Agriculture in the Classroom

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

APPLICATION DEADLINE: May 1, 2018

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA

United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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

AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM

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 **May 1, 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 (6) months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: We at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seek your comments about this RFA. We will consider your comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we'll use them to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Submit your written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this notice via email to Policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This email address is only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and *not* for requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Agriculture in the Classroom RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program for fiscal year (FY) 2018 to increase agricultural literacy through K-12 education. The anticipated amount available for FY 2018 is approximately $500,000. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2018. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

This notice identifies the objectives for AITC projects, deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an AITC cooperative agreement.

Table of Contents

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

The authority for the Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) program is covered in the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (the Act) [7 U.S.C. 3101, et seq.]. The Act gives the Secretary of Agriculture the authority (which is delegated down to the Director of NIFA) to establish, support, promote, coordinate, and plan extension programs. Authorization of appropriations for extension and education programs is contained in general terms in Section 1464 of the Act [7 U.S.C. 3312].

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of AITC is to award a cooperative agreement to:

- ensure that future generations are agriculturally literate;

- encourage K-12 educators to integrate information about the food and agricultural system across curricula to assist students in understanding the pivotal role of agriculture in the U.S. and world economies, to introduce students to environmental and social issues impacting food, agricultural, natural resources, and human (FANH) sciences, and to expose them to higher education and career opportunities in the FANH sciences; and

- support a network of partners to carry out the program at the State and local levels, by fostering the development of active and effective AITC programs in each of the fifty States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands of the United States, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau.

As noted in the 2016 The National Academies (NAS) Press Report, Barriers and Opportunities for 2-Year and 4-Year STEM Degrees and the 2016 NAS workshop, Creating the Future Workforce in Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources, the talent pipeline for the agriculture workforce begins well before college admission. Moreover, as noted in the 2009 NAS Press Report, Transforming Agricultural Education for a Changing World, public understanding of what is involved in the food and fiber system has decreased, while an increasing number of voices now have a stake in agricultural policy.

Accordingly, AITC funded project activities shall support the creation, adaptation, and adoption of learning materials and teaching strategies to enhance agricultural literacy and student training for future careers in the FANH sciences.

Leadership Skills Development:

> The development of leadership skills, knowledge, and qualities are necessary to prepare students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, government, and academia. AITC education applications must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to equip students with technical and leadership abilities upon graduation.

> Specific activities may include:

- Developing practical applications to increase understanding of leadership roles, including critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills; ethics and professionalism; and working in teams;

- Connecting the academic classroom experience with daily leadership roles and organizational activities;

- Providing opportunities for mentoring and shadowing; and

- Organizing leadership academies, workshops, and trainings.

The AITC program directly aligns with:

- [USDA Strategic Goals for FYs 2018-2022](#), specifically Goal 2;
- [USDA Research, Economics and Education Action Plan](#), specifically Goals 6; and
- FYs [2014-2018 NIFA Strategic Plan](#), specifically Strategic Goal 1, Sub-goal 1.7.

C. Program Area Description

This cooperative agreement will provide support for the following enhancement strategies to increase national agricultural literacy through K-12 education. Applicants must demonstrate how they will implement all strategies listed below.

1. Strengthening state AITC programs;
2. USDA AITC recognition programs;
3. AITC website and national agricultural literacy curriculum database maintenance;
4. Research and evaluation projects;
5. Curriculum development and development of materials to support teacher pre- and in-service trainings;
6. Outreach and collaborations with other organizations and agencies; and
7. Support of the national center for agricultural literacy.

1. **Strengthening state AITC programs**
Goals:

- Improve innovative teaching practices to impact student learning;
- Increase knowledge and competencies in agricultural sciences;
- Increase the number and diversity of K-12 academic programs participating in AITC;
- Foster partnerships and collaborations to strengthen agricultural literacy programs; and
- Increase knowledge, skills and abilities of state AITC stakeholders to plan, deliver, and evaluate high quality agricultural literacy programs.

Activities:
National AITC conferences

The grantee will design, plan, conduct and evaluate an annual National AITC Conference attended by K-12 teachers and educators nationwide to discover and learn to use educational resources and agricultural literacy curricula.

Regional AITC conferences and other professional development opportunities

Note: All professional development opportunities must be based on the National Agricultural Literacy Logic Model available here: https://www.agclassroom.org/affiliates/doc/logic_model.pdf .

Regional AITC meetings. Plan, design and administer the content and sessions of the Regional AITC face-to-face conferences in consultation with the NIFA National Program Leader (NPL) and the AITC stakeholders. Ensure that the number of hours for professional development workshops is the predominate allocation of time for the regional meetings.

