

# Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Fields Program (WAMS)

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*Fiscal Year 2016 Request for Applications (RFA)*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: Thursday, April 7, 2016**

**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**

**WOMEN AND MINORITIES IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND  
MATHEMATICS FIELDS PROGRAM (WAMS)**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.318.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 7, 2016**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. 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:** The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks your comments about this RFA. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we'll use them to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice to Policy and Oversight Division via e-mail to: [Policy@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:Policy@nifa.usda.gov). (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fields Program (WAMS) RFA.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA requests applications for the Women and Minorities in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Fields Program (WAMS) for FY 2016 to support research and extension activities that increase the number of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas who will pursue and complete a postsecondary degree in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) disciplines. The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2016 is approximately \$400,000.

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

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

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

This program is administered under the provisions of Section 7209 of the Agricultural Act of 2016. (Pub. L. 110-246). This provision amends Section 1672 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925(e) (49)) authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to make competitive grants to increase the participation of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas (definition Part VIII, E) in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in higher education (7 U.S. C. section 5925 (e) (49)). Priority is extended to eligible institutions that carry out continuing programs funded by the Secretary.

The 7 U.S.C. section 5925(d) provides a priority to those grant proposals, found in the peer review process to be scientifically meritorious, that involve the cooperation of multiple entities. WAMS applicants are encouraged to submit applications that will result in building linkages with other institutions (including other colleges and universities, units of State government, and private sector entities) having a significant, ongoing commitment to the food and agricultural sciences generally and to the specific Need Areas(s) for which a grant is requested (see below). The goals of such a joint initiative should include:

- Maximizing the development and use of limited resources (including faculty, facilities, and equipment) by generating a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on a targeted Need Area(s);
- Increasing cost-effectiveness through achieving economies of scale; strengthening the scope and quality of a project's impact; and
- Promoting coalition building likely to transcend the project's lifetime and lead to future ventures.

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

The WAMS grants program directly aligns with USDA Strategic Goal 1, Strategic Goal 2, Strategic Goal 3, and Strategic Goal 4 of the USDA Strategic Plan (2014 – 2018) (<http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda-strategic-plan-fy-2014-2018.pdf>). The WAMS program also aligns with the USDA Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan (<http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/ree-action-plan>), and specifically addresses Goal 6 – Education and Science Literacy, by recruiting, cultivating, and developing the next generation of scientists, leaders, and a highly-skilled workforce for food, agriculture, natural resources, forestry, environmental systems, and life sciences to ensure America's global preeminence. The WAMS program is also aligned with the NIFA Strategic Plan (2014-2018) (<http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/nifa-strategic-plan-fy2014-fy2018>), specifically addressing Strategic Goal No 1, (Science – Catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education, and extension programs); Subgoal 1.7 – (Ensure the development of human capital, communities, and a diverse workforce through research, education, extension and engagement programs in food and agricultural sciences to support a sustainable agriculture system).

As noted in the December 2012 President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) report to the President on Agricultural Preparedness and the Agriculture Research Enterprise, "At the baccalaureate level, a comprehensive array of undergraduate programs relevant to agriculture and the food industry, as well as applied social and natural sciences, must remain strong and well-supported". The full PCAST report is available at: [http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast\\_agriculture\\_20121207.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/pcast_agriculture_20121207.pdf).

Accordingly, WAMS-funded project activities shall support the creation, adaptation, and adoption of learning materials and teaching strategies to operationalize what we know about how students learn. Many of these concepts are identified in the National Research Council's publication: [\*How People Learn\*](#). WAMS-funded projects shall also focus on imparting both technical knowledge as well as 'soft' skills such as communication, team work, and problem solving, as these are abilities expected by employers. These concepts may be found in the publication: [\*Comparative Analysis of Soft Skills: What is Important for New Graduates?\*](#)

The purpose of this program is to support research and extension projects that increase participation by women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM. NIFA intends this program to address educational needs, as determined by each institution, within broadly defined areas of food and agricultural sciences and related disciplines.

