

Military Families Learning Network

FY 19 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 2, 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

Military Families Learning Network

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: The Military Families Learning Network (MFLN) 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 August 2, 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) seek your comments about this RFA. We will consider your comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we'll use them to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Submit your written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this notice via email to Policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This email address is only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and *not* for requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Military Families Learning Network Competitive Grant Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the MFLN competitive grant program for fiscal year (FY) 19 to develop, utilize, and disseminate innovative and effective resources and programming that would support the professional development needs of providers in both the traditional Military Family Support Program and civilian communities. The anticipated amount available for MFLN in FY 2019 is approximately **\$2,232,450**.

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

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

In accordance with the Economy Act of 1932, as amended, (31 U.S.C. 1535), the Department of Defense (DoD), in order to utilize the unique resources of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), has provided NIFA with funds to support the MFLN competitive grant program.

Pursuant to 7 U.S.C. Sec. 3318(c), the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Director of the NIFA, may enter into contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, for periods not to exceed five years, with State agricultural experiment stations, State cooperative extension services, all colleges and universities, other research or educational institutions or organizations, Federal and private agencies and organizations, individuals, and any other contractor or recipient, either foreign or domestic, to further research, extension, or teaching programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences of the Department of Agriculture. Within the Department of Defense, Economy Act transactions are governed by Department of Defense Financial Management Regulation, Volume 11A, Chapter 3, Economy Act Orders.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The MFLN competitive grant program aligns with and addresses: USDA Strategic Goals for FY 2018-2022, Goal 4: Facilitate rural prosperity and economic development, Objective 1: To expand rural business opportunity and rural quality of life with access to capital; improve infrastructure, broadband access and connectivity; and support workforce availability.

This work also supports the mission of the DoD-USDA Partnership for Military Families Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2010 by NIFA and DoD senior leadership. The goal of the MOU is “...to enhance federal interagency coordination and build capacity for partnerships and collaboration among the agencies and across public and private sectors to sustain programs and services for military Service members and their families.”

Background. Department of Defense Instruction 1342.22, Military Family Readiness, Enclosure 3, Paragraph 5 states that family readiness service providers shall receive training. Professional development across the DoD plays an integral role in the delivery of quality programming to Service members and their families. The DoD utilizes a large network of family support professionals (made up of DoD, contract, and non-government personnel) to deliver a multitude of support programs through the Family Readiness System. These support programs include, but are not limited to, financial readiness, marriage support, parenting, care giving, and more. Not only is the nature of support diverse, this system spans the entire world, delivering support program wherever Service members and their families are stationed.

Due to the diverse nature of delivery of programs, individuals receiving training, and the varying locales (among other challenges), the DoD relies heavily on virtual training. This is especially relevant where the network of military helping professionals exceeds 500,000 personnel. Providing high quality virtual training can result in tremendous cost-savings when compared to in-person professional development that requires travel and any associated longer periods away from one’s duty station. Further, targeting training to Concentration Areas is an efficient and effective way to accomplish workforce development, professional development within that workforce, and the building of capacity at the local level to meet the needs of military families in

the respective areas of support.

Dedicated Concentration Areas include Personal Finance, Family Development/Early intervention, Family Transitions, Military Caregiving, Network Literacy, and Nutrition and Wellness. As interest and participation has grown, the leadership and core support of the Military Families Learning Network has focused on improving delivery of professional development through concentration areas and coalescing those separate specialties in support of identified issues faced by military families and the professionals who support them, to include delivery through Virtual Learning activities. DoD looks to USDA NIFA, its land-grant university partners, and the Cooperative Extension Service to help meet these needs, especially in support of geographically dispersed families.

The primary objective for this project is to develop, utilize, and disseminate innovative and effective resources and programming that would support the professional development needs of providers in both the traditional Military Family Support Program and civilian communities. This objective will be accomplished through fulfilling the following activities:

- Management of the delivery of virtual learning using the theory and practice of adult education (andragogy) through the following concentration areas: Personal Finance, Family Development/Early intervention, Family Transitions, Military Caregiving, Network Literacy, and Nutrition and Wellness. Community Capacity building concepts shall be integrated into all concentration areas. These concentration areas must be staffed with several eXtension Communities of Practice that provide resources/staff for this effort.
- A consolidated, issue driven Virtual Learning Event (VLE) must be spearheaded by a leadership team and built on collaboration of all concentration areas. The VLE should demonstrate the power of the Family Readiness System, the DoDs practice of integrated social service delivery.

