



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

New Beginning for Tribal Students Programs (NBTS)

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year 2021

APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 15, 2021

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Applicable

FUNDING AVAILABILITY: Approximately \$5,000,000

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.527

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), United States (U.S.) Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). The New Beginning for Tribal Students Program (NBTS) is listed in the Assistance Listings under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number 10.527.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, March 15, 2021 [<i>Ref to Part I § C of this RFA</i>]
Letter of Intent:	Not Required
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (<i>NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month</i>)

Stakeholder Input. The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments, to the extent possible when developing RFAs and uses comments to help meet the requirements of Section 103(c)(2) of the [Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998](#) as amended (7 U.S.C. 7613 (c)(2) Input regarding the prior year's request for proposals). Applicants may submit written comments to Policy@usda.gov (email is for comments only. Please use the following subject line: Response to the New Beginning for Tribal Students RFA

This notice identifies the objectives for New Beginning for Tribal Student projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

Enactment and implementation of appropriations or authorizing legislation may affect the availability or level of funding for this program. The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2021 is approximately \$5,000,000.

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

In accordance with [7 U.S.C. 3222e](#), the Secretary is authorized to make competitive grants to land-grant colleges and universities to provide identifiable support specifically targeted for Tribal students through New Beginnings for Tribal Students grant program.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the New Beginning for Tribal Students, Assistance Listing 10.527, is to increase the retention and graduation rate of Tribal students attending 1994, 1862, and 1890 land-grant universities. The primary goals and objectives of the program are for land-grant colleges or universities to use New Beginning for Tribal Students funding to support tribal students through all of the following, but not limited to, recruiting; tuition and related fees; experiential learning; student services, including tutoring; counseling; academic advising; and other student services that would increase the retention and graduation rate of Tribal students enrolled at land-grant colleges or universities.

The New Beginning for Tribal Students Program may support Tribal students by fostering a path from secondary to post-secondary education to allow for an inviting space for Tribal students to attend land-grant colleges and universities. Only land-grant colleges and universities are eligible to apply for NBTS funding. Land-grant colleges and universities are encouraged to partner with high schools, Tribal Governments, community colleges, technical institutions, and other organizations that work with Tribal students.

Handling of baseline data and data collection will be addressed in the Data Management Plan (DMP) in accordance with the Part IV(B) of this RFA.

Global Engagement. NIFA supports global engagement that advances U.S. agricultural goals. NIFA recognizes that collaboration with international partners may be necessary to attain the Agency's goals for U.S. agriculture, promote global competence of our nation's future agricultural workforce, and promote safe and nutritious food security in a growing world. Therefore, although application to this RFA is limited to eligible U.S. institutions, applicants may collaborate with international partners, to include subcontracts to international partners or other institutions. Applications must clearly demonstrate benefits to the U.S. The New Beginning for Tribal Students aligns with the following:

- a) USDA Strategic Plan Strategic Goal 4: Facilitate Rural Prosperity and Economic Development;
- b) USDA Science Footprint Theme 5: Ag Science Policy Leadership by developing an effective and diverse US ag workforce; and
- c) USDA Agriculture Innovation Agenda Metrics: Collection of Graduation Data of Tribal Students.

Additional requirements on expected performance goals, indicators and targets may be required as a condition of award.

Table 2: Program Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	NBTS
Program Code Name:	New Beginning for Tribal Students (NBTS)
CFDA Number	10.527
Project Type:	<u>Education/Teaching Projects</u>
Grant Type:	Regular, Collaborative Grant Type 1, or Collaborative Grant Type II
Application Deadline	March 15, 2021
Grant Duration:	Up to 4 Years
Anticipated # of Awards:	10
Maximum Award Amount:	\$500,000

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for the New Beginning for Tribal Students in FY 2021 is approximately \$5 Million. Enactment and implementation of appropriations or authorizing legislation may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

USDA is not committed to fund any application or to make a specific number of awards. The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA.

B. Types of Application

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. Application for FY 2021 is limited to the following application types:

New application: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).

