Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program WebNEERS

FY 2017 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 28, 2017

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA

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

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program Web-based Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System Project

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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

DATES: Applications must be received by **5 p.m. Eastern Time** on February 28, 2017. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C of this RFA). Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program Web-based Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System (EFNEP-WebNEERS) Cooperative Agreement for fiscal year (FY) **2017** through (FY) **2021** for the maintenance, continuous improvement, and further development of the Web-based Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System for EFNEP (WebNEERS). WebNEERS captures the impacts of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), and to a lesser extent other nutrition education programs, such as the Supplemental Food Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) as conducted by the land-grant universities. The system provides a variety of reports that are useful for program management purposes, provides diagnostic assessments of participant needs, and exports summary data for Region, Institution, State, and National assessment of program impact that inform local, state, and federal program decisions. It also incorporates recently revised EFNEP reporting elements such as the 5-Year Plan/Annual Update, the budget sheet and budget justification, and the social ecological framework of the Community Nutrition Education (CNE) logic model. WebNEERS is used in over 800 locations throughout the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the 6 U.S. territories. It was launched in October 2012, following a careful review, revision, and transition of the Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System version 5 (NEERS5) to a web-based platform. The anticipated amount available for this cooperative agreement is approximately $900,000 available to the project over a five-year period. The amount available in FY 2017 and estimated for each year

thereafter is approximately $180,000 per year. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2017. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

This notice identifies the expectations for continued support and further development of WebNEERS, and includes deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for the EFNEP-WebNEERS 5-year cooperative agreement grant.

Table of Contents

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act provides that the Secretary of Agriculture may fund extension work in several states, territories, and possessions. Section 1425 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (as amended) (7 U.S.C. 3175) is also known as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). This law provides the basis for Federal funding for extension activities associated with disseminating the results of food and nutrition research performed or funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to enable low-income individuals and families to engage in nutritionally sound food purchases and preparation practices. Funding extends to EFNEP at State land-grant colleges established under the Morrill Act of July 2, 1862, as amended, and the Morrill Act of August 30, 1890, as amended, including Tuskegee University, West Virginia State University, and Central State University.

B. Purpose and Priorities

EFNEP-WebNEERS specifically addresses USDA Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan (http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/ree-action-plan) Goal 4 – Nutrition and Childhood Obesity – by building the evidence base for food-based and physical activity strategies and developing and evaluating effective education/extension translational activities to promote health and reduce malnutrition and obesity in children and all individuals with emphasis on high-risk populations. EFNEP-WebNEERS aligns with the NIFA Strategic Plan (http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/nifa-strategic-plan-fy2014-fy2018) and specifically addresses Strategic Goal 1 (Science) by advancing our ability to fight hunger and ensure global food security (Subgoal 1.1), combating childhood obesity by providing individuals and families science-based nutritional guidance (Subgoal 1.5), and Goal 3 (Process) by institutionalizing streamlined effective technologies, policies, and processes.

The purpose of the EFNEP-WebNEERS cooperative agreement is to: 1) fund the maintenance of security and ease of use of the current Web-based Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System by all users: 2) improve functionality; and 3) further develop the Web-based Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System for EFNEP (WebNEERS) to align with advances in program direction. WebNEERS captures planning, implementation, output, outcome, and impact elements of EFNEP that are essential to effective, efficient, and results-based programming. WebNEERS functionality also adds value for Supplemental Food Assistance Program – Education (SNAP-Ed) and other low-income nutrition education data collection, where common indicators apply. The system provides a variety of reports that are useful for program management purposes, provides diagnostic assessments of participant needs, and exports summary data for Region, Institute, State, and National assessment of program impact that inform local, state, and Federal program decisions. It also incorporates recently revised EFNEP reporting elements such as the 5-Year Plan/Annual Update, the EFNEP budget sheet and budget justification, and the social ecological framework of the Community Nutrition Education (CNE) logic model. WebNEERS is used in over 800 locations throughout the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the 6 U.S. territories. It was

launched in October 2012, following a careful review, revision, and transition of the Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System version 5 (NEERS5) to a web-based platform.

This cooperative agreement will require a high level of interaction among EFNEP staff and information technology (IT) personnel at the federal AND university/state/territory level. This is necessary in order to meet local, regional, institution, and state programmatic and reporting needs which are nested within the federal reporting and evaluation structure, and to incorporate new programmatic developments into the software system, as appropriate, at each level of program responsibility.

