

Cost Benefit/Effectiveness Analysis of Army Community Service (AACCS)

FY 2015 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 17, 2015

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

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

Cost Benefit/Effectiveness Analysis of Army Community Service

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 **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on August 17, 2015**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C. of this RFA). Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within 6 months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks your comments about this RFA. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we 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 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 **Cost Benefit/Effectiveness Analysis of Army Community Service RFA**.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Cost Benefit/Effectiveness Analysis of Army Community Service (AACS) for fiscal year (FY) 2015 to conduct a thorough, independent, and impartial cost benefit analysis (CBA) and/or cost effectiveness analysis (CEA) of Army Community Service (ACS) Programs. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2015 is \$498,597.

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

Table of Contents

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION.....	4
A. Legislative Authority and Background.....	4
B. Purpose and Priorities	4
PART II—AWARD INFORMATION.....	7
A. Available Funding.....	7
B. Types of Applications	7
C. Project Types.....	7
D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research	7
PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....	9
A. Eligible Applicants	9
B. Cost Sharing or Matching	9
PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION.....	10
A. Electronic Application Package.....	10
B. Content and Form of Application Submission.....	11
C. Submission Dates and Times	14
D. Funding Restrictions.....	15
E. Other Submission Requirements.....	15
PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS	16
A. General.....	16
B. Evaluation Criteria	16
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality.....	17
D. Organizational Management Information.....	17
E. Application Disposition	17
PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION.....	18
A. General.....	18
B. Award Notice	18
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	19
D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements	20
PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT	21
PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION.....	23
A. Access to Review Information.....	23
B. Use of Funds; Changes	23
C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards.....	24
D. Regulatory Information.....	24
E. Definitions.....	24

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

In accordance with the Economy Act of 1932, as amended, (31 U.S.C. 1535), the Department of Army in order to utilize the unique resources of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), has provided NIFA with funds to support the Cost Benefit/Effectiveness Analysis of Army Community Service Competitive Grant Program.

Pursuant to 7 U.S.C. Sec. 3318(c), the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Director of the NIFA, may enter into contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, for periods not to exceed five years, with State agricultural experiment stations, State cooperative extension services, all colleges and universities, other research or educational institution or organization, Federal and private agencies and organizations, individuals, and any other contractor or recipient, either foreign or domestic, to further research, extension, or teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences of the Department of Agriculture.

Within the Department of Defense, Economy Act transactions are governed by Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation, Volume IIA, Chapter 3, Economy Act Orders.

B. Purpose and Priorities

AACS is aligned with the USDA Strategic Plan (<http://www.ocfo.usda.gov/usdasp/usdasp.htm>) Strategic Goal 1: *Assist Rural Communities to Create Prosperity so They Are Self-sustaining, Repopulating, and Economically Thriving* through addressing *human and social capital*.

AACS is aligned with USDA Research, Economics, and Education Action Plan (http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_03-2014.pdf) Goal 7: Rural-Urban Interdependence and Prosperity through “supporting information and technology transfer and translational research, ‘transformational extension,’ to inform citizens and enable and support vibrant and resilient communities.” AACS is aligned with the NIFA’s Strategic Plan (http://nifa.usda.gov/about/pdfs/strat_plan_2014.pdf), Goal 1: Science through “catalyzing exemplary and relevant research, education and extension programs.”

NIFA is seeking applications from institutions that can demonstrate their ability to provide the overall management and completion of a cost benefit/effectiveness analysis of Army Community Services (ACS) programs.

Background and Context

Through the ACS program, the Army provides a balanced array of services to Soldiers, Army Civilians, and their Families of all Components to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements to promote self-reliance and provide prevention, life-skills education and training to aid Soldier retention, readiness, and morale, and Family preparedness. For FY 2015, the Army has budgeted \$229M to execute ACS services as currently configured. Funding levels

vary each fiscal year and impact levels of service provided across Components as well as levels of service within each functional area (e.g., support to victims of domestic abuse). Resource levels directly impact the program's ability to comply with applicable Public Laws, directives and regulations, and the ability to meet mission leader and customer needs and demands.

In 2011, the Secretary of the Army mandated that unfunded requirements and new or expanded program proposals be accompanied by a formal cost benefit analysis (CBA). This analysis is designed to identify the total cost of a proposal or program and weigh that cost against the resulting benefits of implementation, to include second- and third-order effects. The goal is to produce a strong value proposition -- a clear statement that the benefits more than justify the costs and risks. The Secretary of Army mandate does not require programs that predate the CBA requirement to develop CBAs.