C. Grant and Project Types

The following describes the types of *projects* or *grants* that are eligible for funding:

1. Grant Types. Applicants must propose one of three types of projects: *Regular*, *Collaborative Grant Type I*, or *Collaborative Grant Type II*.
 - a. *Regular Grant Type*
 - Applicants may request up to \$100,000 (including indirect costs) for a Regular Grant.
 - Project periods may not exceed 4 years.
 - Applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.
 - b. *Collaborative Grant Type I (CGI)* (Applicant + Another Collaborator, for example, a 1994 land-grant institution or non-land-grant Tribal college, high school, Tribal Government, community college, another land-grant institution, a technical school, or an organization that works with Tribal students)
 - Applicants may request up to \$250,000 (total, including indirect costs) for a Collaborative Grant Type 1 (CG1) project.
 - Project periods may not exceed 4 years.
 - Applicant executes the project with assistance from one collaborator, for example, a 1994 land-grant institution or non-land-grant Tribal college, high school, Tribal Government, community college, technical school, or an organization that works with Tribal students. The partners must share grant funds (see explanation of required fund distribution percentage among partners in the definition of a Collaborative Grant Type 1 in [Appendix III](#)). There must be a letter of collaboration, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other documentation of collaboration included with this application.

Planned Impacts of CG1 projects must include, but are not limited to the following:

- An assessment of significant progress toward addressing the national challenge of increasing the number of Tribal students who graduate from land-grant institutions;
- Expansion of the number of students who enroll in postsecondary courses;
- Enhanced retention rates of students exposed to CG1 project activities; and
- An informed science community and others about the effectiveness of this CG1 project through a comprehensive project evaluation, using the indicators and methods defined in this grants program.

CG1 projects must include both the Research & Related Federal and Non-Federal Budget and the Research & Related Fed and Non-Fed Subaward Budget Attachment Forms. The forms should clearly identify the total grant funding anticipated for the applicant and each partner to demonstrate the required sharing percentage. All expenditures for the applicant and all partners expenditures should be further itemized in the Budget Justification. Funds do not have to be divided equally among project years.

c. *Collaborative Grant Type 2 (CG2)* (Applicant + Two or more Partners, with one or more of those partners being a 1994 land-grant institution)

- Applicants may request up to \$500,000 (total, including indirect costs) for a Collaborative Grant Type 2 (CG2) project.
- Project periods may not exceed 4 years.
- Applicant executes the project with assistance from at least two additional partners, one must be a 1994 land-grant institution, the other can be a non-land-grant Tribal college, high school, Tribal Government, community college, another land-grant institution, a technical institution, and/or other organization that works with Tribal students. The additional partners must share grant funds (see explanation of required funds distribution percentage among partners in the definition of a CG2 in [Appendix III](#)). There must be a letter of collaboration, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other documentation of collaboration included with this application.
- A CG2 project differs from a CG1 in project scope and impact. CG2 projects must support a multi-partner approach to solving a significant state or regional challenge for Tribal students at land-grant institutions for undergraduate and graduate levels. CG2 projects are characterized by multiple partners, organized and led by a strong applicant with documented project management knowledge and skills to organize and carry out the initiative.

Planned Impacts of CG2 projects must include, but are not limited to the following:

- An assessment of significant progress toward addressing the national challenge of increasing the number of Tribal students who graduate from land-grant institutions;
- Expansion of the number of students who enroll in post-secondary courses at land-grant institutions;
- Enhanced retention rates of students exposed to CG2 project activities; and
- An informed science community and others about the effectiveness of this CG2 project through a comprehensive project evaluation, using the indicators

and methods defined in this grants program.

- CG2 projects must include both the R&R Federal and Non-Federal Budget and the R&R Federal and Non-Federal Subaward Budget Attachment Forms. The forms should clearly identify the total grant funding anticipated for the applicant and each partner to demonstrate the required cost sharing percentage. All expenditures for the applicant and all partners should be further itemized in the Budget Justification. Applicants do not have to divide funds equally among project years.

2. Project Type. Applicants must propose one of the following:

Education/Teaching

Single-function Education Projects develop human capital relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. Projects should focus on developing skills necessary for entry- and mid-level technical employment or for entering graduate programs in food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences.

An education activity or teaching activity is formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials, and innovative teaching methodologies.