The direction of these efforts is to continue to provide and find innovative and effective resources and programming that would support the professional development needs of providers in both the traditional Military Family Support Programs and civilian communities.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for a MFLN grant in FY 2019 is approximately **\$2,232,450**. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. The Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the [Department of Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service](#), is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2019, you may only submit a *new application* to the MFLN Program. New application is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the MFLN Program. We will review all new applications competitively using the screening for administrative requirements, review panel evaluation of proposals using evaluation criteria and selection process described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

C. Activity and Project Types

For FY 2019, approximately \$2,232,450 will be available to fund one standard grant proposal for one year (see Part I, A. Legislative Authority and Background. The project type will be Extension.)

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Only land-grant institutions are eligible to receive the award through the MFLN program. Eligible land-grant institutions include all 1862, 1890, and 1994 land-grant institutions. 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

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

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

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

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

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials. To receive application materials:

1. You must download and install a version of [Adobe Reader](#) compatible with Grants.gov to access, complete, and submit applications. For basic system requirements and download instructions, see <https://www.grants.gov/en/web/grants/applicants/adobe-%20software-compatibility.html>. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determine whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.
2. To obtain the application package from Grants.gov, go to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/search-opportunity-package.html> and enter the funding opportunity number where appropriate

Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-EXCA-006779

Click “Search.” On the displayed page, click the corresponding link to continue. A Grant Application Package is tied to a particular funding opportunity. You may move forms amongst different Grant Application Packages but you may ONLY submit an application to the particular funding opportunity to which the Grant Application Package is associated.

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” This guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If you require assistance to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms) **or submitting the application**, refer to resources available on the Grants.gov website (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>). Grants.gov assistance is also available at:

Grants.gov customer support
800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [federal holidays](#).

Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov iPortal (see <https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants>):

Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self-service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7 a.m. - 9 p.m. EST).

Have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of agency you are applying to
- Specific area of concern

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

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

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III, Section 3 of the guide. Any proposals that are non-compliant with the requirements (e.g. Content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) will be at risk of being excluded from NIFA review. Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or whether attachments are in PDF format; see Part III, Section 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

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

- Email: electronic@nifa.usda.gov
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET, excluding [federal holidays](#).

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

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

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

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

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

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

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract.

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

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 8 pages of written text and up to 4 additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum (12 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Use 12pt Times New Roman font. The Project Narrative must contain all of the following, including how the with **three complementary core components** described below will be implemented:

Leadership and Core Support: MFLN Leadership Core Support includes administrative staff, communications and marketing, computer engineering and information technology staff, and additional evaluation and professional development support, as well as leadership travel and other support to include materials, supplies, and publications as needed. In collaboration with designated DoD points of contact, MFLN Leadership is responsible for managing the development of operations of concentration areas, developing a long range plan and timeline to identify deliverables once scope of work has been determined, and creating a comprehensive schedule for all concentration area deliverables. In addition, MFLN Leadership manages the separate teams to ensure consistent branding and quality presentation. Leadership also administers the overall communications plan, including messaging and outreach for the MFLN. The Core Support team promotes high quality professional development experiences by successfully integrating with DoD training platforms, assisting presenters in overcoming technical challenges during rehearsal, and ensuring seamless operations. Working with DoD Points of Contact (PoCs), the awardee will continue to search for the best methods to suit the online training needs of a variety of adult learners. In addition, the awardee will meet regularly with DoD PoCs utilizing a combination of electronic and face to face meetings.

Concentration Areas: The MFLN will develop new and/or enhance existing Concentration Areas (CA) as follows:

- Personal Finance
- Family Development/Early Intervention
- Family Transitions
- Military Caregiving
- Network Literacy

- Nutrition and Wellness

In addition, Community Capacity building undergirds the entire network, and shall be woven into each concentration.