Applications recommended for funding must highlight and emphasize a competent and qualified workforce to guide the food and agricultural sciences system. WAMS-funded projects should improve the economic health and viability of rural communities by developing research and extension initiatives that focus on new and emerging employment opportunities in STEM occupations. Hence, the goal of WAMS projects is to meet the national challenge to increase the number and diversity of students entering food and agriculture-related STEM disciplines (i.e. having a food and agricultural sciences workforce representative of the nation's population). Projects that contribute to the economic viability of rural communities are also encouraged.

### **Social Sciences**

WAMS supports social and behavioral science disciplines. Projects that integrate social and biological sciences to provide experiential learning opportunities for students in applied research, and related community development programs are encouraged. Incorporation of social and behavioral sciences is important for addressing many of the challenges facing agriculture and rural communities, such as increasing global demand for food production in the face of limited natural resources; improving health and reducing obesity by engaging in healthy diets; and alleviating poverty by fostering economic opportunity.

### **eXtension**

NIFA encourages (but does not require) projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension (<https://extension.org/>).

### **Leadership Skills Development:**

WAMS projects are required to provide leadership skill opportunities. The development of leadership skills, knowledge and qualities are necessary for preparing students for agricultural

related careers in private sector, government and academia. Applications for this program must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to ensure that students are equipped with both technical and leadership abilities upon graduation.

### **Expected Products and Results**

The WAMS program requires all project directors to provide appropriate metrics and describe the expected products and results, outcomes, and their potential impact on strengthening food, agricultural, natural resources and human sciences education, research and extension in the United States. Metrics to assess products, outputs and outcomes are to be clearly delineated in the proposal.

### **Evaluation Plan**

All projects must have an Evaluation Plan that includes both a strategy for monitoring the project as it evolves (to provide feedback to guide these efforts), as well as a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the project in achieving its goals and for identifying positive and negative findings when the project is completed.

The complexity of the evaluation will depend on the scope of the project. Grantees are encouraged to obtain an independent evaluation to secure appropriate documentation of the project's outputs and outcomes. Such efforts should be led by knowledgeable and experienced individuals. As a guide, up to 10% of the grant funds may be used to support this purpose.

## **C. Program Area Description**

A proposed project may address one or more Educational Need Areas and/or be an Applied Project that addresses research, outreach and capacity building to benefit the communities served, especially that of their students.

### **1. Educational Need Areas**

WAMS projects should focus on the purpose of one or more of the FY 2016 Need Areas. Please note that at least one of these Need Areas must be indicated on the Project Summary (Part IV, B.3.).

#### **a. Curriculum Design, Materials Development, and Library Resources**

Promotes the development of courses of study and degree programs, new and improved curricula, and instructional materials and technology; to promote the acquisition of library resources including books and journals relating to the food and agricultural sciences; and to stimulate the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects, new research on teaching and learning theory, and new applications of knowledge. The overall objective is to increase the quality of, and continuously renew, the academic programs of the eligible institutions in the food and agricultural sciences.

#### **b. Faculty Preparation and Enhancement of Teaching**

Advances faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications in a field; expanding competence in innovative technologies and new methods of instruction delivery; developing new skills in a field of science or education including student advising skills; or pursuing graduate-level study in a field related to the food and agricultural sciences.

Each faculty recipient of support for developmental activities must be an “eligible participant” as defined in Part VIII, E. Definitions.

### **c. Instruction Delivery Systems**

Encourages the use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: incorporating alternative instructional methodologies that respond to differences in student learning styles; inter-institutional collaborations that deliver instruction in ways that maximize program quality and reduce unnecessary duplication; and consideration and implementation of innovative instructional techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems in response to advances in knowledge and technology.

### **d. Scientific Instrumentation for Teaching and Research**

Provides students and faculty in science-oriented courses with suitable, up-to-date equipment in order to involve them in work central to scientific understanding and progress. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional, laboratory, classroom, and research scientific equipment to help assure the achievement and maintenance of outstanding food and agricultural science education programs, upgrading existing equipment, or replacing non-functional or obsolete equipment.