Professional development webinar series. Deliver professional development on topics most needed by AITC stakeholders.

Online professional development course(s). This course(s) would target practicing K-12 classroom teachers nationwide, use the national agricultural literacy logic model, and be offered for credit or continuing education units (ceu's) that could be used to fulfill requirements for pre- or in-service credit.

AITC meetings in Washington, DC: The purposes of these meetings with state AITC stakeholders are to: a) meet with the NIFA NPL and staff to provide program updates and conduct joint program planning, and b) meet with agencies and organizations to foster partnerships and collaborations that will strengthen agricultural literacy programs.

2. USDA AITC recognition programs

Goal: Recognize and honor teachers nationwide who excel at teaching agricultural literacy.

Activity: The grantee will work with the AITC NPL to provide logistical support to the annual USDA AITC Teaching Awards program.

3. AITC website and national agricultural literacy curriculum database maintenance

Goals:

- Provide a "one-stop" web-based resource for teachers, students, and families for up-to-date information on agriculture programs, careers, conferences, state-level activities, lesson plans, and other educational information;
- Foster improved, innovative teaching practices that increase student learning;
- Increase the number and diversity of academic programs participating in AITC;
- Support professional development activities;
- Facilitate and enhance the dissemination of teaching improvement activities and educational resources throughout the food and agricultural sciences academic system; and
- Maintain an online, searchable, and integrated agricultural curriculum database for K-12 teachers.

Activity: The grantee will manage a national website and an online agricultural curriculum map. The lessons included in the online agricultural curriculum database will be based on national standards, including but not limited to the National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes (NALOs), national (Common Core) standards for science, social studies, and health education, and Next Generation Science standards.

4. Research and program evaluation projects

Goals:

- Conduct evaluation projects to determine AITC program reach and effectiveness; and
- Conduct research projects that add to the knowledge base of agricultural literacy.

Evaluation activities: Develop and provide RFAs for research and evaluation projects to measure state and national AITC accomplishments (outputs) and outcomes (impacts). Contingent on the amount of funding available, AITC will prioritize projects to be funded and award funds to sub-grantees through a competitive RFA process to conduct the selected projects.

Research activities: Research activities will include but not be limited to: Innovative research to determine best-practices and strategies for delivering agricultural science and literacy programs; work collaboratively with STEM Education centers and organizations to conduct research related to STEM in FANH science programs; and assess a broad group of stakeholders, including those in the industry, to determine and prioritize needs related to agricultural sciences and literacy.

5. Curriculum development and development of materials to support teacher pre- and in-service trainings

Goals:

- Develop relevant instructional materials for teachers and curriculum resources for youth to increase agricultural literacy outcomes in the National Agricultural Literacy Logic Model and meet national content and common core standards; and
- Reduce duplication and maximize resources across state programs.

Activities: Develop curriculum resources—that are relevant and usable by a majority of state AITC stakeholders--to supplement and support the National Agricultural Literacy Outcomes (NALOs), the National Agricultural Literacy Logic Model, and web-based resources. A special focus will be on materials for middle-school and high-school youth. All materials must link to the online agricultural curriculum database.

6. Outreach and collaborations with other organizations and agencies

Goals:

- Elevate educator awareness of AITC Classroom programs and available resources to contextualize core content with agricultural literacy outcomes; and
- Promote partnerships and collaborations to enhance agricultural literacy.

Activity: Develop and disseminate national publications and curriculum resources as appropriate. Develop projects with partners such as 4-H, Future Farmers of America (FFA), and Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS); target underachieving schools, and other outreach to increase knowledge gain and behavior change in youth related to FANH science systems.

7. <u>National center for agricultural literacy</u>

<u>Goal:</u> Maintain the National Center for Agricultural Literacy (NCAL).

<u>Activities:</u> The NCAL coordinates and facilitates a network of scholars, researchers, and practitioners that develop and test agricultural literacy programming and resources. Grant funds will be used to support the NCAL in building capacity of state AITC stakeholders to provide academically rigorous agricultural literacy training. Funds will also be used to support NCAL in creating seamless opportunities to bridge K-12 and post-secondary agricultural literacy programs and training opportunities for teachers and youth.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

Program Code Name: **Agriculture in the Classroom**
Program Code: FF-L   CFDA: 10.500

Maximum # of Applications per institution	Maximum # of Awards Per institution (as lead)	Project Duration	Total Maximum Award	Submission Due Date (5:00 pm Eastern)
One (1)	One (1)	One (1) year Cooperative Agreement (with noncompetitive renewal for four (4) years)	~$500,000 Per year	May 1, 2018

The anticipated amount available for AITC in FY 2018 is approximately $500,000 for a one year cooperative agreement with noncompetitive renewal using continuation awards for four additional years. FY 2018 funding will support the initial year and subsequent funding, of similar funding levels, will be awarded for the additional four years provided performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support is in the best interests of the Federal government and the public. Applications should be submitted for the full five years. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

Institutions may only submit one application.