In collaboration with designated DoD PoCs, personnel associated with each concentration area are tasked with identifying, developing and delivering innovative and effective resources and programming that support the respective professional development needs of Military and Family Support Programs. Overall program development will include Concentration Area staff using tools such as Ask an Expert, blog posts, web conferencing, published content, online courses and learning modules, video content, and a wide variety of social media channels to deliver content. Where appropriate to the staff level, coordination to provide continuing education credits is essential.

Military Families Learning Network Virtual Learning Event: A multi-day Virtual Learning Event (VLE) is a virtual conference for Personal Finance, Military Caregiving, and Family Development Concentration Areas. A multi-day VLE offers an opportunity for DoD staff in areas that include Support for Families with Special Needs, Family Development, and Personal Finance to meet professional development requirements associated with each of the respective concentration areas. All VLEs are recorded and archived for future viewing.

The Project Narrative must additionally include all of the following:

Section 1: Statement of Need & Background

- Demonstrate an understanding of the nature of the issue this project is seeking to address.
- Describe how the overall project will effectively address the audience(s) to be served.
- Detail the characteristics of the lead institution that make it particularly qualified to conduct the proposed work; describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project particularly experience with the professional development of military helping professionals and virtual learning platforms, including the work and related work of key project personnel.

Section 2: Objectives, Approach and Plan

Projects need to provide a clear description of the project objectives and activities. Objectives must address program priorities listed in Part 1, Section B. Please develop a project action plan.

The plan should contain the following:

- Clear, concise, and logically arranged project objectives;
- Clear relationships between objectives, inputs, activities, desired outcomes, and anticipated impacts;
- The sum of activities under each objective which will lead to completion of those objectives within the 1-year project duration;
- Clear relationships between objectives, inputs, activities, outputs, desired outcomes, and anticipated results;
- A timeline outlining the summary of activities under each objective which will lead to completion of those objectives within the 1-year project duration;
- Methods by which science-based information will be gathered and synthesized to inform evaluation design;
- Methods by which data will be collected and evaluated; indicate collection instruments

- and strategies, if appropriate (i.e.: questionnaire, interviews, focus groups, site visits, etc.);
- A description of all outputs and anticipated results along with strategies to track and monitor each;
- A description of development and/or implementation challenges that may be encountered and how those challenges will be addressed;

The project plan will be finalized based on written feedback from the Program Manager in the Office of Military Family Readiness Policy and NIFA National Program Leader after the award is made.

Section 3: Project Communication Plan

- Briefly describe how pertinent information, progress and results from this project will be communicated to the project team, as well as relevant stakeholders.

Section 4: Project Management

- Provide a brief summary of key personnel, their project functions, qualifications and expertise along with timelines, reporting, and collaborative efforts.

Section 5: Budget and Budget Narrative *(to be included below in #6. R&R Budget)

- There must be a direct relationship between the items in the budget and budget justification, as well as between budget justification and the objectives/activities contained in the Project Narrative.
- Field 12. Add Other Attachments
See Part V. Section 4.12 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide (Field 12 on the form) for instructions for this field.

Letter(s) of Commitment from Collaborators on the Proposed Project (e.g., 1862, 1890 or 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, Minority Serving Institutions, eXtension.) The letters must state partner institution's readiness to collaborate on the proposed project and describe the partner's specific role on the project.

Data Management Plan. A Data Management Plan (DMP) is required and is to 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.). **See Part III Section 3.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for NIFA attachment specifications.**

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

Indirect Cost: Fully negotiated rate (see Part IV § D).

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 “Military Families Learning Network”) and the program code (i.e., enter “MFLN”). 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 of it via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review. Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. Applications must be received by Grants.gov by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on TBD. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV. A for Grants.gov contact information.

We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance. If the AR has not received correspondence from NIFA regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact the Agency Contact identified in Part VII of the RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.

D. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Costs: Fully negotiated rate. The applicant should use the current negotiated indirect cost rate established (i.e., approved) by its cognizant Federal agency. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate, the applicant must request a rate from the Federal agency from which the applicant receives the most funding.

Agency policy limits the maximum potential funding period (including any awards transferred from another institution or organization) to five years in duration. The funding period will commence on the effective date cited in the award instrument. Any such limitation also applies to subcontracts made under awards subject to a funding period limitation.