### **e. Student Experiential Learning**

Furthers the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs that provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: preparing future graduates to advance knowledge and technology, enhancing quality of life, conserve resources, and addressing community and economic development issues. Projects should focus on advancing student decision-making and communications skills, and improving real-life technological expertise. Activities may include, but are not limited to, internships, practicum experiences, study abroad opportunities, and participation with faculty on applied research and related community development projects. For example, Leadership Skills Development.

### **f. Student Recruitment, Retention, and Educational Equity (including the provision of student financial assistance)**

Enhances educational equity for under-represented students, and to strengthen student recruitment and retention programs in order to promote the future strength of the Nation's scientific, professional, and technical workforce in the food and agricultural sciences.

Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to:

- Initiating new projects or supplementing current efforts to attract increased number of students from under-represented groups, their families, and communities to engage in a robust exchange of ideas on using the full breadth of the Nation's intellectual resources more effectively;
- Developing agricultural and science literacy programs at the high school level to attract students to college and careers in the food and agricultural sciences; mentoring programs and other initiatives for student retention; and the provision of student financial support to attend college.

Each student recipient of monetary support for educational costs or developmental purposes must be enrolled at an eligible institution and meet the requirement of an "eligible participant" as defined in Part VIII, E. Definitions.

## **2. Applied Projects**

**In addition to the Education Need Areas, applications may choose to develop studies that have relevancy and application within the communities that these institutions serve.** The purpose of each initiative is defined.

### **a. Applied Studies in the Food and Agricultural Sciences**

Apply the body of knowledge in those natural and social sciences that comprise the food and agricultural sciences to address real-world problems, including applied research activities focusing on community and economic development issues related to food, nutrition, conservation, and renewable natural resources. Examples include:

- (i) Conducting plant or animal breeding programs to develop better crops, forests, or livestock (e.g., improving disease resistance, improving productivity, yielding higher quality products);
- (ii) Conceiving, designing, and evaluating new bio-processing techniques for eliminating undesirable constituents from or adding desirable ones to food products;
- (iii) Proposing and evaluating ways to enhance utilization of the capabilities and resources of WAMS institutions to promote rural development (e.g., exploitation of new technologies by small rural businesses);
- (iv) Identifying control factors influencing consumer demand for agricultural products;



(v) Analyzing social, economic, and physiological aspects of nutrition, housing, and lifestyle choices, and of community strategies for meeting the changing needs of different population groups; and,

(vi) Studying other identified State, regional, community, national and global problems such as human nutrition and obesity prevention, sustainable agriculture, bioenergy, climate change, food safety, food security, biotechnology, agribusiness management and marketing, and aquaculture.

### **b. Applied Research Support Systems**

Establish centralized support systems to meet State, regional, or community needs, or serve clientele that cannot otherwise afford or do not have ready access to the support in question, or to provide such support more economically thereby freeing up resources for other applied research uses. Examples include:

(i) Storage, maintenance, characterization, evaluation, and enhancement of germ plasm for use by animal and plant breeders (including those using the techniques of biotechnology);

(ii) Digital databases of important scientific information (e.g., epidemiological, demographic, nutrition, weather, economic, crop yields, animal migration patterns); and,

(iii) Expert service centers for sophisticated and highly specialized methodologies (e.g., evaluation of nutritional quality of foods, toxicology, taxonomic identifications, consumer preferences and demographics).

### **c. Technology-based Information Delivery Systems**

Promote innovations and improvements in the delivery of benefits of food and agricultural sciences to producers and consumers, particularly those who are currently disproportionately low in receipt of such benefits. Examples include:

(i) Computer-based decision support systems to assist small scale farmers, ranchers, herders, or fishermen to take advantage of relevant technologies, programs, policies, etc.; and,

(ii) Efficacious delivery systems for nutrition information or for resource management assistance for low-income families and individuals.

### **d. Other Applied Research and Community Development Applications**

Encourage other creative projects, outside the areas previously outlined, that are designed to provide needed enhancement to the capacity of WAMS institutions to conduct applied research and related community development projects.