The Army's Ready and Resilient Campaign (R2C); however, does require that all quality of life, social service and physical and behavioral health programs formally identified as part of the R2C program portfolio must develop or show evidence of CBAs. This R2C requirement satisfies a comprehensive Program Capabilities Assessment process modeled after a public health assessment methodology and is intended to foster and develop among program managers a culture of long-term improvement, evaluation, accountability, and integration of programs that address Total Force resilience and readiness. The R2C specifically requires that all programs within the portfolio must be supported by an economic analysis that demonstrates that the program is cost beneficial: benefits outweigh the costs or the program is more cost effective than other alternatives.

The Army provides a broad array of Soldier and Family support services through ACS, to include: Exceptional Family Member Program, Survivor Outreach Services, Community Information Services, Family Advocacy Program, New Parent Support Program, Financial Readiness Program, Mobilization and Deployment Services, Soldier and Family Readiness Assistance Centers, Army OneSource, Volunteer and Family Enrichment Programs, Family Readiness Program, Army Family Team Building, and the Employment Readiness Program.

A thorough analysis of the ACS program will be faced with multiple layers of complexity, to include: delivery variability at ~90 garrisons; funding variability by type of service; staff expertise variability; interaction of needs and demands between Senior Commanders, Garrison Commanders, and Soldier and Family clients; demographic variability in the composition of Soldiers and Families on- and off-post; availability of off-post resources (e.g., remote and isolated versus and densely population metropolitan locations); the impact of off-post factors on Soldier and Family needs (e.g., social trends, crime, economic health); and the potential for little or no availability of process and outcome data by which to conduct analyses.

ACS programs expect to be able to provide an estimated 50 percent of process evaluation and/or outcome data required to complete a thorough cost analysis and cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness (CBA/COE) analysis. ACS programs will likely require technical assistance with providing the remaining 50 percent of process evaluation and outcome data for the CBA/COE in order to connect program cost and benefits with program effectiveness in support of outcomes.

Funding reductions impact both the quality and the level of service provided and may result in an environment of decreased prevention and education services, increased crisis intervention, decreased follow-up with high risk clients, lack of standardization and consistency of service delivery, and increased risk of professional staff burnout and departure.

The Army must ensure that support services are available to Soldiers and Families that are effective and efficient in meeting critical mission needs and all requirements established by public law, Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Army regulation, and by senior leaders.

ACS provides a balanced array of social services to Soldiers, Army Civilians, and their Families of all Components to better equip them to meet the unique demands of a military lifestyle, foster life skill competencies, strengthen and sustain physical and mental fitness and resiliency, and promote strong and ready Army communities.

Senior leaders (e.g., Chief of Staff, Vice Chief and Staff, Sergeant Major of the Army) seek additional clarity and precision on whether or not ACS programs and support services are providing a sound return on investment by efficiently meeting the needs of Soldiers and Families. Data provided through a formal CBA/CEA will provide the Army with critically needed insight with which to shape a fiscally sustainable portfolio of programs and support services to most effectively sustain the readiness needs of a modern Army.

The primary project objective is:

- To perform a cost benefit analysis or cost effectiveness analysis of Army Community Services programs designed to provide insight on the fiscal sustainability and efficiency of these programs.

This objective will be accomplished through the following deliverables:

- Based on review of the ACS programs and discussions with ACS leadership, the decision will be made to perform a cost-benefit analysis (CBA) or a cost-effectiveness analysis (CEA) after the award has been made. A CEA identifies and places dollar value on the cost of a program and then relates these costs to specific measures or program effectiveness. A CEA identifies and places dollar values on the cost of the program and weights these costs against program benefits.
- A work plan which outlines a proposed plan of action including a milestone schedule for development and completion of the project and communications strategy to progress and emerging results in cooperation with Army Community Service to ensure timely progress on tasks.
- A final report including, but not limited to an executive summary, issue/opportunity statement, scope, objectives, costs and benefits, potential alternatives, alternatives analyses.
- Progress reports, senior leader briefings, and any necessary technical assistance.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for NIFA support of this program in FY 2015 is \$498,597. The funds will be awarded through a **cooperative agreement**. A cooperative agreement is an agreement in which the Federal Government provides funding authorized by public statute and the government plays a substantial role. 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 2015, you may only submit a new application to the **AACS Competitive Grant** Program:

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

C. Project Types

For FY 2015, approximately \$498,597 will be available to fund one proposal for one year. The statutory time limitation for awards issued under this authority is five years. No award may exceed this statutory time limitation.

D. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR) is critical for excellence, as well as public trust, in science and engineering. Consequently, we consider education in RCR essential to the preparation of future scientists. In accordance with sections 2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422, institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Per award terms and conditions, grant recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training.

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

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by State agricultural experiment stations, State cooperative extension services, all colleges and universities, other research or educational institution or organization, and any other contractor or recipient, either foreign or domestic, to further research, extension, or teaching programs in food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

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

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, we recommend that the Project Director/Principal Investigator (PD/PI) first contact an Authorized Representative (AR, also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If not (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed PRIOR to submitting an application. It can take as long as 2 weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations, the AR should go to **“Register” in the top right corner of the Grants.gov web page (or go to <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html>) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov.** Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the registration process. Refer 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-EXCA-005335

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 AACCS. 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 **6** pages of written text regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced and up to **4** additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (**10** pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

Section 1: Statement of Need & Background

- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the issue this project is seeking to address.
- Describe how the overall project will address the audience(s) to be served.
- Detail the characteristics of the institution(s) that make it particularly qualified to conduct the proposed work; describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project particularly expert knowledge and experience related to performing cost-benefit/effectiveness analyses for social programs, military program evaluation and working with military family program personnel.

Section 2: Objectives

- List clear, concise, and logically arranged project goals and objectives. Goals must address the statement of need identified in the first section of your proposal; and Objectives must link to goals and address program priorities listed in Part 1, Section B.
- Provide a preliminary action plan to show the relationships between objectives, project design, and deliverables.

Section 3: Evaluation Design and Methodologies

The primary responsibility will be to develop a clear, logical plan for a cost benefit/cost effectiveness analysis which meets objectives for this project and results in a comprehensive report of findings that will inform future programming direction for Army Community Service senior leadership and staff.

Describe how the evaluation design and methods selected, based on project objectives which will be used to measure the extent to which the objectives are met. This section should address but not necessarily be limited to:

- Means by which data will be collected; indicate collection instruments and methods if appropriate (i.e.: questionnaire, interviews, focus groups, site visits, etc.) including the feasibility and rationale for their use in the project based on project goals; and
- Potential process and/or outcome evaluations; and
- Development and/or implementation challenges that may be encountered; and
- Limitations to proposed procedures; and
- Stakeholder involvement.

Section 4: Project Communication Plan

- Briefly describe how progress and results from this project will be communicated to project teams and relevant stakeholders.

Section 5: Project Management

- Provide a brief summary of key personnel, their project functions, qualifications and expertise along with timelines, accounting procedures, reporting, and collaborative efforts. Describe any experience in coordinating with other DoD – USDA Partnership for Military Families projects or related projects as well as any collaboration(s) with the land-grant university system.

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.

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 “**Cost Benefit/Effectiveness Analysis of Army Community Service**”) and the program code (i.e., enter “**AACS**”). Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application.
- b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

C. Submission Dates and Times

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

While the checklist should be used to check 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
- Bibliography
- Current and Pending Support forms
- Conflict of Interest forms
- Letters of Commitment

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on August 17, 2015**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

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

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

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 15 days of the established deadline, contact the Agency Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel.**

Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.

D. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Cost: Fully negotiated rate. The applicant should use the current negotiated indirect cost rate established (i.e., approved) by its cognizant Federal agency. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate, the applicant should request a rate from the Federal agency from which the applicant receives the most funding.

Agency policy limits the maximum potential funding period (including any awards transferred from another institution or organization) to five years in duration. 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.

The PD may incur pre-award costs within the 90-day period immediately preceding the effective date of the award providing: the approval of pre-award spending is made and documented in accordance with the awardee's normal procedures prior to the incurrence of the cost(s); the advanced funding is necessary for the effective and economical conduct of the project; and the costs are otherwise allowable. Pre-award expenditures are made at the awardee's risk. AOR authority to approve pre-award costs does not impose an obligation on NIFA: (1) in the absence of appropriations; (2) if an award is subsequently not made; or (3) if an award is made for a lesser amount than the awardee expected.

