



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

MODIFICATION 04/13/2021: RFA modified to include supplemental funding. Significant edits appear in red.

FUNDING YEAR: FY 2021 and FY 2022

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FY 2021: **April 29, 2021**
FY 2022: March 24, 2022

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: NOT REQUIRED

AWARD AMOUNT: Approximately \$18.2 million and additional funding available through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.311

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

National Institute of Food and Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) is listed in the Assistance Listings under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number 10.311.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, FY 2021: April 29, 2021 5:00 P.M. Eastern, FY 2022: March 24, 2022
Letter of Intent:	Not Required
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)

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 use comments to help meet the requirements of [Section 103\(c\)\(2\) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 \(7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)\)](#). Applicants may submit written comments to Policy@usda.gov (email is for comments only).

Please use the following subject line: Response to the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This request for applications request applications for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) for two funding cycles, fiscal years (FY) 2021 and 2022 to support delivery of education, mentoring, and technical assistance programs to help beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States and its territories with entering, establishing, building and managing successful farm and ranch enterprises. Applicants considering applying to the second year should check the BFRDP Funding Opportunity Web Page at: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp>. The anticipated amount available for Standard and Educational Team (ET) grants in FY 2021 is approximately \$18.2 million and in FY 2022 is approximately \$19 million, respectively. Up to approximately \$250,000 per year for three years for a maximum total of approximately \$750,000 will be available for the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse in FY 2022 only. The Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse is competed once every three years.

Additionally, Division M., Subtitle B., Section 754 (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260) provided additional funding for 7 U.S.C. 2279 due to the impacts of COVID-19 on certain producers. The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2021 is approximately \$18.2 million with additional funding available through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021.

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) is authorized under [7 U.S.C. 2279 \(d\)](#) as amended requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a competitive grants program or enter into cooperative agreements to support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers or ranchers in the United States; establish beginning farmer and rancher education teams; and establish a curriculum and training clearinghouse for beginning farmers and ranchers.

Division M Subtitle B., Section 754 (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260) provided additional funding for 7 U.S.C. 2279 due to the impacts of COVID–19 on certain producers.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The primary goal of BFRDP is to help beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States and its territories enter and/or improve their successes in farming, ranching, and management of nonindustrial private forest lands, through support for projects that provide education, mentoring, and technical assistance to give beginning farmers and ranchers the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations, and enhance their sustainability. The term “farmer” is used in the broadest sense and may be interpreted to include agricultural farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers.

Applications from partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and school-based agricultural educational organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach will be given priority in funding. By statute, BFRDP grants may fund programs or services relating to:

1. Basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices;
2. Innovative farm, ranch, and private, nonindustrial forest land transfer and succession strategies;
3. Entrepreneurship and business training;
4. Technical assistance to help beginning farmers or ranchers acquire land from retiring farmers and ranchers;
5. Financial and risk management training, including the acquisition and management of agricultural credit;
6. Natural resource management and planning;
7. Diversification and marketing strategies;
8. Curriculum development;
9. Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
10. Resources and referral;
11. Farm financial benchmarking;
12. Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veteran farmers and ranchers;
13. Farm safety and awareness;
14. Food safety and recordkeeping, and
15. Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers, **including support related to the impacts of COVID–19 on beginning farmers or ranchers. This may**

include financial, marketing advice, production, and business planning technical assistance in accessing federal and state assistance programs and other activities authorized for BFRDP to alleviate and respond to COVID-related disruptions.

Target Audience - The target audience for BFRDP is farmers and ranchers who have not operated a farm or ranch or have operated a farm or ranch for not more than ten years. In addition, a portion of BFRDP funding is a targeted set aside for projects that address the needs of two subsets of beginning farmers and ranchers:

1. At least five percent of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; and/or farm workers (including immigrants) desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers.
2. At least five percent of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers who are military veterans. A recipient of such a grant may coordinate with a recipient of a grant from the AgrAbility program (www.agrability.org) in addressing the needs of veteran farmers and ranchers with disabilities.

Please note: Not all applications need to address the needs of these two subsets of beginning farmers and ranchers.

Priority may be given to applications that address either of the two subsets, if necessary, to achieve the targets, by awarding funding to the highest-ranked proposals that meet the set-aside. For applications to be considered under either of the two subsets, they must:

1. Identify the target audience of any of the groups identified above and state what percentage of the project budget will be allocated to serving these group(s);
2. Explain how the beginning farmers and ranchers in the identified target audience will be recruited and provided with appropriate training, education, outreach and mentoring;
3. Provide evidence of the ability to serve the needs of the identified audience, e.g., involvement of partner(s) with expertise and a strong track record of having previously done so.

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.

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program is aligned with the following [USDA Strategic Goals](#):

Strategic Goal 2: Maximize the Ability of American Agricultural Producers to Prosper by Feeding and Clothing the World; **Objective 2.1:** Provide an effective Financial Safety Net for Farmers and Ranchers to Sustain Economically Viable Agricultural Production and Support Rural Jobs and Economic Growth.

Objective 2.2: Increase Agricultural Opportunities and Support Economic Growth by Creating New Markets and Supporting a Competitive Agricultural System.

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

To achieve program goals, BFRDP projects will be expected to conduct training and assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers on one or more of the topics listed in Part I § B. items (1-15). Applicants should carefully consider the topics that will be addressed by the proposed project (i.e., clearly identify the topics in the project narrative and why those topics are the most appropriate for the project’s audience). Evidence of farmer input on topic selection is very important. Applicants should make use of existing curriculum (whether USDA funded or not), including entries in the BFRDP curriculum and training clearinghouse: FarmAnswers.org (<https://farmanswers.org>). New curriculum should be proposed only if the need can be clearly justified. Applications that seek to develop coursework for credit for four-year degrees at colleges and universities are not appropriate for this program and will not be accepted for review. Applications that seek to educate students for careers in agriculture other **than as farmers or ranchers will not be accepted for review. Applications that seek to conduct research will not be accepted for review.**

The supplemental funds provided in Division M, Section 754 (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021) of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (P.L. 116-260) are meant to provide additional support for BFRDP due to the impacts of COVID-19 on certain producers. Projects are encouraged that help alleviate these impacts. For example, projects may include support for beginning farmers and ranchers with financial, marketing, production and business planning technical assistance and include help with support in accessing Federal and State assistance programs. Applicants may also propose assistance beyond the types mentioned here that are relevant to alleviating and responding to COVID-related disruptions faced by beginning farmers and ranchers. All applicants are encouraged to incorporate strategies in addressing the COVID-19 relief challenges.

NIFA is soliciting applications for BFRDP under the following areas in FY 2021:

1. Standard Grants;
2. Educational Teams (ETs);

NIFA is soliciting applications for BFRDP under the following areas in FY 2022:

1. Standard Grants;
2. Educational Teams (ETs);
3. Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse

C. Program Area Description

NIFA is soliciting applications under the following program areas:

1. Standard Grants
2. Educational Team Grants
3. Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse

1. Standard Grants

Table 2: Standard Grants Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	BFRDA
Program Code Name:	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Standard
CFDA Number	10.311
Project Type:	Training and Technical Assistance
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	FY 2021: April 29, 2021
Grant Duration:	24-36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	45 Awards annually
Maximum Award Amount:	Approximately \$250,000 per year for up to 36 months

Maximum Award: Approximately \$250,000 per year for up to three years for large standard grants; Approximately \$100,000 per year for up to three years for small standard grants; and less than \$50,000 for a simplified standard grant application process for one year.

Both small and large standard BFRDP projects support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers, on the priority topics listed in Part I § B. items (1-15). They differ in their scale. Most BFRDP funding will be directed to Standard Grants. The primary goal of Standard Grants is to increase the number of beginning farmers and ranchers and enhance their successes and sustainability by providing them and their families with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions. Standard Grant applications are expected to identify the audience of beginning farmers and ranchers they aim to serve; describe their characteristics and needs; demonstrate knowledge and experience in educational and assistance methods that are appropriate and effective in engaging the audience and meeting their needs; and propose an ambitious yet achievable plan of work that will accomplish meaningful and measurable success in enhancing the number and success of beginning farmers and ranchers. Most successful standard grant applicants provide training and assistance with business and financial management, as well as production and marketing topics aligned with the priority list in Part I § B (1 - 15).

Small and large standard grants will be reviewed independently, and funding requests can be for a project duration up to three years; applications will be discussed by two different groups and ranked separately within each group to provide an equitable evaluation. Small grants are a standard grant of up to approximately \$100,000 for three-year project duration. We will also offer simplified standard grants of less than \$50,000 for applicants with limited capacities to enhance their portfolios in their abilities to create and sustain beginning farmers and ranchers. Amount requested under the simplified standard grants must be **less than** \$50,000. Evaluation criteria for reviewing the simplified grants will be different from those utilized for reviewing small and large standard grants. Priority for funding under the simplified standard grants will be given to applicants who have not received grant funding in the past. This priority does not exclude previous grant recipients from being funded. Both small and large standard grant proposals will be evaluated using the same evaluation criteria (see Part V § B), including priority for partnerships

and collaborations that are led by or include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), or school-based agricultural educational organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in beginning agricultural producer training and outreach. The expectations for smaller projects, however, will be commensurate with their size (e.g., smaller audiences, more limited geographic reach, less complex collaborative arrangements) and provide an opportunity for smaller or less experienced organizations to propose projects that have smaller budgets and less complex administration.

Under the new authority at [7 U.S.C. 2279\(e\)](#), NIFA is offering simplified standard grants. Simplified standard grants can be utilized to develop action plans to address societal challenges; strengthen program ideas to develop a full proposal; curriculum development; develop apprenticeship programs and hands-on materials; as well as develop an advisory committee to strengthen future program activities.

BFRDP encourages the creation of partnerships among its extension programs to assist urban agricultural production in food insecure and nutrient short communities across the country.

Coordination is encouraged to work with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to include training on conservation practices, farming principles and practices that increase biodiversity, enrich soils, improve watersheds, and enhance ecosystem services.

2. Educational Team Grants

Table 3: Educational Team Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	BFRDB
Program Code Name:	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Educational
CFDA Number	10.311
Project Type:	Educational Team
Grant Type:	Training
Application Deadline	FY 2021: April 29, 2021
Grant Duration:	36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	Two awards annually
Maximum Award Amount:	Approximately \$250,000 per year for up to three years

The purpose of an Educational Team (ET) grant is to enhance beginning farmer efforts based on a particular topic, region, or audience. ET applications must support development of curricula and conduct educational programs and workshops for beginning farmers or ranchers in diverse geographical areas of the United States, or provide training and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers or ranchers or for trainers and service providers that work with beginning farmers or ranchers. Such applications should complement previously-funded ETs, which have addressed environmental management and leadership, regional networks, farmer-to-farmer curricula, financial management, as well as currently active ETs, which are addressing immigrant farming incubators, land access, women farmers, apprenticeships, alternative energy, and the Farm Beginnings curriculum. Educational Teams should involve teams of experts with diverse

backgrounds (e.g., NGO, CBO, SAEO, farmers, university, and government) to do the following:

- a. Identify, collect, and assess existing curricula and programs;
- b. Identify gaps and develop and deliver curricula and train-the-trainer programs to fill the identified gaps; and
- c. Collaborate with the BFRDP Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse (<https://farmanswers.org>) and beginning farmers and rancher’s education providers to enhance successful use of the ET curricula and programs.

Applicants interested in applying for an ET grant are strongly encouraged to confer with the Programmatic Contacts listed in Part VII to discuss the suitability of the topic prior to submitting an application.

3. Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse

Table 4: Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	BFRDC
Program Code Name:	Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program
CFDA Number	10.311
Project Type:	Clearinghouse
Grant Type:	Cooperative Agreement
Application Deadline	FY-2022: March 25, 2022
Grant Duration:	36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	One every three years
Maximum Award Amount:	Approximately \$250,000 per year for three (3) years

The general purpose of the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse is to make available to beginning farmers or ranchers’ educational curricula and training materials and programs, which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers. It does so in large part by collaborating and facilitating coordination and sharing across all BFRDP programs (both standard and ET projects) and other collaborators.

Duties of the Clearinghouse are as follows:

- a. Maintain and enhance an online accessible library for beginning farmer and rancher education, training, mentoring, and outreach materials produced from projects funded through the BFRDP program and through other sources.

Maintain a national “one-stop” source of beginning farmer and rancher education that includes training materials and information that can be accessed online. The online database needs to provide access or linkages to beginning farmer and rancher education and training materials developed by projects funded through the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program and those developed through other funding sources. These materials

could have been developed by Extension and land-grant universities, Community Based Organizations, nongovernmental organizations, other Federal and state agencies, and/or Federally funded activities (such as the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Learning Center, National Agricultural Library, Ag Risk & Farm Management Library, eXtension (existing or new Communities of Practice), etc.) containing content useful to beginning farmers and ranchers and organizations that work with them.

b. Facilitate Sharing, Collaboration and Use of Curricula and Information

- i. Throughout the project, collaborate with all funded Educational Team (ET) projects and Standard projects in identifying content for the Online Clearinghouse, knowledge gaps, needs, and other appropriate issues;
- ii. Provide training and assistance to funded ET and Standard grantees in providing their curricula, tools, success stories and other information to the Clearinghouse, and in accessing the information and materials provided by others;
- iii. Provide regular opportunities for sharing and collaborative learning among ET and Standard projects, such as topical webinars); and
- iv. Enhance communication among BFRDP projects through regular communications such as a monthly e-newsletter.

