

# Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Competitive Grants Program

## *FY 2019 Request for Applications (RFA)*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** July 25, 2019

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



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food and  
Agriculture

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

**Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Competitive Grants Program**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

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

**DATES:** Applications must be received by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on July 25, 2019**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C of this RFA). Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

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

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** NIFA requests applications for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) Competitive Grants Program for fiscal year (FY) 2019 to provide competitive grants to State departments of agriculture, State cooperative extension services, and nonprofit organizations to carry out programs to address farmer stress and suicide. The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2019 is approximately \$1,952,000.

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

## Table of Contents

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION .....	4
A. Legislative Authority .....	4
B. Purpose and Priorities .....	4
C. Program Area Description .....	7
PART II—AWARD INFORMATION.....	8
A. Available Funding.....	8
B. Types of Applications .....	8
C. Activity and Project Types.....	8
PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....	9
A. Eligible Applicants.....	9
B. Cost Sharing or Matching .....	9
PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION.....	10
A. Method of Application.....	10
B. Content and Form of Application Submission.....	10
C. Submission Dates and Times .....	17
D. Funding Restrictions .....	18
E. Other Submission Requirements.....	18
PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS.....	19
A. General.....	19
B. Evaluation Criteria .....	19
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality.....	21
D. Organizational Management Information.....	21
E. Application Disposition .....	21
PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION .....	22
A. General.....	22
B. Award Notice .....	22
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	22
D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements .....	22
PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT .....	23
PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION .....	25
A. Use of Funds; Changes .....	25
B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards .....	25
C. Regulatory Information.....	26
D. Definitions.....	26
Table 1: List of Regions.....	7
Table 2: Steps to Obtain Application Materials.....	10
Table 3: Key Application Instructions .....	11
Table 4: FRSAN Application Page Limits .....	14
Table 5: 2019 FRSANP Checklist .....	15

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

### **A. Legislative Authority**

Section 7522 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, 7 U.S.C. 5936, authorizes NIFA to establish a Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network as follows:

#### § 5936. Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network

*In General* – “The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall make competitive grants to eligible entities described in subsection (c) to establish a Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network that provides stress assistance programs to individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations.”

*Eligible Programs* – Grants awarded under subsection (a) may be used to initiate, expand, or sustain programs that provide professional agricultural behavioral health counseling and referral for other forms of assistance as necessary through the following:

1. Farm telephone helplines and websites;
2. Training, including training programs and workshops, for-
  - a. Advocates for individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other occupations relating to agriculture; and
  - b. Other individuals and entities that may assist individuals who-
    - i. are engaged in farming, ranching, and other occupations relating to agriculture; and
    - ii. are in crisis; and
3. Activities, including the dissemination of information and materials.

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

Applicants must demonstrate how work conducted with FRSAN funding helps advance [USDA Strategic Plan 2018-2022](#), Strategic Goals 2-7:

1. Strategic Goal 2: Maximize the ability of American agricultural producers to prosper by feeding and clothing the world.
2. Strategic Goal 3: Promote American agricultural products and exports.
3. Strategic Goal 4: Facilitate rural prosperity and economic development.
4. Strategic Goal 5: Strengthen the stewardship of private lands through technology and research.
5. Strategic Goal 6: Foster productive and sustainable use of our National Forest System Lands.
6. Strategic Goal 7: Provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious and secure food supply.

There are approximately 2 million farms in the United States. In 2017, “family farms of various types accounted for 98% of farms and 87% of production.” (*America’s Diverse Family Farms*,

Economic Research Service, 2018). Successfully operating a farm or ranch requires a wide range of skills, breadth of knowledge, and in any given year a stroke of good fortune. The taxing nature of agricultural work makes it one of the most hazardous jobs, with risk of injury, disability, and death higher than most other professions. Daily decision-making in the context of long-term planning to ensure crop and livestock yields and profits can prove extremely difficult. Even the most proactive planning can be short circuited by factors beyond an individual's control, such as natural disasters. In addition, over the past several years farmers and ranchers have seen commodity prices remain relatively flat while land, labor, and machinery costs have risen. As a result, some farmers and ranchers have reported increasing levels of stress associated with heightened risk of crop/livestock losses and loan defaults.