Pre-award costs incurred outside the 90-day period immediately preceding the effective date of the award must receive written approval from the ADO. Please verify with the Administrative/Business Contact listed in this RFA before any pre-award expenditures. Any expenditures made before then are at your own risk.

E. Other Submission Requirements

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

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

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

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

We select reviewers based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

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

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Potential for Performing a Cost Benefit or Cost Effectiveness Analysis for a Military Family Programs Portfolio

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will succeed in: (1) providing the expertise necessary to determine the best possible option – CBA or CEA - in meeting the objective of the project; (2) providing the overall management of this project including partnerships and management of project staff; (3) meeting established project objectives; and (4) demonstrating successful past experience with related projects, particularly those involving program assessment and cost benefit/effectiveness analyses related to the subject matter and audience(s).

2. Proposed Approach and Program Coordination

This criterion is used to assess the soundness of the proposed approach including statement of need, scope of the project, objectives, methodology, key personnel, timeline, expected products and results, and communication plan. Recent experience working with military components in partnership with Land-grant Universities and their mission areas of education, research and Cooperative Extension Service is preferred. Also cite any experience in conducting research related to program assessment and evaluation in coordination with military components.

3. Evaluation

This criterion is used to assess the adequacy of the analysis design and its capacity to meet the program objectives.

4. Budget and Budget Narrative

This criterion is used to assess the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective based on budget outline provided. Elements considered include: the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objective and the adequacy of 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 on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis. This requirement is part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. We will provide you copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

E. Application Disposition

An application may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the application. Each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by **NIFA** 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 cooperative agreements 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 recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of financial assistance approved for the award;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

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

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

2 CFR Part 25, “Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration”

2 CFR Part 170, “Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information”

2 CFR Part 175, “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”

2 CFR Part 180, “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement)”

2 CFR Part 182, “Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”

2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”

2 CFR Part 400, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”

2 CFR Part 415, “General Program Administrative Regulations”

2 CFR Part 416, “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”

2 CFR Part 417, “Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension”

2 CFR Part 418, “New Restrictions on Lobbying”

2 CFR Part 421, “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

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.

The awardee will also be asked to provide regular reports (i.e. monthly, quarterly) to the AACS team at NIFA and the designated Army Community Service leadership.

Data Use: Use of data provided to NIFA awardees pursuant to this cooperative agreement shall comply with the provisions of this paragraph. NIFA awardees shall be free to publish in professional, refereed journals information or data developed or collected (except confidential data or information including PHI or PII) resulting from the activities under this agreement. Awardees will be required to submit a copy of any such publication to USDA NIFA sixty (60) days prior to publication for review and approval by NIFA and the Army to ensure that

confidentiality of the deliverables is maintained and that NIFA and the Army have been accurately represented. All educational and technical assistance materials developed by the awardee under an agreement with NIFA shall be owned by the awardee. NIFA and the Army will have a non-exclusive, royalty-free, non-transferable, irrevocable license to reproduce, prepare derivative work and distribute copies of the deliverables so long as such deliverables are used for non-commercial educational or government purposes.

Any work produced under a NIFA award is subject to 2 CFR Part 200.315 related to intangible property.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contacts—

Ahlishia Shipley, PhD
Child and Family Program Specialist
Division of Family & Consumer Sciences
Institute of Youth, Family, and Community
USDA NIFA
202.401.6854 (o)
202.690-2469 (f)
ashipley@nifa.usda.gov

Regular Mail:
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-2225

Brent Elrod
National Program Leader – Community and Rural Development
Division of Family & Consumer Sciences
Institute of Youth, Family, and Community
USDA NIFA
202.690.3468 (o)
202.690-2469 (f)
belrod@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contact –

Adriene Woodin
Branch Chief
Awards Management Division
Office of Grants and Financial Management
National Institute of Food and Agriculture - USDA
(202) 401-4320 (phone)
(202) 401-1804 (fax)
awoodin@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

- [Army Ready and Resilient Homepage](#)
<http://www.army.mil/readyandresilient>
- Army OACSIM proponent of Army Community Service
<http://www.acsim.army.mil/installationservices/soldierfamilyreadiness.html>
- DOD-wide one-stop webpage for support programs
<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/>
- Army OneSource Army's one-stop webpage for support programs
<http://www.militaryonesource.mil/army>