Joint Federal EFNEP programmatic and IT oversight for the project is planned. NIFA will provide programmatic and IT expertise, and will connect the grantee with other agency data collection systems. NIFA will also work closely with the grantee in refining the specifications to meet the needs of the Federal government, and the needs of local, regional, institution, and state level end-users. Further, NIFA will work closely with the recipient to incorporate new programmatic developments into the software system as they evolve.

Joint University EFNEP programmatic and IT oversight for the project is also expected. Programmatic and technological expertise is required to ensure that user needs are met, functionally is maximized, and that programmatic developments are incorporated into the system in a way that has practical application for users. A clear understanding of local and university needs and capacities across the land-grant system is essential. University EFNEP programmatic leadership will have a key role in helping determine practical applications through WebNEERS for initiatives that are underway. For additional understanding of the technical requirements for this project, see the IT specifications document (see Appendix A- WebNEERS Requirements) https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/webneers-requirements.

C. Program Area Description

The purpose of the EFNEP-WebNEERS cooperative agreement is to fund the maintenance of security and ease of use of the current system and to refine the functionality of the Web-based Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System for EFNEP (WebNEERS). The project will 1) continuously update EFNEP reporting and evaluation functionality, as needed and appropriate, and 2) synchronize EFNEP with other Agency and University data collection systems; and 3) further develop WebNEERS to align with advances in program direction. This may include, but is not limited to:
- Analyzing system requirements
- Migrating system data, while ensuring minimal disruption to users
- Maintaining program code and documentation of all project development components and system maintenance procedures
- Leading and co-leading ad hoc workgroups, and engaging with leaders of the respective program initiatives, to consider their application into WebNEERS, where appropriate
- Innovating and continuing development and testing of new features to meet federal and partner needs for ongoing EFNEP evaluation, reporting, and technical support
- Maintaining user manuals
- Creating/offering training opportunities for users

In 2017, applications may be submitted to the EFNEP-WebNEERS as a new application. Although new, the project must maintain the security and ease of use, improve functionality, and further develop the current system – WebNEERS. All applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V— Application Review Requirements.

The awardee must include EFNEP and IT representation. This project team is expected to provide programmatic and technological expertise, and to have a clear understanding of local, regional, institution, and state needs and capacities across the land-grant system to assure that WebNEERS will continue to perform efficiently on both a functional and technological level. The project team is also expected to bridge federal, regional, institution, state, and local needs, and to communicate these needs to university end-users. Further, the project team is expected to help identify options for WebNEERS maintenance and sustainability. The team may include representation from a single institution or multiple institutions through a sub-award process.

Program initiatives are underway to further define and refine application of the social-ecological model and program indicators of change, incorporate technological advances into paraprofessional teaching, strengthen local supervisory oversight, and increase program reach. WebNEERS will need to continue to evolve to contribute to and stay in synch with these program advances. Proposals should address University program and IT expertise and capacity to partner with NIFA to ensure sustainability and upgrades of the Web-based Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System (WebNEERS) server, system costs, technical assistance, and upgrades in conjunction with changes to the U.S. Dietary Guidelines, Food Composition Databases– such as the Food Patterns Equivalents Database and Food and Nutrient Database for Dietary Studies, program advances in EFNEP, technological advances, synchronizing WebNEERS with NIFA applications, and developments. Back information on the WebNEERS tool may be found on the NIFA website (https://nifa.usda.gov/tool/webneers) along with a preview of the WebNEERS system (https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Preview%20of%20WebNEERS%20-%20Screenshot%20Overview_0.pdf).

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for an EFNEP-WebNEERS cooperative agreement is approximately $900,000 available to the project over a five-year period. The amount available in FY 2017 is approximately $180,000. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2017. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. NIFA will provide programmatic and IT expertise, and will connect the project team with other agency data collection systems. NIFA will work closely with the project team in refining WebNEERS to meet the needs of the Federal government, regional, institution, state, and local end users.

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Funding projects beyond FY 2017 is contingent upon the availability of funds, satisfactory progress, and the best interests of the US government. Funding in FY 2017 does not obligate NIFA to any future-year commitments.

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

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2017, you may only submit a new application to the EFNEP-WebNEERS Program:

New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the EFNEP-WebNEERS Program. We will review all new applications competitively using the screening for administrative requirements, merit evaluation of proposals using evaluation criteria and selection process described in Part V—Application Review Requirements. NIFA may choose to issue a new award on a continuation basis. A continuation award is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the federal government and the public.

C. Project Types

Only Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program Web-based Nutrition Education Evaluation and Reporting System cooperative agreement proposals will be accepted.

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 will, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See http://nifa.usda.gov/responsible-and-ethical-conduct-research for more information."

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by Auburn University; Alabama A & M University; Tuskegee University; University of Alaska; American Samoa Community College; University of Arizona; University of Arkansas; University of Arkansas – Pine Bluff; University of California; Central State University, Colorado State University; University of Connecticut; University of Delaware; Delaware State University; University of the District of Columbia; University of Florida; Florida A & M University; University of Georgia; Fort Valley State University; University of Guam; University of Hawaii; University of Idaho; University of Illinois; Purdue University; Iowa State University; Kansas State University; University of Kentucky; Kentucky State University; Louisiana State University; Southern University; University of Maine; University of Maryland (College Park); University of Maryland (Eastern Shore); University of Massachusetts; Michigan State University; College of Micronesia; University of Minnesota; Mississippi State University; Alcorn State University; University of Missouri; Lincoln University; Montana State University; University of Nebraska; University of Nevada; University of New Hampshire; Rutgers University; New Mexico State University; Cornell University; North Carolina State University; North Carolina A & T University; North Dakota State University; Northern Marianas College; Ohio State University; Central State University; Oklahoma State University; Langston University; Oregon State University; Pennsylvania State University; University of Puerto Rico; University of Rhode Island; Clemson University; South Carolina State University; South Dakota State University; University of Tennessee; Tennessee State University; Texas A&M University; Prairie View A & M University; Utah State University; University of Vermont; University of the Virgin Islands; Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; Virginia State University; Washington State University; West Virginia University; West Virginia State University; University of Wisconsin; and University of Wyoming may submit applications.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply for funding provided that such arrangements are necessary to complete the project. Subcontractors would need to have a working knowledge of EFNEP, for efficiency and effectiveness of the project. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the 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 information about the pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.html.

New Users of Grants.gov

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

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

To receive application materials:
1. You must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov to access, complete, and submit applications. For basic system requirements and download instructions, see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determine whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.

2. To obtain the application package from Grants.gov, go to http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/download-application-package.html and enter the funding opportunity number

    Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-SLBCD-006184

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

    Contained within the application package is the "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide." This guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If you require assistance to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms) **or submitting the application,** refer to resources available on the Grants.gov website (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-tools-and-tips.html). Grants.gov assistance is also available at:

> Grants.gov customer support
> 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035
> Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on federal holidays.
> Email: support@grants.gov

> Grants.gov iPortal (see https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants): Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self-service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. EST). Have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov:

> - Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
> - Name of agency you are applying to
> - Specific area of concern

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

You should prepare electronic applications following Parts V and VI of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A of this part). The following is **additional information** you need to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III, Section 3 of the guide. <u>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.</u> Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or whether attachments are in PDF format; see Part III, Section 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

For any questions related to the preparation of an application, review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable RFA. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:
- Email: electronic@nifa.usda.gov
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. EST, excluding federal holidays.

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. See Part V, Section 2.18 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application

Guide for the required certifications and assurances (e.g., Prohibition Against Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

2. <u>SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)</u>
Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 3 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. <u>R&R Other Project Information Form</u>
Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 4 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract.
The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of EFNEP-WebNEERS. 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 must not exceed 10 pages of written text, regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced, and up to 10 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (20 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

(i) Introduction: Describe past and current involvement with data systems development/maintenance and with WebNEERS (see Part I, B).

(ii) Objectives and Procedures: Describe procedures to ensure minimal disruption to end users during transition to a new server. Discuss planned procedures for achieving project goals and providing project deliverables. Describe how planned processes align with the specifications document (see Appendix A: WebNEERS requirements https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/webneers-requirements) - including, but not limited to multi-level data collection, reporting, and analysis in alignment with program advances; incorporation of other data collection systems; ability to develop a user-friendly, secure system that is compliant with federal standards; leading and co-leading working groups with program partners; engaging with end-users and leaders of program initiatives; plans for documentation of source code and maintenance procedures, and development of user manuals and training opportunities for end-users; and capacity for hosting the data collection system. For each task identify key personnel involved, and timelines for achieving milestones. Also describe program IT interface for completing project elements. Describe processes for further development of existing server systems.

(iii) Collaborators: List partner institutions and contacts' names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses (if applicable).

(iv) Evaluation: Provide a plan for evaluating accomplishments and outcomes, matching to project deliverables and specification requirements.

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

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)
Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This section of the guide includes instructions about senior/key person profile requirements, and details about the biographical sketch and the current and pending support, including a link to a suggested template for the current and pending support.

5. R&R Personal Data – As noted in Part V, 6 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. Part V.6 also notes the importance and use of the information.

6. R&R Budget
Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 7 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

7. Supplemental Information Form
Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part VI, 1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. **Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name (i.e., enter "Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Formula Program") and the program code (i.e., enter "**EFNEP**"). 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

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

While you should use the checklist to check the application for completeness, the application should be checked for the following required item(s). The list includes:

- Project Summary

- Project Narrative

- Key Person Biographical Sketch

- Key Person Current and Pending Support

- Key Person Conflict of Interest List

- Budget

- Budget Justification

This is not an exhaustive list of required items; it only serves to highlight items that may be overlooked.

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on February 28, 2017**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

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

We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

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

D. Funding Restrictions

No indirect costs are allowed and no funds will be approved for this purpose.

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 space; or the plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construction of buildings or facilities

E. Other Submission Requirements

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

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

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

We evaluate each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet the administrative requirements will be technically evaluated through a merit review process. Appropriate members of NIFA and one other agency will review all applications submitted, and where necessary, also may seek the opinions of others who are qualified to render expert advice in the area to be supported. After reviews have been completed, a grant recommended for funding will be awarded within the limitation of funds made available for the project.

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

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Program and IT capacity and expertise (20 points):

- The application reflects good understanding, knowledge and ability to use current technology to maintain or transfer WebNEERS to a new server without interruption to users, sustain and refine the current web-based system, and to continue the further development of WebNEERS;
- The application reflects in-depth understanding and knowledge of the existing WebNEERS system and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP);
- The application reflects strong communication and teamwork skills between university(ies) program (EFNEP) and IT staff; and
- The application reflects forward-thinking expertise.

2. Quality of proposed project (20 points):

- The project plan is appropriate, rigorous, and feasible; and
- The project plan reflects understanding, ability, and willingness to deliver on identified programmatic requirements and IT specifications (See PART I, B and C, and Appendix A – WebNEERS requirements (https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/webneers-requirements).

3. Capability of the institution to carry out project (20 points):

- The project team is judged to have sufficient staff or an acceptable staffing plan to successfully complete the project;
- The project team is judged to be capable of maintaining, refining, and hosting a secure web-based system that meets federal standards and requirements; and
- The project team is judged to be capable of conducting the research and communicating its usefulness. Demonstrates ability to:
  - Map content elements;
  - Analyze system requirements;
  - Maintain a secure, user-friendly, sustainable system;
  - Test the system;
  - Host the system;
  - Maintain source code and system maintenance procedures;
  - Document all project elements; and
  - Train end-users.

4. Quality of application (20 points):
- The application is clear, well-written, and well-organized;
- The project goals, objectives, action items, and identified deliverables are clearly articulated; and
- The proposed budget is appropriate, realistic, and sufficiently detailed.

5. Success maintaining and refining information systems (20 points):
- The applicant has been successful in maintaining and refining information systems; such systems have been well received and are well utilized.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the review 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 review process.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant must be submitted one-time, with updates on an as-needed basis. This requirement is part of the responsibility determined prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. We will provide you copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

E. Application Disposition

An application may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the application. Each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by EFNEP-WebNEERS 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 will make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant will be no later than September 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions at 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E.

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the information described in 2 CFR 200.210.

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

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These may include, but are not limited to, the ones listed on the NIFA web page – http://nifa.usda.gov/federal-regulations.

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

Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research
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 –
Helen Chipman, PhD, RD
National Program Leader, Food and Nutrition Education
National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), USDA
Nutrition Division
Phone: (202) 720-8067; Fax: (202) 401-0776
Email: hchipman@nifa.usda.gov

William Bristow
Data Manager
Office of Information Technology
National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), USDA
Phone: (202) 690-1956; Fax: (202) 690-1290
E-mail: wbristow@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contact –
Adriene Woodin
Awards Management Branch Chief
Office of Grants and Financial Management
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA
Phone 202-401-4320; fax 202-401-6271
E-mail awoodin@nifa.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

2. Changes in Budget or Project Plans

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

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

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

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have

considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. We will retain for three years a copy of an application that does not result in an award. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

C. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 2 CFR Part 415, Subpart C, this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

D. Definitions

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

E. Materials Available on the Internet

Appendix A: WebNEERS Requirements ([https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/webneers-requirements]())