Financial stress is just one form of stress and, like other stressors, may be a short-term occurrence that abates when the condition is addressed and/or alleviates on its own. Long-term stress can be more threatening to an individual's physical and mental health. In worst case scenarios, unresolved stressors may contribute to a person threatening and/or harming themselves. In a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention study comparing suicide rates for major occupational groups across 17 states, the rate of suicides by farmers was 32.2 per 100,000 in 2015. The 32.2 rate was more than twice the rate for the general population (13.3) in 2015.

Taking practical steps to manage stress can help lessen or prevent such ill effects. Knowing where to turn is also key. Programs that offer access to resources (e.g., information, skills) and people (e.g., Extension agents, health care providers) can also help identify underlying causes of farm/ranch risk factors and serve as an entry point to working with farmers and ranchers on recognizing their stress, understanding the importance of seeking assistance, and learning how to manage their stress. However, lack of access due to geography, distance, and availability of resources and providers, combined with any real or perceived stigma and privacy concerns, can influence an individual's decision to seek and receive help.

Establishment of a network that assists farmers and ranchers in times of stress can offer a conduit to improving behavioral health awareness, literacy, and outcomes for agricultural producers, workers, and their families. Connecting these individuals with resources, support, and training at the state and local level is critical to helping them successfully navigate the potential challenges they may encounter when working, developing careers, and building sustainable enterprises in farming and ranching. Through key strategic partnerships, existing and experienced programs can conduct outreach, offer training such as [Mental Health First Aid](#), deliver evidence-based information, and make appropriate referrals that strengthen the coping skills and quality of life of America's farm and ranch families and the communities in which they live.

The purpose of the FRSAN Program is to establish a network that connects individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations to stress assistance programs. The term "farmer" is used in the broadest sense and may be interpreted to include agricultural farmers, ranchers, workers, business owners, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers.

To launch the FRSAN program, NIFA is soliciting applications that will create regional frameworks for stress assistance programs, training, and services. The applicant organization must have demonstrable prior experience working in the agricultural stress assistance space. For purposes of implementing FRSAN, a network is an organizational arrangement among three or

more separately operated domestic public or private entities, including the applicant organization, with established working histories in the targeted region. In year one, funds may be used to map out resources in each region, to provide a framework for how those resources can be/are connected, and to train state-level people working with agricultural producers (train-the-trainer model) about how to identify farmers under stress, about the existence of a given regional network, availability of specific resources and how to access them, as well as how to make referrals to programs that are equipped to provide direct behavioral care assistance. Such maps must link with USDA programs such as [Agriculture Mediation Program](#) and [Crop Insurance Mediation](#), with which producers may engage if and when appropriate.

Should funding become available in subsequent years, the regional lead entity must have the capacity to make state-level sub-awards, to include monitoring the performance of specific projects and active participation within the larger regional network. In year one, providing training and/or offering direct services in every state/territory in the targeted region is not required. However, the applicant must clearly articulate where and why training and services are initially being offered, as well as any rationale for areas not served. If possible, a region-wide helpline or website that is available to all should be implemented and publicized.

NIFA is seeking applications from regional partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental organizations (NGO), state departments of agriculture (SDA), Cooperative Extension Services (CES), and Indian tribes with expertise in providing professional agricultural behavioral health awareness, counseling as appropriate, education, training, and referral for other forms of assistance as necessary.

Since all proposed regional partnerships (networks) must be initially composed of three or more member institutions/entities, applications to FR SAN funding opportunity must provide signed commitment letters from at least three key collaborators (see [Part VIII](#) of this RFA). Letters must delineate the expertise, roles, responsibilities, and commitments, including service area and/or role of each network member. A member may participate in more than one regional network, but may only serve as lead entity in a single region. In addition, members participating in more than one regional network must demonstrate the capacity to meet the responsibilities associated with multiple region commitments.

While network members may be located in urban or rural areas within a particular region, at least two network members involved in the proposed project must be currently delivering services in USDA's ERS-designated rural counties or rural census tracts in urban counties. To ascertain whether a particular county or census tract is rural, please refer to the [Rural-Urban Continuum Codes](#). NIFA will not review applications that fail to include at least two entities serving rural communities and will consider such applications non-responsive. For purposes of FR SAN, applications must focus services in one of four regions described in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: List of Regions**

<b>Northeast Region</b>	<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>North Central Region</b>	<b>Western Region</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecticut,</li> <li>• Delaware,</li> <li>• Maine,</li> <li>• Maryland,</li> <li>• Massachusetts,</li> <li>• New Hampshire,</li> <li>• New Jersey,</li> <li>• New York,</li> <li>• Pennsylvania,</li> <li>• Rhode Island,</li> <li>• Vermont,</li> <li>• West Virginia and</li> <li>• <i>The District of Columbia</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alabama,</li> <li>• Arkansas,</li> <li>• Florida,</li> <li>• Georgia,</li> <li>• Kentucky,</li> <li>• Louisiana,</li> <li>• Mississippi,</li> <li>• North Carolina,</li> <li>• Oklahoma,</li> <li>• South Carolina,</li> <li>• Tennessee,</li> <li>• Texas,</li> <li>• Virginia</li> <li>• <i>Puerto Rico and</i></li> <li>• <i>The Virgin Islands</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Illinois,</li> <li>• Indiana,</li> <li>• Iowa,</li> <li>• Kansas,</li> <li>• Michigan,</li> <li>• Minnesota,</li> <li>• Missouri,</li> <li>• Nebraska,</li> <li>• North Dakota,</li> <li>• Ohio,</li> <li>• South Dakota, and</li> <li>• Wisconsin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alaska,</li> <li>• Arizona,</li> <li>• California,</li> <li>• Colorado,</li> <li>• Hawaii,</li> <li>• Idaho,</li> <li>• Montana,</li> <li>• Nevada,</li> <li>• New Mexico,</li> <li>• Oregon,</li> <li>• Utah,</li> <li>• Washington,</li> <li>• Wyoming</li> <li>• <i>American Samoa,</i></li> <li>• <i>Northern Mariana Islands,</i></li> <li>• <i>Guam, and</i></li> <li>• <i>Micronesia</i></li> </ul>

**C. Program Area Description**

Program Code: FRSAN  
 Program Code Name: Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network  
 CFDA: 10.500  
 Project Type: Extension Projects only  
 Grant Type: Standard Grants only  
 Grant Duration: 12 months  
 Proposed Budget Requests: Applications must not exceed \$488,000 total (including indirect costs) for a project period of 12 months.

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

The anticipated amount available for FRSAN in FY 2019 is approximately \$1,952,000. Lead applicants may not submit more than one application. NIFA anticipates making four awards, one award in each of the four designated regions. Applicants may request up to \$488,000 to serve a particular region. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application. 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 Applications**

Application for FY2019 is limited to *new applicants*. New application is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the FRSAN Program. NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA.

### **C. Activity and Project Types**

Applications will be accepted for Regional Networks. The long-term goal of the FRSAN projects is to establish a Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network that provides stress assistance programs to individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations on a regional basis. Network members must initiate, expand, or sustain programs that provide professional agricultural behavioral health counseling and referral for other forms of assistance as necessary through the following:

1. Farm telephone helplines and websites;
2. Training, including training programs and workshops, for the following:
  - a. Advocates for individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other occupations relating to agriculture; and
  - b. Other individuals and entities that may assist individuals who-
    - i. are engaged in farming, ranching, and other occupations relating to agriculture; and
    - ii. are in crisis;
3. Support groups; and
4. Outreach services and activities, including the dissemination of information and materials.

The maximum award for a standard grant is *\$488,000 for one year*.

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Applications may only be submitted by a collaborative state; tribal; local or regionally-based network, or partnership of qualified public and/or private entities, as determined by the Secretary. These collaborations may include the following entities: Indian tribes (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act ([25 U.S.C. 5304](#))); State departments of agriculture, State cooperative extension services; and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Applications submitted by individuals, or by organizations that do not involve other entities in a network or partnership, are not eligible for consideration and will be excluded from review.

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.

For those new to Federal financial assistance, a [grants overview page](#) is available on the NIFA website. This page includes information about free Grants 101 Training and other resources that are highly recommended for those seeking an understanding of Federal awards.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

*No Match Required* - The [Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 \(HR 2\)](#) removed the matching requirements for some NIFA competitive grants imposed by the [Agricultural Act of 2014](#). The FRSAN has *NO* matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

**PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION**

**A. Method of Application**

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically, no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA is available on [Grants.gov](#). **Table 2** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application and applicants are encouraged to review [Grants 101](#).

*New Users* to [Grants.gov](#) must register with [Grants.gov](#) prior to submitting an application ([Register Here](#)). Registration may take up to two weeks to process, so applicants are encouraged to register early. Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization’s readiness to submit an electronic application. **Part II § 1** of the [NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide](#) (Application Guide) contains detailed information regarding the registration process.

**Table 2: Steps to Obtain Application Materials**

Steps	Action
Step One – Download Adobe	Download and Install <a href="#">Adobe Reader</a> (see <a href="#">Adobe Software Compatibility</a> for basic system requirements)
Step Two – Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number <b>USDA-NIFA-OP-006778</b> , search for application here: <a href="#">Opportunity Package</a> .

<p>Help and Resources</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Grants.gov Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Grants.gov Online Support</a></li> <li>• Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035</li> <li>• Email support: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a></li> <li>• Self-service customer based support: <a href="#">Grants.gov iPortal</a></li> </ul> <p><i>Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except <a href="#">federal holidays</a>.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NIFA Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Email: <a href="mailto:electronic@nifa.usda.gov">electronic@nifa.usda.gov</a></li> <li>• Phone: 202-401-5048</li> </ul> <p><i>Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except <a href="#">federal holidays</a></i></p>

**B. Content and Form of Application Submission**

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 3** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

**Table 3: Key Application Instructions**

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

**1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. See Part V, Section 2.17 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances (e.g., Prohibition Against Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

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

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

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

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

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

The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of FR SAN. See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template. Project Summary must provide the following information, in the order listed below:

- Project title;
- List of Project Directors (PDs) and Co-PDs and their institutions/organizations;
- List of other collaborating institutions/organizations;

- Concise (250 words or less) description of the project; and
- Funding amount requested.

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

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 16 pages of written text and up to 4 additional pages for figures, maps, and tables. We have established this maximum 20 pages to ensure fair and equitable competition. Please include a one-page Table of Contents in the project narrative, which will not count towards the narrative’s 20-page limit.

Your application will be reviewed and scored according to the quality of your response to the requirements in Sections A-D detailed below. In developing the Project Narrative section of your application, indicate the Section letter and number in your response, e.g., type “A.1”, “A.2”, etc., before your response to each question. Please do not combine two or more questions or refer to another section of the Project Narrative in your response, such as indicating that the response for B.2 is in C.7.

The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

**Section A: Introduction.**

1. The introduction must include a clear statement of need and significance of the regional network your project proposes to create and implement. Provide the most relevant data for the region the project will be serving, including data on stressors faced by agricultural communities and workers in states within your region, as well as data on the effects of those stressors on farmers and their well-being. Provide references for data. Explain and substantiate any assumptions made.
2. Identify the region (Northeast, South, North Central, or West), target audience (including specific minority/historically underserved farmer groups) within the region, and explain their needs.
3. Include existing (most relevant for the FRSAN program) stress assistance programs available to farmers in the identified region and briefly comment on how those programs currently collaborate/network with each other. If necessary, provide a map/table that clearly shows services currently offered to producers in the chosen region.
4. List key network members (organizations) collaborating on the proposed project. Describe how the proposed regional FRSAN project fits within the context of what is already available in the region. For example: Will the specific network be duplicating/adding to/enhancing any existing efforts with farmers? Are there programmatic gaps in the region and what are some specific resources other regions might have available that your network could tap into for the benefit of agricultural communities in your own region? What is the expected public value/ significance of the regional network you will be establishing?

**Section B: Proposed Approach**

In this first year of funding, the FRSAN program seeks to fulfill three programmatic goals in each region:

1. Establish a diverse, regionally-representative network of member organizations;
2. Develop a clearinghouse (see “Definitions” [Part VIII.D]) of farmer assistance programs in the region (inclusive of programs providing professional agricultural behavioral health counseling and referral); and

3. Educate individuals/team in your region about FRSSAN activities and how they can access and use existing resources and programs in their work with agricultural workers and communities under stress. Given these goals, proposals should concisely and clearly present objectives, activities, and expected outcomes associated with your proposed project.

All activities listed under an objective must be presented in a sequence in which the activities are expected to be performed. The sum of activities under each objective must lead to completion of that objective within the 1-year maximum project duration. In addition, for each activity, indicate the following:

1. Specific expected/desired result(s)/outcome(s) of the activity;
2. Means (e.g. tools) by which results/outcomes will be monitored, captured and measured;
3. How results will be used and by whom; and
4. Possible limitation(s) to the proposed procedures and how you plan to mitigate them.

FRSSAN regional programs are expected to provide deliverables reflective of diversity in farmer populations specific to their region. Describe your project team's ability and readiness to develop appropriate (i.e., ethnically-, racially-, linguistically- and socio- economically-sensitive) network, clearinghouse, training, and outreach inclusive of such audiences.

### **Section C: Project Performance Assessment Plan**

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

1. A logic model, a theory of change, or an alternative schematic that illustrates the causal linkages between planned activities and desired outcomes.
2. A timeline to demonstrate the duration and the sequence of proposed activities, as well as division of labor (as noted in "Section D" below). Each objective might have multiple activities. Chart against a quarterly scale, so that the timeline depicts 1 year / 4 quarters.
3. Indicate who on the team will provide the project performance assessment oversight. NIFA encourages but does not require grantees to include on their teams a project performance measurement expert or an evaluator who can help develop the monitoring plan and conduct outcomes reporting.
  - a) Measure how farmers and ranchers are connected with USDA programs such as Agriculture Mediation Program ([https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2018/agricultural\\_mediation\\_program\\_jan2018.pdf](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2018/agricultural_mediation_program_jan2018.pdf)) and/or Crop Insurance Mediation (<https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/About-RMA/Laws-and-Regulations/Mediation>), as appropriate.
  - b) Measure how farmers and ranchers are connected to other governmental programs and resources through agencies such as HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency and Veterans Affairs, as appropriate.

### **Section D: Institutional Capacity, Division of Labor and Management 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. Indian tribes, SDAs, CES, and NGOs) with shared leadership are essential to FRSSAN projects. For definitions of Partnership and

Collaborator, see “Definitions” (Part VIII.D).

1. Provide justification for selection of the partner organizations. Clearly state each organization’s previous and current work that make it a good fit for the proposed project. Briefly describe your institutions’ and teams’ ability to meet the gaps and limitations in services by detailing your accomplishments from similar projects and your experiences serving farmers in your region.
2. Describe how the relationship between organizations partnering on the proposed project will be managed. Describe the plans for coordination, communication, data-sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups.
3. Provide a brief summary of key staff that will manage the proposed project, their individual roles on the project, and percent of time they will be dedicating to the project.
4. Describe the commitment of the lead organization and partners to this project; and how the collaboration and its impact will be sustained beyond the period of the award.

The following table summarizes the sections of the Project Narrative, suggests an approximate number of pages (not including tables) to allocate to each section, and shows the evaluation criteria most relevant to each section:

**Table 4: FR SAN Application Page Limits**

<b>Narrative Section</b>	<b>Suggested Number of Pages</b>	<b>Related Evaluation Criteria (see Part V, B. of this RFA)</b>
Introduction	3 of 16	Relevancy
Proposed Approach	6 of 16	Partnerships and collaboration; Technical merit; Achievability
Project Performance Assessment	3 of 16	Adequacy of plans for the participatory evaluation process, outcome-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results
Institutional Capacity, Division of Labor and Management Plan	4 of 16	Partnerships and collaboration; Expertise and track record of the applicants; Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities and instrumentation; Achievability

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

**1) Commitment Letters. PDF attachment(s). No page limit.**

Letters of commitment from all partners (signed by the Authorized Representative (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 resource materials. **Attaching additional narrative or figures or tables other than those specifically requested in this RFA will result in disqualification from review.**

2) **Check List.** Please ensure that you check off on the list below and include with project narrative. This inclusion will not count towards the narrative’s page limitation. Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Program – Checklist for FY 2019 Application. This checklist is a tool to help applicants review that they have included all the forms and attachments. It is not a substitute for carefully following all of the instructions in the RFA and the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

**Table 5: 2019 FRSANP Checklist**

<b>File Name for PDF Attachment (or application form/section)</b>	<b>Contents (see the FY2019 Request for Applications (RFA), the Application Package, and Instructions (NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide)</b>	<b>Check Off</b>
<b>SF-424 R&amp;R Cover Sheet Project/Perf. Site Location(s) Other Project Information</b>	Forms in the Application Package – see instructions in the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for all three (3) forms	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Project Summary (pdf)</b>	Use the suggested <a href="#">Application Support Templates</a> or include all of the same information on one (1) page	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	Include a one-page table of contents	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Title	<input type="checkbox"/>
	List of Project Directors/Co-PDs & Institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Project description - 250 words or less	<input type="checkbox"/>
	List of other collaborating organizations not on PD/co-PD list	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Logic Model and other Tools in graphic depiction	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Percent of total federal funds allocated to Indian tribes/SDAs/CES/NGOs	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Project Narrative (pdf)</b>	No more than 16 pages, include the following Sections:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	1. Introduction	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Proposed Approach	<input type="checkbox"/>
	2. Personnel and Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3. Project Performance Assessment	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>File Name for PDF Attachment (or application form/section)</b>	<b>Contents</b> (see the FY2019 Request for Applications (RFA), the Application Package, and Instructions (NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide))	<b>Check Off</b>
	4. Institutional Capacity, Division of Labor and Management Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Bibliography (pdf)</b>	Bibliography and References (no page limit)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Letter of Commitment_ Org Name (pdf attachment(s))</b>	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	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>R&amp;R Senior/Key Person Profile (form)</b>	Information and Biographical Sketch form for each person. Current and Pending Support is required with this application)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>R&amp;R Personal Data (form)</b>	Providing this information is required	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>R&amp;R Budget (form)</b>	Complete the R&R budget forms	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Budget Justification (pdf)</b>	Explain each item; no page limit.	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>R&amp;R Sub-award Budget (form)</b>	Required if any sub-awards	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Supplemental Information Form (form)</b>	Program Code = FR SAN	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Conflict of Interest (pdf)</b>	Complete a Conflict of Interest form for each key /senior person ( <a href="#">Application Support Templates</a> ) then combine them into one (1) pdf document to attach	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### **4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)**

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

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

#### **6. R&R Budget**

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

Indirect Costs. For further information and instructions regarding indirect costs, refer to Part V, section 7.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. For indirect cost funding restrictions, refer to Part IV, D. of this RFA.

## **7. Supplemental Information Form**

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

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

## **8. Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants**

This is a required form for corporate applicants. See Part VI, 2 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for a description of the term, “corporation,” and detailed information related to the questions on this form.

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

We recommend that you conduct an administrative review of the application before submission via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review. **Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.**

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on July 25, 2019.** Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

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

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

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact the Agency Contact identified in Part VII of the RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.**

## **D. Funding Restrictions**

Section 1462(a) and (c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) limits indirect costs for the overall award to 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum indirect cost rate allowed under the award is determined by calculating the amount of indirect costs using:

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **E. Other Submission Requirements**

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

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

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

### **A. General**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

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

website: [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#). NIFA will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

- **Partnerships and Collaborations:** To what extent does the application represent a substantial and effective collaborative regional 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? Priority will be given to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include Indian tribes, SDAs, CES, and NGOs with expertise in providing stress assistance programs to individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations. In addition, these partner organizations must have been involved and played an important role in the project design and development. Projects must also employ an equitable and appropriate decision-making and oversight process that includes all partners to be given this priority.
- **Relevancy:** To what extent do the explanation and documentation convey that the project is directed toward specific topic areas identified in Part I, B in this RFA? These topics are designed to support and strengthen farmers and ranchers as defined in [7 U.S.C. 5936](#). 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 development of project activities, and the degree to which the project addresses audience(s), needs, and the geographic area(s) served.
- **Technical merit:**
  - (a) Clarity and delineation of objectives, activities and outcomes;
  - (b) Conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the targeted region and audiences including suitability and feasibility of the approach (e.g., social, economic and cultural relevance);
  - (c) Innovation and originality of objectives and activities;
  - (d) Expected performance targets and outcomes as indicated in Section C. of this RFA;
  - (e) Sustainability of the project partnerships and collaborations beyond the life of the grant, or a compelling explanation of how the project outcomes will be lasting if the collaboration itself is not sustained; and
  - (f) 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.)
- **Achievability:** 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. 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.
- **Expertise and track record of the applicants:** To what extent does the application demonstrate expertise through successful prior experience in education, outreach, training and/or technical assistance for farmers and ranchers experiencing stress? The successful prior

experience can be demonstrated by the operation of a helpline; number of training, assistance, or education activities previously carried out; number of participants of the program and/or referrals made; the number of years a program or activity has been offered; engagement with other USDA, HHS, and Veterans Affairs programs and resources that can assist; and/or other evaluation metrics. The extent to which the qualifications of the applicant (individual and 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.

- **Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation:** Includes the expertise of consultants and collaborators, sufficiency of the network members and their facilities and equipment for the proposed project activities. If the application proposes to develop and/or utilize tele-delivery of services, adequacy of details provided on e-connectivity and technological requirements that are available for the project and what is required (hardware/software) by those who will be accessing such services.
- **Adequacy of plans for outcome-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results:** Includes the expertise of evaluation team members who have agreed to serve or who have been identified.

#### **C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

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

#### **D. Organizational Management Information**

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

#### **E. Application Disposition**

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

## **PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

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

### **B. Award Notice**

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

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

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These may include, but are not limited to, the ones listed on the NIFA web page – [Federal Regulations](#).

[NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#)—a compendium of basic NIFA policies and procedures that apply to all NIFA awards, unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary.

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

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

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

**Brent Elrod**

National Program Leader  
Division of Family & Consumer Sciences  
Institute of Youth, Family, and Community  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
800 9<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Room 4434  
Washington, DC 20024  
202.690.3468  
[belrod@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:belrod@nifa.usda.gov)

Programmatic Contact –

**Ahlishia Shipley**

National Program Leader  
Division of Family & Consumer Sciences  
Institute of Youth, Family, and Community  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
800 9<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Rom 4429  
Washington, DC 20024  
202.445.5431  
[ashipley@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:ashipley@nifa.usda.gov)

Administrative/Business Contacts –

**Towana DeShazo**

Team Leader  
Awards Management Division  
Office of Grants and Financial Management  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
800 9<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Room 2162  
Washington, DC 20024  
202.401-4155  
[tdeshazo@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:tdeshazo@nifa.usda.gov)

Administrative/Business Contacts –

**Rochelle McCrea**

Team Leader  
Awards Management Division  
Office of Grants and Financial Management  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
800 9<sup>th</sup> Street, SW, Room 2152  
Washington, DC 20024  
202.401.28  
[rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov)

## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

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

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

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

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

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

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

The awardee will be subject to [NIFA Terms and Conditions](#) identified in the award.

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

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

## C. Regulatory Information

This program is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

## D. Definitions

Refer to [7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Financial Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions](#), for applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program. In addition, the following definitions apply:

Clearinghouse: an online repository of farm stress programs, curricula, resources, and training materials, and which may include referral links for suicide awareness and prevention.

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.

Farmer: The term “farmer” is used in the broadest sense and should be interpreted to include agricultural farmers, ranchers, workers, business owners, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers.

Helpline: a telephone service and/or online portal that agricultural producers, workers, and family members can contact/access to get advice and referrals to address agricultural stress.

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.

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:

- 1) Northeast Region: Consists of 12 States (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia) and the District of Columbia;
- 2) Southern Region: Consists of 13 States (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia) and Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands;

- 3) North Central Region: Consists of 12 States (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin);
- 4) Western Region: Consists of 13 States (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming) and American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Micronesia.