The applications for Education Projects must address one or more of the following educational need activities:

- Curricula Design and Materials Development
- Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Education
- Instructional Delivery Systems
- Student Experiential Learning
- Student Recruitment and Retention

Education/Teaching Projects may include any of the following activities:

- Institutional capacity building through faculty development and instructional delivery programs for K-12 and higher education instructors. Educational activities may include curriculum and instructional materials development; externship opportunities; and opportunities to learn modern pedagogy and innovative teaching methodologies.
- Facilitating interaction with other academic institutions to maximize the use of resources supporting outstanding education, such as linkages between baccalaureate degree granting institutions, secondary, and/or 2-year postsecondary institutions to make instruction targeted at undergraduate students available to secondary students as advanced placement credit or as transfer credit from associate - degree programs into baccalaureate - level programs.
- Experiential learning for students enrolled in Associate, Baccalaureate, Masters and Ph.D. degree programs. Experiential learning component must address at least one but preferably two of the following key actions:

- Research/extension internships for undergraduate students;
- Graduate and postdoctoral students actively engaged in the scholarship of the research/extension projects, including in activities such as internships, externships, and clinics;
- Recruitment and retention of Tribal college students, including targeted recruitment, mentoring and experiential learning opportunities; and/or
- Student study abroad and international research opportunities relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture.

D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects

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 must, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research](#) for further information.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility Requirements

In accordance with 7 U.S.C. 3222(e), the Secretary is authorized to make competitive grants to land-grant colleges or universities which includes 1994 Institutions (as defined in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (Public Law 103–382; 7 U.S.C. 301 note)) to provide support targeted at Tribal students. Land-grant colleges and universities includes 1862, 1890 and 1994 land-grant institutions. You can find a link to the Land-Grant colleges and Universities here: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/land-grant-colleges-and-universities-partner-website-directory>. Tribal student is defined in this legislation as a student at a land-grant college or university that is a member of an Indian tribe as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C 5304). The maximum amount allowable per state is \$500,000 per year.

Applicants for the NBTS must meet all the requirements discussed in this RFA. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or, preclude NIFA from making an award. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – duplicate or multiple submissions of the same proposal by the same PD to different programs is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits duplicate or multiple submissions to multiple programs. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Match Required – Applicants **MUST** provide at minimum 100% matching contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all Federal funds awarded under the New Beginning for Tribal Students. NIFA is not authorized to waive this matching requirement for any applicant or awardee.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on Grants.gov and [Grants 101](#). Table 3 provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. Part II § 1 of the [NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide](#) (Application Guide) contains detailed information regarding the Grants.gov registration process.

Table 3: How to Obtain an Electronic Application

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements)
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-TGP-007932 search for application here: Opportunity Package .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization's readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 4 1 Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
Grants.gov Online Support Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: support@grants.gov Self-service customer based support: Grants.gov iPortal <i>Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays.</i>	Email: policy@usda.gov <i>Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except federal holidays</i>

B. Content and Form of the Application

The [Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the [Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. NIFA will accept subsequent submissions to an application until the application deadline. However,

applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA’s review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all applications that meet the requirements of this RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 5** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 5: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the Application Guide)
Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.	Part III § 3
Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.	Part III § 6.1
Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.	Part VII and
Follow the submission instructions.	Part IV § 1.5
Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.	Part IV § 1.5
Contact the Grants.gov helpdesk for technical support, and keep a record of the correspondence.	
Contact NIFA if applicant does not received correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 30 days of the application deadline.	

SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet. See **Part V § 2** and **Part V § 2.17** of the [Application Guide](#) for the required certifications and assurances.

SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s). See **Part V § 3** of the [Application Guide](#).

R&R Other Project Information Form. See **Part V § 4** of the [Application Guide](#).

1. Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the New Beginning for Tribal Students. See **Part V § 4.7** of the [Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. Field 8. Project Narrative (PN). The PN must not exceed 15 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text and up to 3 *1.5 spaced* additional pages for figures and tables (the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman). The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. The PN must include all of the following:
 - a) *Potential for increasing Tribal students graduating with AA/BS/ or graduate degrees from a land-grant institution.*

- i) Include a Table of Contents
 - ii) What is the problem/challenge this proposal is addressing; who is the target population; what is the anticipated impact on having more Tribal students graduate from land-grant institutions? Clearly explain how the proposed project will address the Purpose and Priorities in Part I (B (1)) of this RFA.
 - iii) Project Justification: Summarize the body of knowledge justifying the need for the proposed project. Describe any ongoing or recently completed, significant activities related to the proposed project for which funding received under previous awards from any sources.
 - iv) Institutional Long-Range Goals: Demonstrate how the institution/organization attributes a high priority to the project; discuss how the project will: (1) contribute to the achievement of the institutions mission and vision statement; and (2) is linked and supported by the institutions strategic plan.
 - v) Innovation and Inclusiveness: Describe how the proposed project will improve the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its recruitment and retention of Tribal students, as well as increase the graduation rates of Tribal students through literature review and the institution's historical knowledge.
- b) *Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages.*
- i) Methodology: Describe how the institution is going to accomplish the objectives of the project. Include in the description plans for management of the project, how will resources and personnel be used, what cultural issues need to be addressed by the administrators of the grant to be successful? Will there need to be training for administrators for cultural awareness?
 - ii) Timetable: what are the milestones starting with the project initiation and ending with student graduation and workforce increases for Tribal students.
 - iii) Measurable Outcomes: How will the institution measure the outcome of the project, what will the intended impacts of the project be, and how will the institution ensure sustainability of the program?
 - iv) Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts: Explain how the proposed project will maximize partnerships and collaborative efforts between 1862 and/or 1890 land-grant institutions and/or 1994 Institutions and other Tribal colleges, high schools, Tribal Governments, community colleges, other land-grant institutions and other organizations that work with Tribal students. Explain how this collaboration will help all organizations, institutions and Nations elevate and enhance Tribal students looking beyond just graduation rates of Tribal students (i.e. experience of the Tribal student, quality of culturally relevant material for the Tribal student, emotional support of the Tribal student, post-college readiness, and other activities to support Tribal students).
- c) *Institutional Capability*
- i) Institutional/Organizational Commitment and Capability: Demonstrate that the program administration is committed to this project and has the capability to ensure its completion. This can be in the form of a letter of collaboration from an institution, Tribal Nation or organization.
 - ii) Institution Resources: Document that necessary institutional, organization resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials), and other appropriate resources, will be made available to the project. Demonstrate how the institution's

- resources will be made available to the project, and when, combined with the support requested from USDA, will be adequate to carry out the proposed project.
- iii) Continuation plan: Explain how the institution will integrate the project into the long-range plans of the institution.
 - iv) Expected outcomes: Explain what the impacts and outcomes will be, including number of publications, number of students directly and indirectly affected, presentations, etc.
 - d) *Key Personnel*. Discuss the adequacy and specific attributes and project responsibilities of each key person associated with the project. Also include the background and qualifications of those personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering the project evaluation and reporting process and why they will be successful working with Tribal students, organizations and Nations.
 - e) *Budget and Cost-Effectiveness*. In addition to the separate, required budget forms and budget justification, discuss how the budget specifically supports Tribal students as well as the proposed project activities. Explain how such budget items as student, professional or technical staff time and salary, travel, etc., are necessary and reasonable to achieve project objectives. Justify that the total budget is allocated adequately between the applicant and any collaborating institution/organization(s), and will be appropriate to carry out the activities of the project.
 - f) *Cost-effectiveness*: Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, or leverages additional funds.
3. Field 12, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V § 4.12** of the [Application Guide](#).
- 1. For CG1 and CG2 applications, documentation of collaboration is required between each institution (must be attached as PDF)
 - 2. Signed letter(s) of support from the Tribal government or departments are required (must be attached as PDF)
 - 3. Institutional Review Board approval (if applicable) (must be attached as PDF)

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V § 5** of the [Application Guide](#) for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates. PDF all attachments.

R&R Personal Data. This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see **Part V § 6** of the [Application Guide](#)).

R&R Budget. See **Part V § 7** of the [Application Guide](#).

- 1. Match – Grants that require matching funds as specified under [Part III § B](#) of this RFA must list in their *budget justification* the matching sources, the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match, and the total pledged amount. A written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement) is not required. However, applicants are subject to the documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, as specified in [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles,](#)

[and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(the Uniform Guidance\)](#),” and [7 CFR 3430, “Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions.](#)” Examples of Match are students who are supported by non-federal scholarships that will be working on the project, faculty salaries supported by non-federal sources who will be working on the project, 1994 Endowment funds, and other sources of non-federal funds and some forms of Bureau of Indian Education funding. Please see 2 CFR Part 200 or contact the NPL for additional details pertaining to Match.

2. Indirect costs (IDC) – See [Part IV § C](#) of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and **Part V 7.9** of the [Application Guide](#) for additional information.

Data Management Plan. A DMP is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V § B](#) of this RFA, [Part III § 3.1 of the Application Guide](#) and [NIFA’s Data Management Plan](#)).

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part VI § 1** of the [Application Guide](#).

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name New Beginning for Tribal Students and the program code (NBTS). Accurate entry is critical.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See **Part VI § 1.8** of the [Application Guide](#).

Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants. This is required for corporate applicants. See **Part VI § 2** of the [Application Guide](#) for a description of the term, “corporation.”

C. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Cost (IDC) not to exceed 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) of the recipient. Section 1462(a) and (c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) limits IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum IDC rate allowed under the award is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:

1. the sum of an institution’s negotiated indirect cost rate and the indirect cost rate charged by sub-awardees, if any; or
2. 30 percent of TFFA.

The maximum allowable IDC rate under the award, including the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, is the lesser of the two rates.

If the result of number one is the lesser of the two rates, the grant recipient is allowed to charge the negotiated IDC rate on the prime award and the sub-award(s), if any. Any sub-awards would be subject to the sub-awardee’s negotiated IDC rate. The sub-awardee may charge its negotiated IDC rate on its portion of the award, provided the sum of the IDC rate charged under the award by the prime awardee and the sub-awardee(s) does not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

If the result of number two is the lesser of the two rates, then the maximum IDC rate allowed for the overall award, including any sub-award(s), is limited to 30 percent of the TFFA. That is, the IDC of the prime awardee plus the sum of the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, may not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

In the event of an award, the prime awardee is responsible for ensuring the maximum indirect cost allowed for the award is not exceeded when combining IDC for the Federal portion (i.e., prime and sub-awardee(s)) and any applicable cost-sharing (see 7 CFR 3430.52(b)). Amounts exceeding the maximum allowable IDC are considered unallowable. See sections 408 and 410 of 2 CFR 200.

Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. NIFA's Evaluation Process

NIFA evaluates 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 scientific peer- review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that meet the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

B. Scientific Peer Review Process:

NIFA selects reviewers for the review panel based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. 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;
2. the need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields;
3. 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;
4. 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;
5. the need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and
6. 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 NIFA will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or 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 grant for funding.

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel

Conflicts of interest. NIFA takes extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may influence the review or evaluation (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

C. Evaluation Criteria

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate this RFA:

1. *Potential for increasing Tribal students' graduation rates with AA/BS/graduate degrees from land-grant institutions.* This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project

will have an impact upon and advance the number of Tribal students that graduate at land-grant institutions by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs of Tribal students. Elements considered include long-range institutional goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing educational equity, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, and potential for adoption by other institutions/organizations. The proposed project must also show its relevance to the goals of the NBTS program of increasing the number of tribal students graduating from land-grant institutions.

2. *Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages.*

This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. The project evaluation plan must state the methodologies in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable impacts from the project. The approach is based on sound outreach concepts that are effective in Tribal communities and educational principles and may be documented through background literature or actual institutional data. Emphasis is placed on the quality of support provided to the applicant institution/organization through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project. Any perceived pitfalls and alternative strategies or approaches need to be addressed.

3. *Institutional Capability.* This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its recruitment and retention of Tribal students. Elements include all documented partners' commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, cultural support, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic enhancement of Tribal students, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support. Include institutional data (i.e., financial, personnel and physical resources available to support the project could all be potential data provided by the applicant, depending upon the particular need area) to show all documented partners' ability to support the proposed project.

4. *Key Personnel.* This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number, qualifications and expertise 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 the dissemination of these findings. Specific roles for each key personnel must be defined to ensure appropriate project leadership and to avoid any duplication of effort. CG1 and CG2 proposals must take into consideration the qualifications and expertise of key persons representing all contributors should be included. Such expertise should address all critical activities of the CG2 project and letters of collaboration should be included.

5. *Budget and Cost-Effectiveness.*

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately 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; 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, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority educational or research need areas.

D. Organizational Management Information

Applicants must submit specific management information relating to an applicant prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only have to update their information if they had previously provided the information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requested forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, 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, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

E. Application Disposition

Applicants may withdraw at any time before NIFA makes a final funding decision. NIFA will retain all applications, including withdrawn applications and unfunded applications.

PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds authorized, the NIFA awarding official will make grants to responsible and 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 must 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, 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E](#).

Award Notice. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions (see NIFA's Terms and Conditions for information about NIFA award terms). Program specific reporting guidelines will be included in the [Award Terms and Conditions](#). If there are any award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the award.

Recommended Format for Submitting Expected Impacts

Primary Project Function: (Choose one)		
EDUCATION: <input type="checkbox"/>	EXTENSION : <input type="checkbox"/>	RESEARCH: <input type="checkbox"/>
DATA FOR NNF PROGRAM APPLICATIONS		
Total expected student impact during entire grant period		Expected Number
(1) Total number of students to be directly supported by this grant (i.e. fellowships included as a cost in your project budget) for graduate education		
(2) Number of underrepresented ¹ students to be supported during the grant period (Provide the best estimate based on past experience)		
(3) Number of female students to be supported during the grant period (provide the best estimate based on past experience)		
(4) Number of students supported by this grant (i.e. fellowships) who are pursuing their degree		
4-A. Two year or other certificate		
4-B. Undergraduate or other 4 year degree		
4-C. Master's degree		
4-D. Ph.D. degree		
4-E. Post-doctorate training		
(5) Number of students who will be supported by this grant on an internship or other experiential learning opportunity		
5-A. Domestic experiences, with a government or non-governmental organization that is not affiliated with your institution.		
5-B. International experiences, including study abroad, educational travel longer than a month, etc.		

¹underrepresented = those whose representation among food and agricultural professionals is disproportionately less than their proportion in the general population as indicated in standard statistical references, or as documented on a case-by-case basis by national survey data (e.g. the U.S. Department of Education's Digest of Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Agricultural Education Information Systems, etc.).

Notes:

1. Please provide your best estimate based on past experiences, graduation rates, retention rates, etc.
2. Number of underrepresented students to be supported during the grant period (question #2) should be less than or equal to total number of students supported by the grant (question #1).
3. Number of female students to be supported during the grant period (question #3) should be less than or equal to total number of students supported by the grant (question #1).
4. Response to question #4 should be the sum of 4-A through 4-E.

PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget

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.

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 (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring);
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award;
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project;
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), 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, unless waived by the federal awarding agency,
5. [Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
6. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([§200.75 Participant support costs](#));
7. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [§200.333 Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services;
8. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
9. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw 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](#).

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

Programmatic Contact

Name	Email	Telephone
Erin Riley	Erin.riley@usda.gov	202-505-0361

For administrative questions related to

- Grants.gov, see Part IV of this RFA
- Other RFA or application questions, please email policy@usda.gov
- Awards under this RFA, please email awards@usda.gov

NIFA's Mailing Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

Courier/Package Delivery Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Name	Acronyms
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative	AFRI
Authorized Representative	AR
Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education reform Act of 1998	AREERA
Coordinated Agricultural Project	CAP
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	CFDA
Center of Excellence	COE
Data Management Plan	DMP
National Institute of Food and Agriculture	NIFA
Request for Application	RFA
Research, Education, and Economics	REE
United States Department of Agriculture	USDA

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

Refer to 7 CFR 3430 [Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions](#) for additional definitions.

Terms	Definitions
Continuation Award	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.
Collaborative Grant Type 1 Projects	Applicant executes the project with assistance from a collaborator, for example a 1994 land-grant institution, a non-land-grant Tribal college, high school, Tribal Government, community college, technical school, or an organization that works with Tribal students. Applicant must retain at least 50% of funds, with remaining funds distributed to partner.
Collaborative Grant Type 2 Projects	Applicant executes the project with assistance from at least two additional partners, one must be a 1994 land-grant institution, the other may be a non-land-grant Tribal college, high school, Tribal Government, community college, another land-grant institution, a technical institution, and/or an organization that works with Tribal students. Applicant must distribute at least 60% of funds among partners.
Matching	The process through which a grant recipient match awarded USDA funds with cash and in-kind contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The matching funds must derive from non-Federal sources.
New Application	An application not previously submitted to a program.
Renewal Application	A project application that seeks additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award.
Resubmitted Application	A project application that was previously submitted to a program, but the application was not funded.
Resubmitted Renewal Application	A project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. This is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to but not funded.