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2016 is approximately \$400,000. The funds will be awarded competitively through a peer panel review process. 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**

This WAMS RFA is requesting applications that are supportive of integrated research, education, and/or extension projects; increase participation of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields; and address one or more of the Educational Need Areas or Applied Projects.

Supporting the many components of agriculture under the constraints of a growing population, pressure on natural resources, and the challenges of climate variability and change, requires research, education, extension, and integrated programs that increase agricultural and natural resource sustainability. The term "sustainable agriculture" (National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 ( NARETPA), (7 U.S.C. 3103) means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will over the long-term achieve the following goals: 1) Satisfy human food and fiber needs; 2) Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends; 3) Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; 4) Sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and 5) Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

In FY 2016, applications may be submitted to the WAMS program as one of the following types of requests:

**(1) New application.** This is a Regular project application that has not been previously submitted to the WAMS Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

**(2) Resubmitted application.** This is an application that had previously been submitted to the WAMS Program but not funded. Applicants must respond to the previous review panel summary, (see Responses to Previous Review, Part IV). However, resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending

regular applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as the 2016 new regular grant applications.

## **C. Project Type**

### **1. Regular Grant Project**

Applicants must submit proposals to WAMS per the following grant type: Regular Grant Project. An eligible institution, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system may submit a Regular Grant application for project activities to be undertaken principally on behalf of its own students or faculty and to be managed primarily by its own personnel.

### **2. Project Duration**

The project period may range from 12 to 36 months (one to three years).

### **3. Number and Size of Awards**

The number of grants awarded in FY 2016 will depend on the number of applications recommended for funding in response to this notice.

An applicant may request up to \$100,000 (total amount – not per year) for a Regular Project. Budget forms submitted with the grant applications should reflect this estimate. In a Regular Project, the applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

Note the actual amounts awarded by NIFA under the WAMS program may differ from the amounts requested in the application submitted to the program, and the revised budgets and revised plans of work may be required by NIFA before an award is made.

### **4. Proposal Submission Limitations**

Each eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, and branch institution of a State system may submit one application as an individual institution (see Part II, C.1., Regular Grant). Institutions that received a grant under this program in a prior year are still eligible to submit and receive a regular grant this year.

### **5. Funding Limitations per Institution**

For FY 2016, NIFA will make only one award per eligible institution for a maximum of \$100,000. (see Part II, C.3.).

## **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**

#### **1. Individual Applicants**

As contained in Section 7204 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246 which amends Section 1672 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925)), applications may only be submitted by the following eligible applicants: (a) State agricultural experiment stations; (b) colleges and universities; (c) university research foundations; (d) other research institutions and organizations; (e) Federal agencies; (f) national laboratories; (g) private organizations or corporations; and, (h) individuals. Priority will be given to eligible institutions that carry out continuing programs funded by the Secretary.

An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline will result in NIFA failing to review, or even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

#### **2. Certification of Eligibility**

At the time of application, primary applicants (lead applicants or Project Directors) must demonstrate their institution of higher education is accredited as a degree granting institution. If an institution currently has a Title III, Part A grant from the U.S. Department of Education that does not end prior to September 30, 2016, the institution shall submit a copy of the "Notice of Award" letter for that grant along with its application to satisfy the demonstration of eligibility requirement.

Otherwise, an institution must submit a letter, signed by the institution's Authorized Representative (AR) certifying that it meets the requirements of WAMS as defined above.

The AR must certify that:

- a. The institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus, is legally authorized by the State in which it is located to provide an educational program for which it awards an associate's or bachelor's degree, or that it is a junior or community college;
- b. The institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus, is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered, or making reasonable progress toward such accreditation;
- c. At least 50 percent of enrolled degree students are receiving need-based assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, or that a substantial percentage of students are receiving Pell Grants in comparison with the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants at all similar institutions (institution of higher education, or junior or community college);

d. Unless waived by the Secretary of Education, the average educational and general expenditure per full-time equivalent undergraduate student are low in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent student at institutions that offer similar instructions; and,

Eligibility documentation must be submitted with the application. See Part III, A1-4.

