

# Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program

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## *Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Request for Applications (RFA)*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 19, 2018**

**ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA**

**ANTICIPATED AWARD AMOUNT: \$462,000**



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture

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

**SMITH-LEVER SPECIAL NEEDS COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

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

**DATES:** Applications must be received by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on June 19, 2018**. 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](mailto:Policy@nifa.usda.gov). (This email address is only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and *not* for requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program RFA.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA requests applications for the Smith-Lever Special Needs Competitive Grants Program (SLSNCGP) RFA for fiscal year (FY) 2018 to implement applied programs that serve public needs in preparation for, during, and after a disaster. The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2018 SLSNCGP) is approximately \$462,000.

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

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

### **A. Legislative Authority**

Section 3(b) & (c) of the Smith-Lever Act, Pub. L. No. 63-95 (7 U.S.C. 343) allows the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), to conduct competitive grant programs for State Extension Services at 1862 Land-Grant Institutions to support innovative, education-based approaches to provide cooperative agricultural extension work.

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

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), “In 2017, there were 16 weather and climate disaster events with losses exceeding \$1 billion each across the United States. These events included 1 drought event, 2 flooding events, 1 freeze event, 8 severe storm events, 3 tropical cyclone events, and 1 wildfire event.” The aftermath is impact on food, agriculture, natural resources, and humans. The purpose of the SLSNCGP is to support innovative, education-based approaches to addressing emergency preparedness and specific responses related to natural and human-made disasters. The SLSNCGP supports quality of life in communities across the United States by addressing disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery in the context of food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. The SLSNCGP provides information and tools to USDA, stakeholders, and collaborators to improve decision-making in handling disasters.

Funds will support innovative extension education initiatives that address risks, hazards, and disasters. The SLSNCGP sponsors targeted projects that enable Cooperative Extension System (CES) to assist in preparing for, providing an educational response to, and recovering from disasters. Some types of hazards and disaster-related events funded in previous years include uncertainties caused by losses of economic infrastructure, severe weather or other natural disasters, security breaches, human disease, or high consequence animal diseases and plant pests. The SLSNCGP increases awareness and capacity building of urban/rural communities’ response to disasters by increasing individuals, families, farms and small businesses disaster preparedness through education and collaborations with other agencies/volunteer organizations.

The SLSNCGP aligns with the following:

#### [USDA Strategic Goals for 2018-2022](#)

Goal 2: Maximize the Ability of American Agriculture Producers to Prosper by Feeding and Clothing the World

#### [USDA REE Action Plan](#), 2014

Goal 1. Sustainable Intensification of Agricultural Production

1A: Crop and Animal Production

1B: Crop and Animal Health

Goal 2: Responding to Climate and Energy Needs

2A. Responding to Climate Variability

Goal 3: Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

3A. Water Availability: Quality and Quantity

Goal 7: Rural Prosperity/Rural-Urban Interdependence

[NIFA Strategic Plan for 2014-2018;](#)

Goal 1. Science Catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education and extension programs.

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

- Education and technical assistance through inter-disciplinary disaster training programs and demonstration projects for problem solving, especially those which build upon already existing strengths, contribute to or expand the [Extension Disaster Education Network](#) (EDEN) and/or eXtension educational materials related to disaster preparation, mitigation, response and recovery;
- Collaboration with federal, state and local agencies and other disaster relief organizations, which might include non-government organizations, to support education and service activities that enhance recovery of impacted rural communities, schools, businesses and agriculture-based activities;
- Long-range family, farm, and community planning projects that enhance implementation of programs that serve public needs in preparation for, during, and after disasters within impacted states and across impacted regions; and
- Communication delivery of key information that meets end-users' needs in a timely fashion with consideration of potentially limited communication channels due to disaster situations.

### C. Program Area Description

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

**Application Deadline:** June 19, 2018 (5:00 p.m. ET)

**Grant Types:** Standard and Planning

**Project Types:** Extension Standard and Extension Planning

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

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

1. Enhance national, regional, multi-state or state networks that support official information by ensuring the content is:
  - In a format appropriate to the situation and intended audience;
  - Delivered in a timely fashion; and
  - Science-based.
2. Provide national, regional, multi-state, or state education and communications leadership to develop or add value to current educational materials regarding disaster issues, utilizing distribution mix of the EDEN website, eXtension, related social media, and/or other outlets. This strategy could include materials targeted to underserved audiences (such as people who speak English as a second language, and individuals with low literacy).

3. Improve national, regional, multi-state, or state stakeholder partnerships (which might include the public, governments at all levels, non-profit and/or volunteer organizations, academia, and/or industry) to prepare for and respond to disasters through extension education.
4. Deliver extension education to affected citizens and communities, in one or more states, to address effects of a major declared disaster that occurred no more than 12 months prior to the application due date of this RFA.

NIFA intends to fund SLSNCGP projects to implement applied programs that serve public needs in preparation for, during, and after disaster. Though national, regional, and/or multi-state efforts are a priority for strategies 1-3, highly replicable single-state projects may be considered if they have a strong plan for transferring successful methods to other states. The SLSNCGP will also fund the development of educational programs and demonstration activities focusing on disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. The most competitive proposals will provide educational and communication leadership across an optimized mix of these and other resources.

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

### **eXtension**

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

### **Behavioral and Social Sciences**

Behavioral education and promotion of disaster preparedness is important in planning for resiliency. Incorporation of social and behavioral sciences is key for addressing many of the challenges facing communities, such as helping people plan for and mitigate disasters. Effective education programs and services in social and behavioral sciences can promote and enhance disaster preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery and in the long run increases community resiliency. Such initiatives can provide timely and adequate information to communities that lead to behavior change. Extension outreach disaster education projects should include programs and activities that use community leadership to address resiliency. Projects should promote increases in Extension professionals' capacity to engage in disaster education in communities, which includes gaining knowledge and skills to collaborate, connect, communicate, and build community capacity in the context of disaster education. The proposed Extension outreach program should include activities that integrate social and behavioral sciences in the program design and implementation. Extension educators and other relevant partners, supported by innovative communication platforms, can employ these programs and services

to sustain disaster education activities that successfully protect and enhance vitality and resiliency of communities. SLSNCGP provides funding for such initiatives.

### **Global Engagement**

NIFA supports global engagement that advances U.S. agricultural goals. To attain the agency's goals for U.S. agriculture, promotion of global competence of our nation's future agricultural workforce, and safe and nutritious food security in a growing world, NIFA recognizes that collaboration with international partners can contribute to advances for U.S. agriculture. Thus, applications in response to this program's RFA may include collaborations with international partners, but may only be submitted by eligible U.S. institutions. Such applications may include subcontracts to international partners or other institutions. Applications must clearly demonstrate benefits to the U.S. Additional guidance on including international activities is provided on the [International Partnerships website](#).

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

The anticipated amount available for SLSNCGP grant in FY 2018 is approximately \$462,000.

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](https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsservices/gov/pmt/asap/asap_home.htm).

### **B. Types of Applications**

In FY 2018, you may submit applications to the SLSNCGP as one of the following types of requests:

**New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the SLSNCGP. We will review all new applications competitively using the screening for administrative requirements, review panel evaluation of proposals using evaluation criteria and selection process described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

**Resubmitted application.** This is an application that has previously been submitted to the NIFA but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). We must receive resubmitted applications by the relevant due dates. We will evaluate resubmitted applications in competition with other pending applications in the appropriate area to which they are assigned and review them according to the same evaluation criteria (Part V, B) as new applications. If you are submitting a resubmission application, enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously-submitted application in the Federal field (Field 4 on the form).

### **C. Grant Types**

The following describes the types of projects that are eligible for funding. NIFA does not plan to award a specific number of awards under each project type and all proposals will be reviewed together.

#### **1. Standard**

In FY 2017, projects ranged from appropriately \$21,200 to \$141,900 and have historically ranged from \$15,000 to \$180,000. However, the amount requested will vary depending on the geographic scope of the project (national, regional, multi-state, or state) and the urgency of the need(s) being addressed. Typical project periods range from one to three years. Only applications that address one or more of the following five key target areas will be considered for funding.

- Education and technical assistance;
- Collaboration;



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

## **2. Planning**

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

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

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

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply, provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. The 1862 land-grant institutions may partner with each other as well as with other land-grant institutions (e.g., 1890s and 1994s) and non-land-grant institutions within their state or their region on joint proposals.

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**

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

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

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

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

## PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA. We urge you to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For information about the pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle see <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.html>.

#### **New Users of Grants.gov**

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

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

To receive application materials:

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

#### **Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-SLBCD-006551.**

Click “Search.” On the displayed page, click the corresponding link to continue. 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 (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.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](mailto: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**

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

**Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III, Section 3 of the guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW.** Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or whether attachments are in PDF format; see Part III, Section 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

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

- Email: [electronic@nifa.usda.gov](mailto: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 2.17 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for

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

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

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

## **3. R&R Other Project Information Form**

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 4 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

### **a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract.**

All proposals must include a Project Summary/Abstract. Please use the template suggested in Part V. 4.7 of [NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide](#) and also found at <https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/application-support-templates>. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of SLSNCGP. Project Summary should provide the following information, in the order listed below:

- Project title;
- List of Project Directors (PDs) and Co-PDs and their institutions/organizations;
- Concise (250 words or less) description of the project;
- Funding amount requested, *per year and in total*;
- Proposal type: New Submission or Resubmission;
- Project type: Standard or Planning.

### **b. Field 8. Project Narrative.**

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 10 pages of written text and up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (15 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

- 1-inch margins;
- Times New Roman 12-point font; and
- Single- or double-spaced text.

Please include a one-page Table of Contents in the project narrative, which will not count towards the Project Narrative's 15-page limitation.

In developing the Project Narrative section of your application, use the sections headings listed below. Indicate the Section letter and number in your response, e.g., type "A.1", "A.2", etc., before your response to each question. Please do not combine two or more questions or refer to another section of the Project Narrative in your response, such as indicating that the response for B.2 is in C.7.

### **Section A. Introduction:**

1. Provide background information on and describe the disaster education problem that the project proposes to address. Provide references for data. Explain and substantiate any assumptions made.

- Describe the targeted issue to be addressed and why it is important.
  - What is the current problem or situation?
  - Who is affected by the problem and the approximate size of the population affected?
  - How long has the problem existed?
  - What will happen if the problem is not addressed?
  - Describe the potential benefit to the population group or community served.
  - If the project will support the Extension Disaster Education Network, briefly describe how.
  - If the project seeks to contribute to an existing eXtension COP, briefly describe how it will complement or enhance the COP's resources currently available to the public.
  - If proposing to conduct a planning project, briefly lay out the project steps beyond the planning period and show how the SLSNCGP will enable the project to become competitive for future funding.
2. Concisely state which of the five program areas the project will address (*Enhance national, regional, multi-state, or state networks; Provide national, regional, multi-state, and/or state education and communications leadership, Improve national, regional, multi-state, or state stakeholder partnerships, Provide national, regional, multi-state, or state educational leadership as a result of a declared disaster*). What geographic area(s) is/are affected by it? Provide relevant national, regional, multi-state, or state statistics and other data to document the need for this issue to be addressed in the target community. Identify what has already been done and where are the gaps.
  3. Concisely state the overall goal(s) of the proposed project; and
  4. Describe how this project will build upon or expand related work or programs.

## **Section B: Objectives**

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

1. Define the target audience and/or end users of project deliverables. Support for identifying these specific groups must be clearly reflected in the data provided for the state(s) in which the proposed project will operate;
2. Present a clear, concise set of project objectives.

## **Section C: Methods**

Describe the procedures for the proposed effort, including:

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

## **Section D: Project Performance Assessment**

Project performance assessment plans allow projects to review outcomes achieved and to use results to inform, refine and adjust future project plans as needed. Applicants to SLSNCGP need to submit a plan for monitoring and measuring performance of their projects. The plan must include the following elements:

1. A logic model or alternative schematic that illustrates the causal linkages between planned activities and desired outcomes. A logic model template and explanation of its components can be located at: <https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/integrated-programs-logic-model-planning-process>.
2. A Timeline to demonstrate the duration and the sequence of project activities, as well as division of labor. The Timeline should depict project quarters by project years.
3. Indicate the amount of funding that will be set aside for monitoring performance of your project.
4. Indicate who on the team will provide the project performance assessment oversight. NIFA does not require but it does encourage grantees to include on their teams colleagues skilled in project performance measurement or evaluation who can help develop the monitoring plan and, if feasible, participate in carrying out the plan.

## **Section E: Project Management Plan**

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

## **Section F: Partner Roles**

1. State Cooperative Extension System and non-Land Grant partners may jointly or individually provide leadership for different objectives/activities. Briefly describe roles of key staff on the proposed SLSNCGP project and percent of time each will be dedicating to the project.
2. Land Grant Institutions submitting joint applications must demonstrate that the institutions' roles and responsibilities in regards to main aspects of project development and implementation will be appropriate. Describe institutions' relevant work that demonstrate its ability to successfully execute the proposed project.

Please be as specific as possible in describing the linkages among activities, outputs, and different types of outcomes (e.g., changes in participant knowledge, awareness, competency, behavior, or changes in condition). Also, indicate who on the team will provide the lead and oversight for design and conduct of project outcomes evaluation. We highly recommend involving on your proposed project a faculty/professional with expertise/strong experience in developing and implementing program evaluations to lead the design and conduct of your SLSNCGP project's outcome evaluation.

### **c. Field 12. Add Other Attachments**

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

### **Response to Previous Review (PDF Attachment)**

This requirement only applies to Resubmitted Applications or Resubmitted Renewal Applications as described in Part II, B. The Project Narrative attachment is to include two components: 1) a one-page response to the previous review (containing the previous proposal number in the first line) titled “Response to Previous Review” as the first page of the attachment and 2) the [15] page Project Narrative, as required (see Part IV, C. 3. b., above). The one-page “Response to Previous Review” does not count against the [15] page limit of the Project Narrative.

**Letters of Commitment from All Partners on the Proposed Project** (e.g., EDEN or other organizations, 1862, 1890 or 1994 Land Grant Institutions; Regional Rural Development Center (RRDC); State offices, eXtension, etc.). The letters from partners’ should state readiness to collaborate on the proposed SLSNCGP project and describe the partner’s specific role(s) on the project. Title the attachments for example as, “EDENLetter,” “1890Letter”, “RRDCLetter” or “eXtensionLetter”. *Note: If partnering with eXtension, you must have a letter of acknowledgement from eXtension and a letter of commitment from the appropriate Community of Practice or Learning Network. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057>*

### **Bibliography**

No page limit. Submit as an attachment in PDF format. Title the attachment as “BibliographyReferencesCited.” All work cited in the proposal should be referenced in this section of the application. All references must be complete, include titles and all co-authors, conform to an acceptable journal format, and be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.

### **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.

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

Matching is required for this program, so the R&R Budget (Federal and Non-Federal) form is mandatory. Grant awards cannot be issued until all required matching has been documented and verified. To comply with the matching requirements, the applicant institution is required to provide



100% matching funds from non-federal sources for all proposed federal funds sought in the application. Third party in-kind contributions are not allowed for this program.

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

The budget should include reasonable expenses for a 2-day trip for project director, project performance assessment lead, and one representative from each partner institution, if applicable, receiving funds to attend SLSNCGP meeting in the Washington, D.C metro area. The tentative dates of the meeting are March 5-6, or March 6-7, 2019. The final dates of the meeting will be announced as soon as possible. The purpose of this meeting is to encourage networking among state project teams from different regions and support alignment of efforts on disaster related indicators and outcomes measures.

## **7. Supplemental Information Form**

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

- a. Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “ESNP Special Needs”) and the program code (i.e., enter “MB”). Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application.
- b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

## **C. Submission Dates and Times**

We recommend that you conduct an administrative review of the application before submission of it via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review. While the checklist referenced above should be used to determine the application for completeness, the application should be checked additionally for the following required item(s). This is not an exhaustive list of required items; it only serves to highlight required items that are commonly overlooked by applicants:

- Project Summary/Abstract
- Project Narrative with all required sections
- Bibliography
- Budget Justification
- Logic Model and Timeline
- Current and Pending Support forms
- Conflict of Interest forms
- Match Letter signed by Authorized Representative
- Response to Previous Review (if applicable);

- Letters of Commitment
- Felony Convictions or Tax Delinquent Status

**Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.** Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on June 19, 2018**. 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 peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.**

#### **D. Funding Restrictions**

Indirect costs and tuition remission are not allowed in accordance with section 1473 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (U.S.C. 3319). Costs that are a part of the institution's indirect cost pool may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable. You may not use grant funds awarded under this authority to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space. You may not purchase or install fixed equipment in such space or plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

#### **E. Other Submission Requirements**

**You should follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV, Section 1.5 in the document entitled "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide."**

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

## **PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. General**

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

We select reviewers based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

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

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

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

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

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

A reviewer's written evaluation entails two levels of assessment. First, the reviewer summarizes how well the application addressed each evaluation criterion. After the application has been assessed for strengths and weaknesses of each criterion, the reviewer then evaluates the overall likelihood that the project will have significant outcome and impact. These written reviews are used to begin panel discussions with other reviewers serving on the peer review panel. Through these discussions, peer review panelists come to a consensus on the final rating and ranking of proposals. A complete description of NIFA's peer review process can be found at the NIFA website:

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

**1. Potential for Advancing Education about Disaster Preparedness and Response; Significance of the Problem (30 points).**

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will increase knowledge and skills of disaster preparedness and response. Elements considered include institutional goals, USDA's Goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, body of knowledge and data, justification for the project, innovation, advancing educational equity, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, potential for enhancing extension's reach of providing innovative, education-based approaches to addressing disaster preparedness and specific responses related to natural and man-made disasters, and potential for adoption by others.

**2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages (25 points).**

This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, logic model, scope of the project to produce expected outcomes/changes in knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and/or behaviors in targeted population, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. Emphasis is placed on the educational support provided to the applicant institution through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project. Proposed approach should be one that can be implemented at regional or national level and utilized via existing electronic distribution media such as the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) and/or eXtension.

**3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building (20 points).**

This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its extension capacity. Elements include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support.

**4. Key Personnel (15 points).**

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts and dissemination of these findings.

**5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (10 points).**

This criterion relates to how well the total budget supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; matching funding, the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project

personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority educational need areas. |

### **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 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 NIFA for a period of three years.

## **PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

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

### **B. Award Notice**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

**Name:** Beverly Samuel

**Title:** National Program Leader

**Unit:** Division of Family and Consumer Sciences

**Location:** USDA NIFA 800 9<sup>th</sup> Street SW, 4427 Waterfront Centre, Washington, DC 20024

**Phone:** (202) 720-6059 **Fax:** (202) 720-9366

**Email:** [bsamuel@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:bsamuel@nifa.usda.gov)

Administrative/Business Contact –

**Name:** Susan Bowman

**Title:** Branch Chief

**Unit:** Awards Management Division

**Location:** USDA NIFA, 800 9<sup>th</sup> Street SW, 2240 Waterfront Centre, Washington, DC 20024

**Phone:** (202) 401-4324 **Fax:** (202) 401-6271

**Email:** [sbowman@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:sbowman@nifa.usda.gov)

## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Use of Funds; Changes**

#### **1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

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

#### **2. Changes in Budget or Project Plans**

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

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

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

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

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. We will retain for three years a copy of an application that does not result in an award. Such an application will be



released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **C. Regulatory Information**

This program is not subject to the provisions of 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**

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.