Also refer to RFA Part IV.B.6.

Matching: Applications shall include written verification of commitments of matching support from non-federal sources. This written verification must be signed by an Authorized Representative from your institution. Written verification means: the sources and the amount of all matching support from the applicant institution should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application as a part of the Budget Justification attachment [see Field K on the Form SF 424 (R&R) Budget Fed/Non-Fed]. Include the matching amount, the budget category for the match, and detail how the matching support will be used (e.g., salary and position supported).

Additionally, all pledge agreements must be included as a part of the PDF attachment in Field K. The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to 2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards” for further guidance and other requirements relating to allowable costs.

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 information about the pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.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 two 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/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determine whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.

To obtain the application package from Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/download-application-package.html> and enter the **Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-SLBCD-006349.**

From the search result, click “Select Package” to access the application package. A Grant Application Package is tied to a particular funding opportunity. You may submit an application ONLY to the particular funding opportunity to which the Grant Application Package is associated.

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-tools-and-tips.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. EST).

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** you need 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 whether 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. EST, 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. See Part V, Section 2.18 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances (e.g., Prohibition Against Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

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

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 3 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available 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 SLSNCGP. 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 10 pages of written text regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced and up to five (5) additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (15 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

Introduction: Include information on the following in the order identified:

- Provide background information on and describe the disaster education problem that the project proposes to address;
- Concisely state which of the four program areas the project will address (Enhance national, regional, multi-state, or state networks; Provide national, regional, multi-state, and/or state education and communications leadership, Improve national, regional, multi-state, or state stakeholder partnerships, Provide national, regional, multi-state, or state educational leadership as a result of a declared disaster); and
- Concisely state the overall goal(s) of the proposed project.

Here are tips for consideration to include in the introductory statement:

- Describe the targeted issue to be addressed and why it is important.
- What is the current problem or situation?
- Who is affected by it and the approximate size of the population affected?
- What geographic area(s) is/are affected by it?
- How long has the problem existed?
- What has already been done in this area? What are the gaps?
- What will happen if the problem is not addressed?

- Provide relevant national, regional, multi-state, or state statistics and other data to document the need for this issue to be addressed in the target community.
- Describe the potential benefit to the population group or community served.
- If the project will support the Extension Disaster Education Network, briefly describe how.
- If the project seeks to contribute to an existing eXtension COP, briefly describe how it will complement or enhance the COP's resources currently available to the public.
- If proposing to conduct a planning project, briefly lay out the project steps beyond the planning period and show how the SLSNCGP will enable the project to become competitive for future funding.

Objectives

Objectives must be realistic and answer the questions of “Whom,” “What,” and “To What Extent.” Each objective needs a specific action plan describing a reasonable scope of activities that can be accomplished within the resource and time constraints of the grant. Be sure to:

- Define the target audience and/or end users of project deliverables;
- Present a clear, concise set of project objectives and associated activities;
- Describe how this project will build upon or expand related work or programs; and
- Indicate duration of the activities.

Methods

Describe the procedures for the proposed effort, including:

- Techniques and methods, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project, and how they accomplish stated objectives;
- A description of the proposed project activities related to the objectives provided and in the sequence in which it is planned. A project timeline should include education/extension/planning activities with milestones, partners'/collaborators' roles (if appropriate) and verifiable indicators, which demonstrate progress;
- A brief description of participant recruitment strategy(ies) to be used;
- Project development and implementation challenges that may be encountered;
- Limitations to proposed procedures, if applicable.

Project Management and Partners' Roles:

Management Plan

- If the proposed SLSNCGP project represents collaboration between two or more Land Grant Institutions or other organization, provide an explanation of how the relationship and communication will be managed.
- Describe how the relationship and communication between the State Cooperative Extension System and the non-Land Grant partners will be managed, if applicable.
- Describe the fiscal and administrative oversight for the project.

Partner Roles

- State Cooperative Extension System and non-Land Grant partners may jointly or individually provide leadership for different objectives/activities.
- Briefly describe roles of key staff on the proposed SLSNCGP project and percent of time each will be dedicating to the project.
- Within the project Timeline, include a column that shows responsibilities of the respective organizations/individuals under appropriate objectives/activities.
- Land Grant Institutions submitting joint applications must demonstrate that the institutions' roles and responsibilities in regards to main aspects of project development and implementation will be appropriate.