#### **4. Fiscal Agent**

If an institution cannot accept Federal funds directly, it must admit a letter stating that it will accept the award, but that funds must be administered through a fiscal agent. This agent must be identified in the letter for the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by a representative of the fiscal agent organization. The letter should include the fiscal agent's point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and email address. Both the fiscal agent and the applicant institution must submit complete management information (see Part V, D.). Nevertheless, the legal recipient of the award must be an eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system, or a consortium of eligible institutions. Submission of fiscal agent information (above) is not requested now, but will be required, before an award is made.

Examples of fiscal agent arrangements include, but are not limited to the following scenarios:

a. A State university system or a public system of higher education may apply on behalf of an eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution in the State. In such cases, the State system will act as fiscal agent for the eligible institution under a Regular Grant award to advance the purposes of the WAMS grants program.

b. A research foundation, or other similar foundation established and maintained by an eligible, individual institution to facilitate the application and management of externally-funded grant awards may apply on behalf of the eligible, parent institution. In such cases, the foundation will act as fiscal agent for the eligible, individual institution under a Regular Grant award to advance the purposes of the WAMS grants program. A research foundation, or other similar foundation established and maintained by an eligible, individual institution to facilitate the application and management of externally-funded grant awards may apply on behalf of its parent institution and at least one additional eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system under a consortium arrangement. In such cases, the foundation will act as fiscal agent for the eligible institutions under a Consortium Grant award to advance the purposes of the WAMs grants program.

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

In accordance with section 1492 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3371), as added by section 7128 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-79), for grants awarded after October 1, 2014, the recipient of an award from the **WAMS** program must provide funds, in-kind contributions, or a combination of both, from

sources other than funds provided through such grant in an amount that is at least equal to the amount awarded by NIFA unless one of the exemptions described herein is applicable. Note that NIFA included information at <http://nifa.usda.gov/matching-requirement> to further assist in determining if you must meet the new matching requirement.

The matching funds requirement does not apply to grants awarded:

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

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

- a. 1862 Land-grant Institutions, including State Agricultural Experiment Stations receiving funding under the Hatch Act of 1887
- b. 1890 Land-grant Institutions
- c. 1994 Land-grant Institutions
- d. Entities eligible to receive funds under the Continuing Animal Health and Disease, Food Security, and Stewardship Research, Education, and Extension Program Funds — Capacity and Infrastructure Program (CIP)
- e. Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU)
- f. Distance Education Grants Program and Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institution of Higher Education in Insular Areas
- g. Entities eligible to receive funds under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program Funds
- h. Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) - (for exemption from the new matching requirement, these applications must include NLGCA certification, see instructions for requesting certification at <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/form/form.html> and also <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/webform/request-non-land-grnt-university-designation>.)
- i. Entities eligible to receive funds under a program established under section 1417(b) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)), including: (1) 1890 Institution Teaching, Research, and Extension Capacity Building Grants Program; (2) Higher Education Challenge Grants Program; (3) Higher Education Multicultural Scholars Program; and (4) Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postgraduate Fellowship Grants Program.
- j. Individual public or private, nonprofit Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions of higher education (see 20 U.S.C. 1059d).

**Waiver of Match** - NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a recipient for one year with respect to a competitive grant that involves research or extension activities that are consistent with the priorities established by the National Agricultural Research, Education, Extension and Economics Advisory Board for the year involved.

To determine whether proposed activities are consistent with the priorities of The National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB), please refer to the 2014 Research, Education and Economics Action Plan  
[http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA\\_REE\\_Action\\_Plan\\_03-2014.pdf](http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_03-2014.pdf)



## **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, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR) (also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.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 additional explanatory language regarding the registration process. Refer to item 2. below to locate the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.”.

#### **Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials**

To receive application materials:

1. You must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov to access, complete, and submit applications. For basic system requirements and download instructions, see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html>. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determine whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.
2. To obtain the application 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-WAMS-005736**

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/grant-application-process.html>. Grants.gov assistance is also available at:

Grants.gov customer support

1-800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [Federal Holidays](#).