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2018. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

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

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2018, you may only submit a new application to the AITC Program.

New application.
This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the AITC Program. 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.

 NIFA will issue a new AITC award (cooperative agreement) on an additional four-year continuation basis. A continuation award is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level

of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the federal government and the public.

C. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

In accordance with sections 2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422, institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training.

For information about the Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research, see
http://nifa.usda.gov/responsible-and-ethical-conduct-research.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by State agricultural experiment stations, State cooperative extension services, all colleges and universities, other research or educational institutions or organizations, Federal and private agencies and organization and individuals.

Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

NIFA does not require matching support for this program, and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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

<u>New Users of Grants.gov</u>

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), <u>then the one-time registration process must be completed</u> **PRIOR** to submitting an application. <u>It can take as long as two (2) weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible</u>. 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."

<u>Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials</u>

To receive application materials:
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.

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-OP-006510.

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

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 (2) 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
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. EST, excluding federal holidays.

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. See Part V, Section 2.18 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances (e.g., Prohibition Against Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

2. 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.
The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of AITC See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.
NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 15 double spaced pages of written text and up to five (5) additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (20 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

1. Implementation of seven (7) agricultural literacy enhancement strategies (listed in Part I.C):

   a. Method for implementing agricultural literacy enhancement: Describe how the seven (7) agricultural literacy enhancement strategies will be implemented and the anticipated, overall *impact* your approach will have on improving agricultural literacy nationally through K-12 education. (Your *impact* shall be a change you can measure at the project's conclusion.)

   b. Justification of proposed approach: Summarize the body of knowledge justifying your proposed approach. Describe any ongoing or recently completed, significant activities related to the proposed project.

   c. Innovation: Describe the proposal's creative approach to enhancing national agricultural literacy. Using either actual experiences or literature background information, justify why this approach was chosen.

   d. 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 institution/organizations' long-term (five- to ten-year) goals; (2) help satisfy the institution's high-priority objectives; and (3) be linked to/supported by the institution's strategic plan.

2. Program Management and Cooperative Linkages:

   a. Plan of Operation and Methodology: Describe plans for management of the project to ensure its proper and efficient administration. Describe the way in which resources and personnel will be used to conduct the project.

   b. Timetable: Identify all important project milestones (performance targets that indicate when project goals will be met) and dates as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination, and closeout.

   c. Products, Results, and Measurable Outcomes: Outline the expected products/results and their outcome (impact) on strengthening agricultural literacy through K-12 education. **Make sure to differentiate among the three (3) terms:**

1. "Products" may be actual *items or services* acquired with funds, e.g., "…developed three (3), new Web-based courses";

2. "Results" are *accomplishments* related to the products, e.g., "...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours"; and

3. "Impacts" are the *benefits* to your audience. Impacts are the consequences of your project and the most critical elements in your Evaluation Plan. They are a measure of the results by comparison to what might have happened in the absence of the funded project, e.g., "…an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, Web-based course materials".

   d. Evaluation Plans: State the methodologies to be used in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable impacts from the project. Discuss the strategies and metrics for evaluating progress toward meeting the AITC program priorities listed in Part I.A. Describe any data to be collected and analyzed. Demonstrate how the project will improve education. This section shall clearly indicate how you plan to measure impacts.

   e. Dissemination Plans: The application must document how project accomplishments (products, results and impacts, etc.) will be published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic and practitioner community. Identify target audiences and explain methods of communication.

   f. Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts: Explain how the project will maximize partnership and collaborative efforts to enhance agricultural literacy through K-12 education. Provide evidence, via letters from the parties involved in the partnership.

3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building:

   a. Institutional/Organizational Commitment and Capability: Demonstrate that the program administration is committed to this project and has the capability to ensure its completion.

   b. Institutional/Organizational Resources: Document that necessary institutional/organizational resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials), and other appropriate resources, will be made available to the project. Demonstrate how the institutional/organizational resources to be made available to the project, when combined with the support requested from USDA, will be adequate to carry out the activities of the project.

   c. Continuation Plans: Discuss the likelihood of, or specific plans for, continuation or expansion of the project beyond the period of USDA support. For example, does the institution's/organization's long-range budget or academic plan provide for the realistic continuation or expansion of the initiative undertaken by this project after the grant period ends, are plans for eventual self- support built into the project, are plans being made to institutionalize the program if it meets with success, and are there indications of other continuing non-Federal support.