The PD may incur pre-award costs within the 90-day period immediately preceding the effective date of the award providing: the approval of pre-award spending is made and documented in accordance with the awardee's normal procedures prior to the incurrence of the cost(s); the advanced funding is necessary for the effective and economical conduct of the project; and the costs are otherwise allowable. Pre-award expenditures are made at the awardee's risk. AOR authority to approve pre- award costs does not impose an obligation on NIFA: (1) in the absence of appropriations; (2) if an award is subsequently not made; or (3) if an award is made for a lesser amount than the awardee expected.

Pre-award costs incurred outside the 90-day period immediately preceding the effective date of the award must receive written approval from the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO). Please verify with the Administrative/Business Contact listed in this RFA before any pre-award expenditures. Any expenditures made before then are at your own risk.

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., program evaluators, military serving professionals, learning specialists, technology specialists) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs;
- the need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations;
- the need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and
- the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of MFLN will recommend that your project be approved for support from currently available funds or be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review. MFLN reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding. We will send copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments to the PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

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

1. *Potential for Developing/Enhancing a Military Families Learning Network serving the*

DoD. This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will succeed in: 1) developing and/or enhancing a high-quality virtual learning platform that increases the capacity of military helping professionals serving military families across the Military Services as well as within civilian programs; (2) providing the overall management of this learning platform including collaborations, partnerships, concentration areas and project staff; (3) developing and coordinating valuable program content and resources through content expertise, collaborations, and/or partnerships, particularly with the land-grant university system; and 4) demonstrating successful past experience with related projects, particularly those involving virtual learning platforms serving military family professionals across the DoD. Factors include those identified in the project narrative.

2. *Proposed Approach and Program Coordination*. This criterion is used to assess the soundness of the proposed approach including statement of need, scope of the project, objectives, methodology, key personnel, timeline, expected products and results (e.g., educational approaches, including an effective and efficient delivery platform, collaborations and partnerships), and communication plan. Recent experience working with military family service professional audiences in partnership with Land-grant Universities and the Cooperative Extension Service must be demonstrated. Factors include those identified in the project narrative.
3. *Evaluation*. This criterion is used to assess the adequacy of the evaluation design and its capacity to measure the extent to which program objectives are met and build upon project outcomes. Factors include those identified in the project narrative.
4. *Budget and Budget Narrative*. This criterion is used to assess the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective based on budget outline provided. Elements considered include: the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objective and the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel. Factors include those identified in the project narrative.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

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](#)).

D. Organizational Management Information

Applicants must submit specific management information relating to an applicant prior to an award, and update the information as needed. Applicants may only have to update their information if they had previously provided the information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

E. Application Disposition

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

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds 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 <https://nifa.usda.gov/terms-and-conditions> to view current NIFA award terms and conditions.

C. 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.

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

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

Data Use: Use of data provided to NIFA awardees pursuant to this grant must comply with the provisions of this paragraph. NIFA awardees are free to publish in professional, refereed journals information or data developed or collected (except confidential data or information including Protected Health Information (PHI) or Personal Identifiable Information (PII)) resulting from the activities under this agreement. Awardees will be required to submit a copy of any such publication to USDA NIFA sixty (60) days prior to publication for review and approval by NIFA and the DoD to ensure that any confidentiality necessary related to the deliverables is maintained and that NIFA and the DoD have been accurately represented. All educational and technical assistance materials developed by the awardee under an agreement with NIFA will be owned by the awardee. NIFA and the DoD will have a non-exclusive, royalty-free, non-transferable, irrevocable license to reproduce, prepare derivative work and distribute copies of the deliverables so long as such deliverables are used for non-commercial educational or government purposes. Any work produced under a NIFA award is subject to 2 CFR Part 200.315 related to intangible property.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact: Programmatic

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PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget

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

Changes in Budget or Project Plans. In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring);
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award;
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project;
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, \(Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals\)](#), or 48 CFR, unless waived by the federal awarding agency,
5. [Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
6. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([§200.75 Participant support costs](#));
7. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [§200.332, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services;
8. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
9. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it is part of the record of NIFA transactions and is available to the public. Information determined 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 other applicable definitions.