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

Grants.gov iPortal: Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M. ET). Get help now!

Have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov:

- Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of Funding Agency You Are Applying To
- Specific Area of Concern

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

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

You should prepare electronic applications following Parts V and VI of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guided. This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order 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 (i.e., 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 NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).**

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

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

- Email: [electronic@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:electronic@nifa.usda.gov)
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm Eastern Time, 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 WAMS. See Part V. 4.7 of the 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 20 pages of written text regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced and up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (25 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Project Narratives that exceed this page limit requirement will not be accepted for review (no exceptions). The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

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

- (1) Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders and to ongoing state-federal food and agricultural research, education and extension programs.

(2) The role of stakeholders in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation as appropriate.

(3) Reasons for performing the work at the proposing institution.

b. **Objectives:** All applications must include a statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort in clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged terms.

c. **Methods:** Explicitly state the procedures or methodology you will apply to the proposed effort. This section should include but not necessarily be limited to, description of:

(1) stakeholder involvement in problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation;

(2) proposed project activities, listed sequentially;

(3) techniques to be employed in this project, including their feasibility and rationale;

(4) expected results;

(5) how extension and education activities will be evaluated;

(6) how data will be analyzed and interpreted;

(7) plans to communicate results to stakeholders and the public;

(8) pitfalls that might be encountered; and,

(9) limitations to proposed procedures.

d. **Project Timetable:** The proposal should outline all important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant funding period.

#### **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 the 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.

(a) Budgets for each project year do NOT have to be the same from year to year. However, detailed budget information (budget and narrative) must be submitted for each year of the proposed project.

(b) During the tenure of a grant, PDs must attend at least one National Project Directors' Meeting/Conference, if offered, in Washington DC, or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, future directions for education reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results of the

projects. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in the application's budget under travel expenses.

## **8. 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. "Women and Minorities in STEM Fields") and the program code "WAM". 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 Date and Time**

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

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 7, 2016**. 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 application. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged 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 Program 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 or a delay in the issuance of an award. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

## D. Funding Restrictions

Section 713 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 ( P.L. 114-113) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. See Part V section 7.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further indirect cost information.

If your institution does not have, or cannot obtain, a negotiated rate, you must calculate an indirect cost rate in order to request indirect costs. You should calculate an indirect cost rate based on actual costs for the entire organization from the most recently completed accounting year. If no prior cost history exists, you should use budgeted costs for the entire organization. You should follow the example(s) found at [http://nifa.usda.gov/business/indirect\\_cost\\_process.html](http://nifa.usda.gov/business/indirect_cost_process.html) for information regarding this process. You may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase “None requested” should be written in the space.”

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

The use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility is not allowed under this program. With prior approval, and in accordance with the cost principles set forth in 2 CFR part 220 (Circular No. A-21), some grant funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations, or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching or research spaces in order to carry out a funded project. Grant funds may not be used for endowment investing.

Statutory language or agency policy limits the maximum potential funding period (including any awards transferred from another institution or organization) to 5 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.”

**Program funds may only be used for research and extension activities in the training, outreach and mentoring of rural women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields relevant to USDA mission.** Funds made available for grants in this program shall not be used for scholarship or fellowship purposes, the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

### Special Notices (Applicable to Grantees and Subcontractors)

1. NIFA will withhold all funds for a WAMS award to an applicant requesting indirect costs if the applicant has not negotiated an indirect cost rate with its cognizant federal agency.
2. If a grantee is in the process of negotiating an indirect cost rate with its cognizant federal agency, NIFA will withhold all funds from that grantee until the indirect cost rate has been established.