Project Performance Measurement/Evaluation Plan

Proposals must should contain a strong performance measurement/evaluation plan. Plans should clearly state the goals of the project and explain how project activities will lead to results (both outputs and outcomes). The plan should identify the project's most significant expected outcomes and explain the methods by which those outcomes will be measured. We strongly recommend that these plans include or refer to the project's logic model or theory of change. Please be as specific as possible in describing the linkages among activities, outputs, and different types of outcomes (e.g., changes in participant knowledge, awareness, competency, behavior, or changes in condition).

Indicate who on the team will provide the lead and oversight for design and conduct of project outcomes evaluation. We highly recommend involving on your proposed project a faculty/professional with expertise/strong experience in developing and implementing program evaluations to lead the design and conduct of your SLSNGCP project's outcome evaluation.

c. Field 12. Add Other Attachments

See Part V. Section 4.12 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide (Field 12 on the form) for instructions regarding mandatory Felony Convictions or Tax Delinquent Status.

Re-submitted Application's Response to Previous Review - PDF Attachment.

One-page Limit. Title the attachment as "ResponseToPreviousReview". This requirement only applies to "Resubmitted Applications" as described under Part II, B. (2), "Types of Applications". PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary. If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.

Letters of Commitment from All Partners on the Proposed Project (e.g., EDEN or other organizations, 1862, 1890 or 1994 Land Grant Institutions; Regional Rural Development Center (RRDC); State offices, eXtension, etc.). The letters from partners' should state readiness to collaborate on the proposed SLSNCGP project and describe the partner's specific role(s) on the project. Title the attachments for example as, "EDENLetter, Letter," "1890Letter", "RRDCLetter" or "eXtensionLetter". *Note: If partnering with eXtension, you must have a letter of acknowledgement from eXtension and a letter of commitment from the appropriate Community of*

Practice or Learning Network. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057>.

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

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This section of the guide includes instructions about senior/key person profile requirements, 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. Part V.6 also notes the importance and use of the information.

6. R&R Budget (Fed/Non-Fed)

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

There should be a direct relationship between the items in the budget and budget justification, as well as between budget justification and the objectives/activities contained in the Project Narrative. Every item in the budget should be justified in the proposal. The amount of detail depends on the nature of the project and the breakdown of costs.

Matching is required for this program, so the R&R Budget (Federal and Non-Federal) form is required. **To comply with the matching requirements, the applicant institution is required to provide 100 percent matching funds from non-federal sources for all proposed federal funds sought in the application. In-kind and third party contributions are not allowed for this program (please note that sub-awards/partner match would be considered third party).** Grant awards cannot be issued until ALL required matching has been documented and verified.

All matching should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the proposal as part of the Budget Narrative. The value of applicant contributions to the project must be established in accordance with applicable cost principles. Applicants may refer to 2 CFR Part 200 - Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

The budget should include reasonable expenses for a 2-day trip for project director, project evaluation lead, and one representative from each partner institution, if applicable, receiving funds to attend SLSNCGP investigators meeting in the Washington, D.C metro area. The dates of the meeting will be announced as soon as possible. The purpose of this meeting is to encourage networking among state project teams from different regions and support alignment of efforts on disaster related indicators and outcomes measures.

7. Supplemental Information Form

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available 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 “ESNP Special Needs”) and the program code (i.e., enter “MB”). 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. **Field 9. Bibliography**

No page limit. Submit as an attachment in PDF format. Title the attachment as “BibliographyReferencesCited”.

All work cited in the proposal must be referenced in this section of the application. All references must be complete, include titles and all co-authors, conform to an acceptable journal format, and be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.

C. Submission Dates and Times

We recommend that you conduct an administrative review of the application before submission of it via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review.

While the checklist referenced above should be used to determine the application for completeness, the application should be checked additionally for the following required item(s). This is not an exhaustive list of required items; it only serves to highlight **required items that are sometimes overlooked by applicants:**

- Project Summary
- Project Action Plan
- Timeline
- Bibliography
- Current and Pending Support forms
- Conflict of Interest forms
- Match Letter signed by Authorized Representative
- Letters of Commitment
- Felony Convictions or Tax Delinquent Status

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 May 15, 2017.** 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. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email 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 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, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Indirect costs and tuition remission are not allowed. Costs that are a part of the institution's indirect cost pool may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable.

You may not use grant funds awarded under this authority to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space. You may not purchase or install fixed equipment in such space or plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

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 two-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:

- 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;
- the need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields;
- the need to include 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;
- the need to include 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;
- the need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and
- the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of SLSNCGP will recommend that your project (a) be approved for support from currently available funds or (b) be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

SLSNCGP 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.

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA. The following criteria will be evaluated equally:

1) Significance of the problem and potential for enhancing extension's reach of providing innovative, education-based approaches to addressing emergency preparedness and specific

responses related to natural and man-made disasters by any one (1) of the four(4) strategies below:

- Enhance national, regional, multi-state, or state networks that add value to official information by delivering the information:
 - In an audience and situation appropriate format
 - In a timely fashion and
 - Coupled with appropriate and existing research based information.
- Provide national, regional, multi-state, or state education and communications leadership to develop or add value to current educational materials regarding disaster issues, utilizing the proper distribution mix of the EDEN website, eXtension, related social media, and/or other outlets. This strategy could include materials targeted to underserved or non-traditional audiences (such as people who speak English as a second language, low literacy individuals, and/or international opportunities). Any international aspects of the proposal must support EDEN or domestic work.
- Improve national, regional, multi-state, or state stakeholder partnerships (which might include the public, governments at all levels, non-profit and/or volunteer organizations, academia, and/or industry) across traditional boundaries to decrease the impact of disasters through extension education.
- Deliver extension education to affected citizens and communities, in one or more states, to decrease the impact of a major declared disaster that occurred no more than 12 months prior to the application due date of this RFA.

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of emergency preparedness, post-disaster relief programs or activities with a focus on rapid recovery and reestablishment through Extension engagement. Elements considered include: identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed; body of knowledge, and preliminary data and other past activities used to substantiate the need for the proposed project.

2) Proposed Approach, Program Design and Methodology (Objectives and Methods)

This criterion is used to assess the soundness of the proposed approach. Elements considered include the adequacy of the scope of the project to produce expected outcomes/changes in knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and/or behaviors in targeted population; objectives; soundness/evidence-base of educational curricula to be used in the project; proposed activities and sequence of activities; participant recruitment; methodology and limitations of the proposed approach; project timeline; and expected new products and results (e.g., educational approaches including training curricula, workshops, meetings, conferences, exhibits, publications, electronic communication, fact sheets, newsletters, and mass media). Proposed approach should be one that can be implemented at regional or national level and utilized via existing electronic distribution media such as the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) and/or eXtension.

3) Evaluation Design

This criterion is used to assess the adequacy of the evaluation design and evaluation methodology, and its capacity to measure the extent to which program objectives are met. Elements considered include: evaluation question(s), the methodological approach proposed for answering these questions, justification for the type of data to be collected, a data collection plan, data analysis plan, and strengths and limitations of the proposed evaluation approach.

4) Budget

This criterion is used to assess the extent to which the total budget adequately supports, is appropriate to the project being proposed, and is cost effective. Elements considered include: the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institutions(s), including matching funds; and appropriateness of the budget relative to time committed to the project by key project personnel

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 one-time, with updates on an as-needed basis. This requirement is part of the responsibility determined 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 SLSNCGP 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, the information described in [2 CFR 200.210](#).

See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view current NIFA award terms and conditions.

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 web page – <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>.

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 CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Name: Beverly Samuel

Title: National Program Leader

Unit: Division of Family and Consumer Sciences

Location: 4427 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 720-6059

Fax: (202) 720-9366

Email: bsamuel@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contact –

Name: Susan Bowman

Title: Branch Chief

Unit: Branch I

Location: 2240 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 401-4324

Fax: (202) 401-6271

Email: sbowman@nifa.usda.gov

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. 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 Budget or Project Plans

In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons:

- (i) Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring prior written approval).
- (ii) Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
- (iii) The disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project, by the approved project director or principal investigator.
- (iv) The inclusion, unless waived by the federal awarding agency, of costs that require prior approval in accordance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E—Cost Principles of this part or 45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, “Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals,” or 48 CFR Part 31, “Contract Cost Principles and Procedures,” as applicable.
- (v) The transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs as defined in §200.75 Participant support costs to other categories of expense.
- (vi) Unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards, the subawarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount subawards as described in §200.332 Fixed amount subawards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
- (vii) Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity.
- (viii) The need arises for additional federal funds to complete the project.

The awardee will be subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award. See <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> for information about NIFA award terms.

B. 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 of Agriculture 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. We will retain for three years a copy of an application that does not result in an award. 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.

C. 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.

D. 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.