4. <u>Key Personnel</u>:

>   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.

5.<u>Budget and Cost-effectiveness</u>:

>   a. <u>Budget</u>: In the budget justification, discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed project activities. Explain how such budget items as professional or technical staff time and salary, travel, equipment, 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. Provide a summary of sources and amounts of all third party matching support.

>   b. <u>Cost-effectiveness</u>:   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.

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. The following are additional instructions.

>   1) **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

>   2) **IRS 501(c)(3) Status – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as 'IRS 501 (c)(3) Status' in the document header and save file as 'IRS501(c)(3)Status'.

>   3) **Expected Outcomes – PDF Attachment.** Tile the attachment "Expected Outcomes" in the document header and name the file to be saved as "Expected Outcomes". Use a format, similar to what is provided below, to submit expected impacts and attach it as the last page of the application. In addition to data requested in the table, ***<u>provide justification for projected numbers.</u>***

Total expected student impact during entire grant period	Expected Number	Justification for Expected Numbers
Number of products to be developed through grant funds during the grant period (e.g., curricula, academic programs, recruitment/retention programs, materials, experiential learning opportunities)		
Number of faculty supported by this grant for professional development during the grant period: e.g. participation in sabbaticals, workshops, conferences.		
Number of students who will indirectly benefit from the products produced from the grant during the grant period (e.g., using the curriculum/instrumentation, enrolled in the program, recruited or retained but not paid by the grant using scholarships, fellowships and assistantships).		

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.
See section D. of this part for indirect cost limitations.

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.

Field 2. Program to which you are applying. Enter the program code name "Agriculture in the Classroom" and the program code "AITC". Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application.

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.

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on May 1, 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 30 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 are not to exceed 10% of the total direct cost of the cooperative agreement.

E. Other Submission Requirements

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

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

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

We evaluate each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, 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 AITC will recommend that your project be approved for support from currently available funds or be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

AITC 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 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

https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/NIFA-Peer-Review-Process-for-Competitive-Grant-Applications_0.pdf

The criteria below are not equal in merit but are listed in descending order of importance. Applications are evaluated primarily for overall merit, with emphasis placed on the proposed approach to implement the seven (7) agricultural literacy enhancement strategies using sound program management and strong cooperative linkages.

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

1. **Implementation of agricultural literacy enhancement strategies.**
   This criterion will assess the likelihood that the project will successfully implement the seven (7) agricultural literacy enhancement strategies (listed in Part I.C). The extent to which national agricultural literacy will be advanced and the degree to which the priorities of the AITC program (listed in Part I.B) will be achieved, will be assessed.

2. **Program Management 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 clearly explains the methodologies to be used in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable impacts from the project. The extent to which the approach is based on sound research concepts and educational principles and documented through background literature or actual institutional data, will be evaluated. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a strong capacity to provide programing in the 53 states/territories with active AITC programs will be evaluated.

3. **Institutional Capability and Capacity Building.**
   This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project. 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. Institutional data (i.e., financial, personnel and physical resources available to support the project) strongly exhibit the institution's 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 are well defined, demonstrates appropriate project leadership and avoids any duplication of effort. Qualifications and expertise of key persons representing all contributors are well explained and adequate for project execution.

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 evaluated include the extent to which: the costs to

carry out project activities and achieve project objectives are necessary and reasonable; budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s) are appropriate; time committed to the project by key project personnel are adequate; 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 or research 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 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 (1) 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 AITC for a period of three (3) 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.

Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research
Refer to Part II, C. for more information.

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

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

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

> **Programmatic Contact –**
> Victoria S. LeBeaux, Ph.D.; National Program Leader
> Division of Community and Education
> National Institute of Food and Agriculture;
> U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2250;
> 1400 Independence Ave., SW;
> Washington, DC 20250-2250
>
> Phone: (202) 720-2067
> Email: victoria.s.lebeaux@nifa.usda.gov
>
>
> **Administrative/Business Contact** –
> Adriene Woodin, Branch Chief
> Awards Management Division
> Office of Grants and Financial Management
> National Institute of Food and Agriculture;
> U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2201;
> 1400 Independence Ave., SW;
> Washington, DC 20250-2201
>
> Phone: (202) 401-4320
> Email: awoodin@nifa.usda.gov

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds; Changes

1. <u>Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility</u>

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. <u>Changes in Budget or Project Plans</u>

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 (3) 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 (3) 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.