3. If an institution's indirect cost rate (with its cognizant federal agency) has expired or will expire in the near future, a clear statement on renegotiation efforts must be included in the application.
4. It is incumbent on all applicants to have a current indirect cost rate or begin negotiations (with its cognizant federal agency) to establish an indirect cost rate prior to the WAMS submission deadline. Because it may take several months to obtain an indirect cost rate, applicants needing an indirect cost rate are encouraged to start work on establishing these rates well in advance of submitting a WAMS application.
5. For organizations or entities which do not have a federal cognizant agency, the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate with USDA/NIFA" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. If a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal to support the amount of indirect costs requested must be submitted and a rate negotiated prior to those funds being released. NIFA will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be written in this space.
6. Indirect cost rates will be established for primary awardee, but not for sub-awardees. Sub-awardees who do not have a Federally negotiated rate will not be eligible for indirect costs.

#### **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.

**Applications** should include elements of a logic model detailing the activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. This information may be provided as a narrative or formatted into a logic model chart. The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used in developing projects before writing the proposal. Two additional pages are allowed for this information. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat\\_plan\\_logic\\_models.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html).

#### **Expected Outputs Measures – PDF Attachment**

Title the attachment “Expected Outputs Measures” in the document header and save file as “ExpectedOutputsMeasures”. Please use format, similar to what is provided below, to submit expected outputs and attach it as the last page of the application.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Primary</b> Project Function: (Choose one)  |   |  |
| <b>RESEARCH:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>  | <b>EXTENSION :</b> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>EDUCATION:</b> <input type="checkbox"/>                   |
|  |   |  |
| <b>DATA FOR WAMS PROGRAMS:</b>   |   |  |
| <b>Total expected outputs measures during entire grant period</b>  |   | <b>Expected Number and/or percentage or other descriptor</b> |
| Number of products to be developed for students through grant funds (i.e., curricula, academic programs, recruitment/retention programs, materials, experiential learning opportunities) |   |  |
| Number of collaborations to be developed between institutions  |   |  |
| Number of faculty attending professional development: sabbaticals, workshops, conferences, etc.  |   |  |
| Number of individuals who indirectly will benefit from the projects (i.e., using the curriculum/instrumentation, enrolled in the program, recruited or retained)                         |   |  |
| Total number of students to be directly supported by grant (i.e., scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, internships)  |   |  |
| Number of underrepresented students to be supported during the grant period  |   |  |
| Number of women students to be supported during the grant period   |   |  |
| Number of students who will graduate as a result of the grant during grant period  |   |  |
| Number of students who will complete advanced or additional degree programs as a result of the grant (graduate, professional)  |   |  |
| Number of students who will complete internships and other experiential learning during the grant-period   |   |  |
| Number of students who will complete international experiential learning as a result of this grant   |   |  |
| Number of students who will complete post-doctoral experiences as a result of this grant   |   |  |

**Project Director’s Conference**

During the tenure of a grant, PD’s must attend at least one National Project Directors’ meeting, if offered, in Washington, DC, or any other announced location. The timing and intervals for PD meetings are determined by the WAMS program office. A reasonable amount for travel costs to attend the meeting should be included in the budget. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative



efforts, partnerships and capacity building, project updates/presentations, future directions for program reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results.

## **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 these requirements.

We select reviewers base 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, and managers/operators in STEM fields) 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, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public.

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

WAMS 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 of funding.

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA. The percentage weight that will be given to each criterion is listed after the criterion.

Following the completion of a peer review process for grant proposals received under this section, the Secretary of Agriculture shall provide a priority to those grant proposals, found in the peer review process to be scientifically meritorious, that involve the cooperation of multiple entities [7 U.S.C. § 5925(d)]. NIFA encourages applicants to:

- (i) develop robust collaborations that include governmental, non-governmental, P-14 education, and community-based organizations with expertise in training and outreach to women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields relevant to USDA mission; and

(ii) state what percentage of the project budget will be designated for use in **identifying, recruiting, and placing** women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas in STEM fields.