c. Assist in Enhancing Outcome-Based Reporting

- i. Collaborate with NIFA and all BFRDP grantees to assist in identifying and improving ways to document outcomes of funded projects and in data collection concerning outcomes and results of BFRDP-supported activities;
- ii. Operate the electronic tool that helps grantees organize and document the results of BFRDP projects. This system provides public access to reports and accomplishments of BFRDP projects funded by NIFA as well as projects already in existence. The system should allow Educational Team Projects, non-profit organizations and other interested parties to learn from existing projects and build upon successful programs and materials; and
- iii. Develop appropriate communication tools to disseminate information on successful BFRDP projects, ET Project activities and other projects of interest to the BFRDP national community, working in close coordination with NIFA leadership, all Standard BFRDP projects, and ET projects.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) grants is approximately \$18.2 million in FY 2021 and is anticipated to be approximately \$19 million in FY 2022. **The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2021 is approximately \$18.2 million with additional funding available through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021.** USDA is not committed to fund any particular 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. All applications for FY 2021 and FY 2022 should state **September 15** project starting dates on all applications. In FY 2021 and FY 2022, applications may be submitted to BFRDP as one of the following types of requests:

- 1. 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). This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to BFRDP or an application from a previously funded BFRDP project that has completed its project work and is applying for a continuation or starting a completely new project. 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. Applications from previously funded and terminated BFRDP projects seeking grant funds to start new BFRDP projects are also considered new applications. The new applications from a Project Director (PD) who has received a prior BFRDP award must contain the same information as required for new applications; they also must contain an additional one-page “Accomplishment-Based” narrative (see Project Narrative, Part IV). All previously funded and terminated BFRDP project applications must be received by the relevant due date, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications, plus based on performance during the previous BFRDP grant(s) and adequacy of plans for continuous improvement. Evaluation of performance during the previous BFRDP grant(s) will include the outcomes achieved and (where appropriate) contributions to the BFRDP Clearinghouse and Project Directors’ Annual Meeting.
- 2.** In order to meet the legislative requirement for geographical distribution to achieve regional balance, Project Directors (PDs) of active BFRDP awards are strongly discouraged from applying, unless the active award is in its final year of project work.
- 3. Resubmitted application.** Resubmitted applications must include the response to the previous review panel comments and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Resubmitted applications must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application in the *Federal Field (Field 4)* on the application form (see [Appendix III](#) for definition). This is an application that had previously been submitted to BFRDP but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel comments

(see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications. Addressing previous comments is important, but since each year is a new competition, resubmitting applicants should strengthen their proposals in every way possible.

C. Project and Grant Types

Applications will be accepted for two project types in FY 2021: 1) Standard BFRDP Projects consisting of large, small, and simplified standard grants; and 2) Educational Team (ET) Projects. Applications will be accepted for three project types in FY 2022: 1) Standard BFRDP Projects consisting of large, small, and simplified standard grants; 2) Educational Team (ET) Projects, and 3) Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse.

1. Standard BFRDP Projects and Simplified Standard Grants:

- a. **Standard BFRDP Projects:** The long-term goals of the Standard BFRDP projects are to enhance the sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers through education, training, mentoring and outreach programs that enhance self-employment in farming, ranching and forestry opportunities. The maximum award for a large standard grant is approximately \$250,000 per year for up to three years. All work must be completed within three years. Extensions of time beyond the three years is allowable for an additional 12 months. The program will also accept applications for small standard grants of no more than \$100,000 for the three years of project duration and simplified standard grants of **less than** \$50,000 for one year of project duration.
- b. **Simplified Standard Grants:** Simplified Standard Grants are intended to assist organizations: 1) to sustain and enhance important collaborations and innovative activities relevant to beginning farmer and rancher programs; and 2) to initiate and develop beginning farmer and rancher project ideas to lead to future program success or success in obtaining other grants for beginning farmer and rancher education.

Letters of reference or any additional application materials not submitted with application package by the application deadline are considered late and will not be accepted for application consideration.

2. Educational Team Projects:

The long-term goals of Educational Team (ET) projects are to identify gaps in beginning farmer and rancher training by evaluating all existing programs, and to develop and conduct train-the-trainer projects to address these gaps.

The maximum award for an ET project is approximately \$250,000 per year for up to three years. ETs are awarded for up to three years. Extensions of time beyond the three years of project life will be allowable for up to an additional 12 months.

Applications that include requests for annual project budgets in excess of the maximum

annual project budgets established above, or that propose project periods outside the acceptable project ranges above, will be excluded from NIFA review.

3. Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse:

The purpose of the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse is to serve as an online platform and library for curricula, training materials, technical assistance materials and any other appropriate information for beginning farmers and ranchers. The Online Clearinghouse assists NIFA leadership in developing and providing an outcome based results verification system appropriate for use by the BFRDP, provides archival support for all materials and curricula on beginning farmer education and training, organizes appropriate meetings (both in-person and electronic, i.e., webinars, conference calls) under the direction of NIFA leadership and collaborates with BFRDP grantees as needed. The clearinghouse award is for three years.

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

Applicants for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) 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.

Applications may only be submitted by a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally based network or partnership of qualified public and/or private entities. These collaborations may include the following entities: State Cooperative Extension Services; Federal, State, municipal or tribal agencies; community-based organizations (CBOs); nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); junior and four-year colleges or universities or foundations maintained by a college or university; and private for-profit organizations. Inclusions of beginning and/or non-beginning farmers and ranchers as part of the collaborative group is strongly encouraged.

Applications submitted by individuals, or by organizations that do not involve other entities in a network or partnership, are not eligible for consideration under any category applicable to the BFRDP and will be excluded from review.

To meet geographical diversity, multiple awards will not be made to the same organization, institution or Project Director in the same calendar year. Further, organizations and institutions that have received a grant in the last two funding cycles (FY 2019 or FY 2020) are ineligible to apply. Since simplified standard grants are awarded for one year only, recipients of these grants that were awarded in FY 2020 may apply for grants in FY 2021 or FY 2022.

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. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – duplicate or multiple submissions is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits duplicate or multiple submissions. 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 –

For FY 2021 and FY 2022, BFRDP awardees must provide a match from non-Federal sources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount equal to 25 percent of the funds provided by the grant or cooperative agreement. **However**, NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a grant if NIFA determines that such a waiver or modification is necessary to effectively reach an underserved area or population. **See Part IV § B., R&R Budget Federal and Non-Federal, for details on requesting a match-waiver.**

In addition, for FY 2021 awards made only under the supplemental funding and during the public health emergency*, NIFA will reduce the amount of matching funds required to zero.

* Declared on January 31, 2020, by the Secretary of Health and Human Services under section 319 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d) with respect to COVID-19 (or any renewal of that declaration).

The matching funds must be from non-Federal sources except when authorized by statute.

An award will not be issued unless all matching funds over the life of the grant are secured with match support documentation, which will be requested of applicants at the time they are recommended for an award. There can be no contingencies on the matching amount.

The Budget Justification must list matching sources along with the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match as well as the total dollar amount being pledged. NIFA is no longer requiring written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement). However, you are still subject to documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, etc. as specified in [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(the Uniform Guidance\),”](#) [7 CFR 3430, “Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions,”](#) and program-specific regulations, as applicable. In instances where match is required, any resulting award will require the signature of an Authorized Representative (AR). Only when NIFA receives the award signed by the AR will award funds be released and available for drawdown.

The applicant must establish the value of matching contributions in accordance with applicable cost principles. Refer to [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards,”](#) for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

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 5** 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 6**).

Table 5: Application Instructions

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-BFR-008056 , 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 6: 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 Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays.	Email: policy@usda.gov Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except federal holidays

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 7** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 7: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the <u>Application Guide</u>)
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
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.	N/A
Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 30 days of the application deadline.	N/A

1. Standard Projects

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](#).

- a. Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the BFRDP See **Part V § 4.7** of the [Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates. The following items should be included in the summary:
 - i. Project Title;
 - ii. List of Project Directors (PDs) and Co-PDs and their institutions/organizations;
 - iii. Concise (250 words or less) description of the project;
 - iv. Project summary must include objectives to carry out project work as well as anticipated project outcomes;
 - v. List of other collaborating institutions/organizations/farmer and rancher groups;
 - vi. Percent of total federal funds requested that are allocated to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and school-based agricultural educational organizations (SAEOs);
 - vii. For applications to be considered under either of the target audience set asides:
 - viii. Percent of budget allocated to serving military veterans; and/or

- ix. Percent of budget allocated to serving socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or farmworker audiences; and
- x. Percent of budget allocated towards assisting beginning farmers and ranchers to overcome COVID-19 pandemic challenges.
- xi. List of any previous or current BFRDP projects that PD has been a part of leading(list project director and award number (20XX-XXXXX-XXXXX); see Part VIII § Ffor a link to the full list of abstracts of previously funded projects).

Since there are relevant questions needing response when you complete the project summary, you are strongly encouraged to use the BFRDP Project Summary Format (template) provided at [NIFA-19-004 BFRDP Project Summary Format](#).

You are strongly encouraged to include key words most relevant to your topic area in the project summary to better make a distinct connection with the topic being addressed in your application. Spaces occupied by these key words will not count against the 250-word limit in your project summary. Your application will not be reviewed if you include a project summary that is not relevant to the objectives outlined in your project narrative.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative (PN)

For Small and Large Standard Grants, Educational Team Grants and Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse Grant Applications.

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages of written text, regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced, using font no smaller than 12 point and with at least 1-inch margins.

This total includes figures and tables. We have established this maximum (20 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Organizing your proposal, clearly labeling each section and sequencing them as indicated below, will help reviewers find the information to evaluate your proposal. It is encouraged that you include a one-page table of contents in the project narrative, which will not count towards the narrative's 20-page limitation. The Project Narrative must include all the following clearly defined sections:

c. Introduction.

The introduction should include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) of the proposed project. Justify the need for the program by identifying the target audience and explaining their needs (size, region, value of sales, structure of the industry (the number of small, medium and large farms), critical barriers, etc.); and by briefly summarizing any similar beginning farmer and rancher education and training programs that are available for the identified target audience, including all programs at www.FarmAnswers.org. If necessary, provide a map of the region. Show evidence that beginning farmers and ranchers were involved in conceptualizing the project and designing the activities. If the project type is Educational Team, present the rationale for the geographic, topic or other appropriate focus of the Team and the Team's composition. If this application is for the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse, briefly describe the technology that will be used to operate the online library and the

applicant's experience in developing and maintaining such a system. All works cited must be referenced (see 7(i) Bibliography & References Cited in this section). Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages for this section. (Related evaluation criteria (see Part V § B): Relevancy.)

- d. **Objectives and Outcomes.** Concisely present the goals, associated objectives and expected outputs and outcomes of the project in relation to the audience and needs identified in the introduction. Provide numbers of beginning farmers and ranchers that will be served. Estimate how many of them will attain specific, anticipated knowledge gains or actions (e.g., starting farming; improving production practices; entering new markets) and project the expected resulting impacts of those gains and actions on the success of their operations. Discuss whether and how this program can be adapted to other regions, communities and/or agricultural systems. Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages for this section. (Related evaluation criteria: Technical merit.)
- e. **Approach.** The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Applicants are encouraged to use approximately six of the 20 pages for this section. Specifically, this section must include:
 - i. A description of the activities proposed for each objective.
 - ii. A timeline of the proposed project. The timeline should include activities and major outputs and associated outcomes for each year of the project.
 - iii. Discuss how and where the activities will be provided and the appropriateness of the approach for the target audience.
 - iv. For Standard BFRDP projects: how will the beginning farmers and ranchers be recruited for this training?
 - v. For Education Team Projects: how will beginning farmer and rancher curricula and programs be identified and evaluated? How will you help guide curriculum and program development and delivery in future years?
 - vi. How will the project, and its partnerships and collaborations be sustained beyond the life of the grant (e.g., plans for eventual self-support or institutionalization or other sources of support)? If there are no plans to sustain the effort, explain why not, and how the impact of the project will be lasting.
 - vii. The inclusion of a logic model to guide program planning, implementation and evaluation. To receive credit for the logic model, this model must be included within the project narrative. Use graphical depiction to show the relationships between the various elements leading to the outcomes in the logic model. Logic model page will not count against the 20-page project narrative limitation since it will be the 21st page which does not count as a demerit.
 - viii. Any novel ideas or contributions of the proposed project.
 - ix. Pitfalls that may be encountered and limitations to proposed procedures, and how you will address them. For Standard BFRDP projects, identify possible challenges to your proposed strategy for participant recruitment and how you plan to address those challenges. (Related evaluation criteria: Technical merit; Achievability.)

- f. **Personnel and Resources.** Describe in detail the Key Personnel’s experience in serving the identified or other audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers and ability to provide effective education, training, outreach and mentoring programs for the identified audience. For any audience, but particularly for socially disadvantaged audiences and/or veterans, it is very important to have partner(s) who have knowledge and experience working with such audiences, and that such partner(s) be involved in the leadership of the project (see “Management and Collaboration Plan” below). Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project, and their impacts. This information may include: the years and locations of prior activities; number of training assistance or education activities previously carried out; number of participants and graduates from the program; success rate in completing the program; percentage of graduates who are still in farming; and/or percentages of those who improved their operations. Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages (of the Project Narrative) for this section. (Related evaluation criteria: Expertise and track record; Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel.)
- g. **Plan for Outcome Based Reporting.** Clearly identify a minimum of two expected project specific outcomes within the life of the project and explain the plan to document and evaluate these outcomes. Third-party evaluators are strongly recommended. Participatory evaluation, and formative as well as summative evaluation, are encouraged. All projects must describe methods and resources for documenting and evaluating their outcomes and impacts. Because of the diversity in the types of BFRDP projects funded, it is not possible to require all applicants to report on identical measurable outcomes. However, all Standard BFRDP applicants should consider using as their outcomes:
- i. The expected number of new farm startups that would result from their project, and
 - ii. The expected number of new farmers (i.e., those who are already farming but in their first ten years of operation) who will make beneficial changes (and describe those changes) as a result of the project.

Additionally, more specific outcomes, may include the number of new farmers who will learn and/or act on their learning (e.g., develop a business plan, and adopt a new production or marketing practice). Reporting of evaluation measures is managed through the Results Verification System at [RVS Reporting](#). For greater detail on appropriate evaluation measurement for a BFRDP grant, please see the [Outcomes Guide](#). All Educational Team applicants must consider using the anticipated number of users of information products created as a result of their Educational Team activities as one of their metrics. Include a table summarizing the two to five primary outcome targets and related measurements:

- iii. Data management plan (DMP);
- iv. Response to previous review: The response to previous review must not exceed 1.5 spaced pages. This does not count towards the page limit for the PN.
- v. Field 12, Add Other Attachments. See Part V § 4.12 of the Application Guide.

Table 8: Reporting Measures

Outcome	Target Number	How Measured
Number of new farm start-ups		
Number of new farmers who will... [describe action and/or condition change]		
Number of new farmers who will... [describe another action and/or condition change]		
(if ET) Number of users of [describe info/product(s)]		
(if ET) Number of trainers trained or # of organizations assisted who will then [describe actions taken]		

Applicants for Standard grants that include instruction in farm financial management are also strongly encouraged to employ the applicable evaluation instruments available in the Farm Business Health Assessment tool. Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages for the outcome-based reporting section. (Related evaluation criteria: Adequacy of plans for the participatory evaluation process.)

h. Management and Collaboration Plan. It is critical to have a clearly articulated management plan that describes the roles and functions of all partners, collaborators and the organizations, as related to the proposed project. Strong partnerships among complementary organizations (e.g., NGOs, CBOs, SAEOs and universities) with shared leadership are essential to most successful BFRDP projects, see “Definitions” (Part VIII § E) for definitions of Partner and Collaborator. Include time allocated by each partner for attainment of objectives; key roles of each partner and collaborator; and plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance and partnerships. Describe the plans for coordination, communication, data-sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. Describe the commitment of the organization and partners to this project; and how the collaboration and its impact will be sustained beyond the period of the award. An applicant’s failure to provide the requested information in the Management and Collaboration Plan may preclude NIFA from making an award. Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages for this section. In addition, letters of commitment signed by the AR of the partnering organization demonstrating that the partners involved have agreed to abide by the Management Plan should be provided (see “Other Attachments” below). (Related evaluation criteria: Partnerships and collaboration; Achievability.)

i. Additional Narrative Pages. The following situations represent exceptions and require Additional Narrative Pages. In addition to the 20 page limit for the above sections of Narrative, proposals must use additional pages to provide the sections specified below if the proposals fall into the following categories:

a. Response to Previous Review. Required for “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II § B of this RFA, “Types of Applications”. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary. The Response to Previous Review is limited to one page. Use the subheading “Response to Previous Review”. (Related evaluation criteria:

Technical merit – Additional evaluation criteria.)

- b. **Prior BFRDP Accomplishments.** If the Project Director (PD) has been involved in leading prior BFRDP project(s), list those projects in the Project Summary (see 3.A above) and add to the narrative a brief description of what was learned from the past project(s), what can be improved upon, and how those lessons and improvements are being incorporated into the current application to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting program goals. This information must be added at the end of the project narrative, in no more than one page. Use the subheading “Prior BFRDP Accomplishments”. (Related evaluation criteria: Technical merit – Additional evaluation criteria.)

Table 9 summarizes the sections of the Project Narrative for Standard Grant and Educational Grant-Other applications suggest an approximate number of pages to allocate to each section and shows the evaluation criterion most relevant to each section.

Table 9: Project Narrative Components

Narrative Section	Suggested Number of Pages	Related Evaluation Criteria (See Part V § B of this RFA)
Introduction	2 of 20	Relevancy
Objectives and Outcomes	2 of 20	Technical merit
Approach	6 of 20	Technical merit; Achievability
Personnel and Resources	2 of 20	Expertise and track record of the applicants; Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities
Plan for Outcome Based Reporting	2 of 20	Adequacy of plans for the participatory evaluation process, outcome-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results beyond the immediate
Management and Collaboration Plan	2 of 20	Partnerships and collaboration; Achievability
COVID-19 Relief	2 of 20	For COVID-19 relief efforts or could be interwoven into the entire proposal as you deem appropriate
Response to Previous Review (if resubmission)	Limit of 1 additional page	Responsiveness to previous comments and recommendations by reviewers
Prior BFRDP Accomplishments (if applicable)	Limit of 1 additional page	Performance during the previous BFRDP grant(s); Adequacy of plans for continuous improvement

j. Field 12. Add Other Attachments

- i. **Commitment Letters.** PDF attachment(s). No page limit. Letters of commitment from all partners (signed by the AR of the partnering organization) stating that the partners involved have agreed to their stated roles in the project and have agreed to abide by the Management Plan. Letters from other organizations or people whose participation is important to the success of the project, committing those collaborators to specific roles, are also encouraged.

Title the attachment(s) as ‘Letter of Commitment – Organization Name’ in the document header and save file as ‘Letter of Commitment Organization Name. Other more general letters of support (i.e., from those who are not committing to a specific role in the project) are not needed and should not be included.

Do not add any other attachments not specifically requested in this RFA. Specifically, do not attach examples of curricula or other appendices that were allowed in previous years’ BFRDP RFAs. Attaching additional narrative or figures or tables other than those specifically requested in this RFA will result in disqualification from review.

- ii. Check List – Please reference and include Table 10 with project narrative. This inclusion will not count towards the narrative’s page limitation. Table 10 is a tool to ensure that applicants include all required forms and attachments. It is not a substitute for the requirements of this or the instructions herein or in the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Table 10: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program FY 2021-2022 Checklist

File Name for PDF Attachment (or Application Form/Section)	Contents (See the FY 2021-2022 RFA, the Application Package, and NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide)	Check Off
SF-424 R&R	Forms in the Application Package – see	
Cover Sheet	instructions in the NIFA Grants.gov Application	
Project/Perf.	Guide for all three (3) forms	
Site		
Location(s)		
Other Project		
Information		
Project Summary (PDF)	Use the suggested template at: NIFA-19-004 BFRDP Project Summary Format	
Table of Contents	Have you included a one-page table of contents	
	Title	
	List of Project Directors/Co-PDs & Institutions	
	Project summary- 250 words or less	
	List of other collaborating organizations not on PD/co PD list	
	Logic Model in graphic depiction	
	Percent of total federal funds allocated to NGO/CBO/SAEOs	
	Percent of budget allocated to serving military veterans if applicable	
	Percent of budget allocated to serving socially-disadvantaged audiences if applicable	
	List of previous BFRDP projects that PD has led	

Project Narrative (PDF)	No More Than 20 Pages, Including the Following Sections:	Check Off
	1. Introduction	
	2. Objectives and Outcomes	
	3. Approach	
	4. Personnel and Resources	
	5. Plan for Outcome Based Reporting(w/summary table)	
	6. Management and Collaboration Plan	
	Additional section(s) beyond 20 - page limit if applicable:	
	1. Response to Previous Review (if Resubmission) – limit one (1)	
	2. Prior BFRDP Accomplishments – limit one (1) page	
	7. NIFA Data Management Plan – limit two (2) pages, will not count among the twenty (20) page narrative.	
Bibliography (pdf)	Bibliography and References (no page limit)	
Letter of Commitment_ Organization Name (pdf attachment(s))	Signed letter(s) that Partners have agreed to their role in the project and to abide by management plan; often multiple attachments, no page limit.	
R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (form)	Information and Biographical Sketch form for each person. Current and Pending Support is required with this application.	
R&R Personal Data	Providing this information is required.	
R&R Budget Federal and Non- Federal (form)	Complete three (3) R&R budget forms reflecting each year of the project; annual budgets are required at the time of application.	
Budget Justification (PDF)	Explain each item, no page limit. The Budget Justification must list matching sources along with the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match as well as the total dollar amount being pledged. NIFA is no longer requiring written verification of commitments of matching support and pledge agreements). If you are requesting a waiver of the match, include your rationale for the waiver of the	
R&R Sub-award Budget (form)	Required if any sub-awards	
Supplemental Information Form (form)	Program Code = BFRDA for Standard Grants Program Code = BFRDB for Educational Grants Program Code = BFRDC for Clearinghouse Grants	
Conflict of Interest (PDF)	Complete a Conflict of Interest form for each key /senior person Conflict of Interest then combine them into one (1) pdf document to attach	

2. **Project Narrative for Simplified Standard Grant Applications (Field 8)** NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 10 pages of written text, regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced, using font no smaller than 12 point and with at least 1-inch margins. This total includes figures and tables. We have established this maximum (10 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Organizing your proposal, clearly labeling each section and sequencing them as indicated below, will help reviewers find the information to evaluate your proposal. It is encouraged that you include a one-page table of contents in the project narrative, which will not count towards the narrative's 10-page limitation. The Project Narrative must include all the following clearly defined sections:
- a. **Introduction.** The introduction must include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) of the proposed project. Justify the need for the program by identifying the target audience and explaining their needs (size, region, value of sales, structure of the industry), the number of small, medium and large farms), (critical barriers, etc.); and by briefly summarizing all the other similar beginning farmer and rancher education and training programs that are available for the identified target audience, including all programs at FarmAnswers.org. If necessary, provide a map of the region.
 - b. **Objectives and Outcomes.** Concisely present the goals, associated objectives and expected outputs and outcomes of the project in relation to the audience and needs identified in the introduction. Provide numbers of beginning farmers and ranchers that will be served. Estimate how many of them will attain specific, anticipated knowledge gains or actions (e.g., starting farming; improving production practices; entering new markets) and project the expected resulting impacts of those gains and actions on the success of their operations.
 - c. **Approach.** The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described.
 - i. A description of the activities proposed for each objective.
 - ii. A timeline of the proposed project. The timeline should include activities and major outputs and associated outcomes for each year of the project.
 - iii. Discuss how and where the activities will be provided and the appropriateness of the approach for the target audience.
 - iv. How will the beginning farmers and ranchers be recruited for this training?
 - v. How will the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, be sustained beyond the life of the grant (e.g., plans for eventual self-support or institutionalization or other sources of support)? If there are no plans to sustain the effort, explain why not, and how the impact of the project will be lasting.
 - vi. The inclusion of a logic model to guide program planning, implementation and evaluation.
 - vii. Any novel ideas or contributions of the proposed project.
 - viii. Pitfalls that may be encountered and limitations to proposed procedures, and how you will address them.
 - d. **Personnel and Resources.** Describe in detail the Key Personnel's experience in serving the identified or other audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers and ability to provide effective education, training, outreach and mentoring programs for the identified audience. For any audience, but particularly for socially disadvantaged audiences and/or veterans, it is very important to have partner(s)

who have knowledge and experience working with such audiences, and that such partner(s) be involved in the leadership of the project.

- e. Commitment Letters. PDF attachment(s). No page limits. Letters of commitment from all partners (signed by the AR of the partnering organization) stating that the partners involved have agreed to their stated roles in the project. Letters from other organizations or people whose participation is important to the success of the project, committing those collaborators to specific roles, are also encouraged. Title the attachment(s) as ‘Letter of Commitment – Organization Name’ in the document header and save file as ‘Letter of Commitment Organization Name’. Other more general letters of support (i.e., from those who are not committing to a specific role in the project) are not needed and should not be included.

Table 11: Checklist

Document Type	Criteria	Check Off
Table of Contents	Have you included a one-page table of contents?	
	Title	
	List of Project Directors/Co-PDs & Institutions	
	Project summary - 250 words or less	
	List of other collaborating organizations noton PD/ co- PD list	
	Logic Model in graphic depiction It cannot be an attachment, must be included within the project narrative, and would not count against the 10-pagelimit required for project narrative	
Project Narrative (PDF)	No more than 10 pages, include the following Sections:	
	Introduction	
	Objectives and Outcomes	
	Approach	
	Personnel and Resources	
	Project Evaluation	
	Project Results and Dissemination	
Budget Justification (PDF)	Explain each item, no page limit. The Budget Justification must list matching sources along with the identification of the entity(ices) providing the match as well as the total dollar amount being pledged. NIFA is no longer requiring written verification of commitments of matching support and pledge agreements). If you are requesting a waiver of the match, include your rational for the waiver of the match on the top page of the budget justification form. Enter this statement at the top of the budget justification form to be considered for a match waiver – “This applicant plans to serve underserved group or population and hereby requests a match waiver”	
R&R Sub- award Budget	Required if any sub-awards	
Supplemental Information Form (form)	Program Code = BFRDA for Simplified Standard Grant	
Conflict of Interest (pdf)	Complete a Conflict of Interest form for each key /senior person https://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/conflict_of_interest.doc then combine them into one (1) pdf document to attach	

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.

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 – If an applicant concludes that the matching requirements described under [Part III § B](#) of this RFA is not applicable to them; the applicant must include an explanation of their conclusion in the *budget justification*. NIFA will consider this justification when determining final matching requirements or if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements. 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.”](#)
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 and the program code. Accurate entry is critical.

Table 12: Program Codes

Proposal Type	Program Code Name	Program Code
Standard Grant	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Standard, includes small and large standard grants as well as simplified standard grants	BFRDA
Educational Team	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Educational	BFRDB
Clearinghouse	Beginning Farmer and Rancher DevelopmentProgram, Clearinghouse	BFRDC

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

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 amended the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 ([7 U.S.C. 3310\(a\)](#)), limiting indirect costs for grants to 22 percent (22%) of the total Federal funds provided under each award. However, Section 12302 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 limits indirect costs for this program to 10% of total federal funds awarded. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants for Standard Grants, Educational Teams (ETs), and Clearinghouse proposals must limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to 10 percent (10%) of the total funds requested. Funds under BFRDP grants may not be used for the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility.

Other Submission Requirements

Follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV § 1.9 in the document entitled “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” For information about the status of a submitted application, see Part III § 6 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

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**).

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 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 AFRI project 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 comments to the PD.

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).

B. Evaluation Criteria

NIFA will use the following evaluation Criteria for Small and Large Standard Grants and Educational Team Grant Applications criteria to evaluate this RFA:

1. We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to

this Request for Applications:

- a. **Partnerships and Collaborations (10 points):** To what extent does the application represent a substantial and effective collaborative network or partnership of public and/or private entities? Does the proposal include the necessary partners to meet the needs of the audience, and does it make appropriate use of the expertise and other strengths of each of the partners?
- b. **Consultation of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (10 points):** Explain and document the role that beginning farmers and ranchers played in the design, implementation, and decision making related to the proposed initiative to support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives to increase opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers.
- c. **Relevancy (10 points):** Explanation and documentation that the project is directed towards specific topic areas identified in Part I § B in this RFA. These topics are designed to yield improvements in and sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers as defined in the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334). In addition, the relevancy will be evaluated by the description of the necessity of the project based on the needs identified for the target audience, the inclusion of beginning farmers and ranchers in the conceptualization and development of project activities, and the degree to which the project addresses audience(s), needs, and/or geographic area(s) not served by previous and alternative training, outreach, mentoring and education programs.
- d. **Technical merit (15 points):**
 - i. Clarity and delineation of objectives, activities and outcomes;
 - ii. Conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the targeted audience including suitability and feasibility of the approach (e.g., social, economic and cultural relevance, distance based versus face-to-face);
 - iii. Innovation and originality of objectives and activities;
 - iv. Expected performance targets, outcomes and impacts as indicated in the Plan for Outcome Based Reporting;
 - v. Adaptability to other locations, communities, and/or agricultural products and technologies;
 - vi. Sustainability of the project partnerships and collaborations beyond the life of the grant, or a compelling explanation of how the project impact will be lasting if the collaboration itself is not sustained; and
 - vii. Reasonableness of the budget for planned activities. (While the size of the budget is not an evaluation criterion, the reviewers will be asked to comment whether it matches logically with the program described in the narrative.)
 - viii. Additional evaluation criteria for New and/or Resubmitted Applications from Project Directors (PDs) of prior BFRDP projects

(Standard and ET grants):

- a) Performance during the Previous BFRDP grant(s). The applicant should include a description of the achievement of prior project outcomes and prior project contributions of curriculum to the BFRDP Clearinghouse. The applicant should also describe their participation and contributions to the Results Verification System and annual report to REEport. Prior project outcomes, prior project curricula contributions to the Clearinghouse, and participation in the Project Directors' meetings will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the proposal.
- b) Adequacy of Plans for Continuous Improvement. Includes what was learned from the past project(s), what can be improved upon, and how those lessons and improvements are being incorporated into this application to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting program goals.
- ix. For Educational Team applicants, this includes: Adequacy of dissemination plans for evaluation reports, including number and description of activities planned for disseminating evaluation reports and new curricula.
- x. **Achievability (15 points):** Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality, target audience and budget for each activity. The extent to which the applicant identifies potential pitfalls and how they will be addressed. There should be sufficient time commitment of project directors and co-directors for project activities including management. The plans for management and collaborative arrangements of the proposed project should be adequate, e.g., sufficient time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; clearly defined project roles and relationships among the key participants and collaborators; plan for decision-making; and plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, and collaborative efforts.
- xi. **Expertise and track record of the applicants (15 points):** To what extent does the application demonstrate expertise through successful multi-year experience in education, outreach, mentoring and/or technical assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers? The successful multi-year experience can be demonstrated by the number of training, assistance, or education activities previously carried out; number of participants or graduates of the program, success rate and their current occupation; the number of years a program or activity has been offered. The extent to which the qualifications of the applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project activities are detailed. The applicant's ability to evaluate project outcomes. The applicant's demonstration of experience and competence in serving the needs of the identified target audience.
- xii. **Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation (10 points):** Includes the expertise of consultants and collaborators, sufficiency of the educational facilities and equipment for the proposed education and outreach methods.
- xiii. Adequacy of plans for the participatory evaluation process, outcome-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results beyond the immediate target audience (15 points): Includes number and expertise of evaluation team members who have agreed to serve or who have been identified.

2. **Evaluation Criteria for Simplified Standard Grant Applications** – We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to the simplified standard grant applications:
- a. **Partnerships and Collaborations (10 points):** To what extent does the application represent a substantial and effective collaborative network or partnership of public and/or private entities?
 - b. **Consultation of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (10 points):** Explain and document the role that beginning farmers and ranchers played in the design, implementation, and decision making related to the proposed initiative to support new and established local training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives to increase opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers.
 - c. **Relevancy (15 points)** The relevancy will be evaluated by the description of the necessity of the project based on the needs identified for the target audience, the inclusion of beginning farmers and ranchers in the conceptualization and development of project activities, and the degree to which the project addresses audience(s) needs, and/or geographic area(s) not served by previous and alternative training, outreach, mentoring and education programs.
 - d. **Technical Merit (15 points):**
 - i. Clarity and delineation of objectives, activities and outcomes;
 - ii. Explanation of the method of delivery and applicability to audience: Distance-based versus face-to-face;
 - e. **Achievability (15 points):** Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality, target audience and budget for each activity. The extent to which the applicant identifies potential pitfalls and how they will be addressed. Sufficient time commitment of project directors and co-directors for project activities, including management.
 - f. **Expertise and track record of the applicants (10 points):** To what extent does the application demonstrate expertise through successful multi-year experience in education, outreach, mentoring, training and/or technical assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers?
 - g. **Personnel (10 points):** Each application must implement sound and effective project management practices. Applications demonstrating strong leadership and skills in delivering training and outreach to target audience will be given priority. Expertise of consultants and collaborators will be taken into consideration.
 - h. **Project Evaluation (5 points):** Project evaluation must be fully described including a graphic logic model to be utilized for the evaluation. For example, one page of write up can be devoted to a logic model graphic illustration to be utilized. Third party evaluator is strongly encouraged.
 - i. **Project Results and Dissemination (10 points):** Plans for reporting, and the communication of findings and results within the target audience and local area. Each application must demonstrate project benefits and results to growing new and beginning farmers and ranchers. Emphasis is on creating and sustaining beginning farmers and ranchers.

3. **Evaluation Criteria for Online Clearinghouse Applications** – We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to the online clearing house applications:
- a. **Consultation with pre-existing grantees (10 points):** Explain and document the role that preexisting BFRDP standard and educational enhancement team grantees played in the design, implementation, and decision making related to the proposed clearinghouse.
 - b. **Relevancy (10 points):** Explanation and documentation that the project is directed towards making available to educators, educational curricula and training materials and programs, related to the specific topic areas identified in Part I § B in this RFA. These topics are designed to yield improvements in and sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers as defined in the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334). In addition, the relevancy will be evaluated by the description of the necessity of the proposed clearinghouse approach based on the needs identified for the target audience beginning farmer and rancher educators, and the inclusion of these educators in the conceptualization and development of clearinghouse design and activities.
 - c. **Technical Merit (20 points):**
 - i. Clarity and delineation of objectives, activities and outcomes;
 - ii. Conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the targeted audience of educators including suitability and feasibility of the approach;
 - iii. Adaptability and replicability of the clearinghouse to other educational sectors;
 - iv. Sustainability and transferability of the project beyond the life of the grant; and
 - d. **Achievability (15 points):** Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality, target audience and budget for each activity. The extent to which the applicant identifies potential pitfalls and how they will be addressed. There should be sufficient time commitment of project directors for project activities including management. The plans for management and collaborative arrangements of the proposed project should be adequate, e.g., sufficient time should be allocated for systematic attainment of objectives.
 - e. **Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation (15 points):** Includes the expertise of consultants and collaborators, sufficiency of the educational facilities and equipment for the proposed education and outreach methods. The adequacy of the computer and technology requirements that are available for the project and what is required by those who will be accessing your online library will be evaluated. Plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, and collaborative efforts should be clearly demonstrated.
 - f. **Adequacy of plans for assisting BFRDP grantees in the participatory evaluation process, outcome-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results beyond the immediate target audience (10 points):** Includes number and expertise of clearinghouse team members who have agreed to serve or who have been identified.
 - g. **Organizational Effectiveness in Operating an Electronic Library of Beginning Farmer and Rancher Education Programs and Materials (20 points)**
 - i. Ability to gather, organize, and make available educational curricula, materials and information relevant and useful to beginning farmer and rancher development programs and issues;

- ii. Management and organizational capacity to provide support to Educational Team and Standard projects; knowledge and expertise to compile, analyze, and continuously improve outcome-based measures and reporting;
- iii. Capacity to provide communications materials to enhance the impacts of BFRDP projects;
- iv. Applicants demonstrated expertise through successful multi-year experiences in education, outreach, mentoring and/or technical assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers.

4. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer review evaluation process, we take extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. See [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#) for further information about conflicts of interest and confidentiality as related to the peer review process.

5. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted one-time, with updates on an as-needed basis. This requirement is part of the responsibility determined prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. We will provide you copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-award process.

Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

6. Application Disposition

An application may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the application. Each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by NIFA on behalf of BFRDP for a period of three years.

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, Sub parts 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.

PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget

1. **Delegation of fiscal responsibility.** Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.
2. **Changes in Budget or Project Plans.** In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):
 - a. 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);
 - b. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award;
 - c. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project;
 - d. 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,
 - e. [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
 - f. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR §200.456 Participant support costs](#));
 - g. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR §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;
 - h. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
 - i. 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 CONTACTS

Programmatic Contacts

Name	Email	Telephone
Denis Ebodaghe	denis.ebodaghe@usda.gov	(202) 445-5460
Desiree Rucker	desiree.rucker@usda.gov	(202) 445-5386

For administrative questions related to;

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

NIFA's Mailing Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64105

Courier/Package Delivery Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture,
805 Pennsylvania Avenue, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64105

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Name	Acronyms
Authorized Representative	AR
Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education reform Act of 1998	AREERA
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program	BFRDP
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance	CFDA
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
Beginning Farmer or Rancher:	A person that has not operated a farm or ranch or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years.
Clearinghouse:	An online repository that will make available to beginning farmers or rancher’s education curricula and training materials and programs, and which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.
Collaborator:	a person or an organization that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project but is not immediately connected to the management of the project.
Community Based Organizations (CBOs):	Private non-profit organizations that are representative of a community or a significant segment of a community that provides services to that local community.
Education:	an act or process that delivers knowledge and informal educational programs to beginning farmers and ranchers, enabling them to make practical decisions.
Limited resource farmer or rancher:	an operator of a farm or ranch that has both low levels of farm sales and low household income.
Military Veteran:	a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable.
Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs):	legally constituted, non-governmental organizations created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government and serving one (1) or more communities.
Partnership:	a relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.
Performance target:	a specific, verifiable change in people’s actions or conditions. It defines how many people will change and what degree of change constitutes success.
Producer:	an individual, family, or other entity in the U.S. engaged in the business of agriculture, crop, livestock, forestry, and range production, management and marketing.
Qualified Public and Private Entities:	public or private groups, organizations, or institutions that have established and demonstrated capacities to conduct projects that accomplish the purposes of the program as designated in these guidelines.
Regions:	are subdivided into four categories and include the states and territories as described below:

	<p>i. The Northeast Region: Includes the 12 Northeast States and the District of Columbia (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia);</p> <p>ii. The Southern Region: Includes 13 States plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma);</p> <p>iii. The North Central Region: Includes 12 States (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri; Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota) and;</p> <p>iv. The Western Region: Includes 12 States and the American Territories in the Pacific (Hawaii, Alaska, Washington State, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Micronesia).</p>
School-based agricultural educational organizations (SAEOs):	organizations that deliver career and/or technical education in agriculture to high school students, which may include classroom and/or experiential learning, for example, FFA (formerly known as the Future Farmers of America), National Young Farmer Educational Organization, or other similar organizations.
Socially disadvantaged beginning farmer or rancher:	a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group (i.e., a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) (7 U.S.C. 2003(e)).
Veteran farmer or rancher:	a farmer or rancher who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable. (See 7 U.S.C. 2279(e) for further details.)