All project applications submitted for funding shall be technically evaluated by a review panel using the criteria below, specifically:

- **Relevancy (20%)** – Explanation and documentation that the project is directed toward: (a) specific areas identified in Part I C. These areas are designed to yield improvements in participation in STEM fields by women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas as defined in FCEA; and (b) stimulate collaborations that align with the proposed project’s objectives and WAMS grant program goals. Identify appropriate methodologies for reviewing and evaluating expected project outputs and outcomes (Project Evaluation).
- **Technical merit (35%)** – Will be evaluated on the basis of: (a) Necessity, innovation, and originality; (b) For proposed projects with research components, as practicable, scientifically sound approach, and potential to increase knowledge not only in STEM research but also in attracting women and minorities from rural areas in areas of STEM fields relevant to USDA mission; (c) Demonstrated awareness of previous and alternative research, extension, training, outreach, mentoring, and education programs that address the needs identified for the target audience; (d) Clarity and delineation of objectives and outcomes and alignment of the proposed project with the WAMS program purpose, priorities, and goal; (e) Conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the targeted audience including suitability and feasibility of the approach; (f) Expected outcomes of the project in terms of the number of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas trained and placed in the STEM workforce, the value of their enterprise, and the needs of the targeted audience; (g) Probability of success of the project; and (h) Sustainability beyond the life of the grant.
- **Achievability (15%)** - Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality and target audience.
- **Key personnel (10%)** - Demonstration of feasibility through prior experience in research, extension, education, outreach, mentoring, and training of women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas. Also, qualifications of key personnel to conduct the proposed project and institutional experience and competence in serving the needs of the identified target audience.
- **Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation of the proposed project (20%)** – Demonstration that the personnel, collaborations, and facilities and instrumentation are available, committed, and well-positioned to achieve the integration needed to ensure that the WAMS project will recruit, lead/train, and place the target audience in STEM fields at the level and scale(s) to increase America’s competitiveness. **Document the time and resources allocated for:** (a) systematic attainment of objectives and effective functioning of collaboration(s) to facilitate successful achievement of program and project goals and objectives; (b) a plan for participatory evaluation of project activities, development, and use of outcomes-based measures and

reporting; (c) an effective communication of activities, outputs, and outcomes to wide-ranging audiences and for tracking success of participants in STEM fields; and (d) a plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, and collaborative efforts.

### **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](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 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 non-financial 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 WAMS 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 awarding official of NIFA 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 following:

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

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

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

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

### **Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research**

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

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

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

## **PART VII – AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact – Dr. Salei’a Afele-Faamuli; National Program Leader;  
Division of Community and Education; National Institute of Food and Agriculture;  
STOP 2251; 1400 Independence Ave, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2251;  
Telephone: (202) 720-0384;  
Fax: (202) 720-2030; E-mail: [sfaamuli@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:sfaamuli@nifa.usda.gov).

### **Administrative/Business Contact –**

Duane Alphas; Team Leader, Team II, Section II; Office of Grants and Financial Management;  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture; 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Stop 2201  
Washington, DC 20250-2201; telephone: (202) 401-4326; fax: (202) 401-6271; email  
[dalphs@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:dalphs@nifa.usda.gov); or

Sondra R. Watkins; Team Leader, Team I; Office of Grants and Financial Management; National  
Institute of Food and Agriculture; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; STOP 2271 Washington, DC  
20250-2271; telephone: (202) 401-4249; fax: (202) 401-6271; email: [swatkins@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:swatkins@nifa.usda.gov).

## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

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

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent 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, the awardee 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. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. 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, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by NIFA without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

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



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

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

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

### **D. Regulatory Information**

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

### **E. Definitions**

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

For the purpose of this program, the following additional definitions are applicable:

Institution of higher education means an educational institution in any state that:

- (1) admits as regular students those persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (2) is legally authorized within such state to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- (3) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
- (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and,
- (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary of Education has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

Rural Area means any locality that has a population of 50,000 inhabitants or less, and is generally characterized as having fewer than 1,000 inhabitants per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau).

Training means the planned and systematic acquisition of practical knowledge, skills or competencies required for a trade, occupation or profession delivered by formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, or practicum experience that prepares women and underrepresented minorities from rural areas for participation in STEM fields.

Underrepresented minority means any ethnic group – African American, Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian American, Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or any other group – whose representation among food and agricultural professionals in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields is disproportionately less than their proportion in the general population as indicated in standard statistical references, or as documented on a case-by-case basis by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary.