



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

National Institute  
of Food  
and Agriculture

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NIFA

# **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

## **Scholarships for Students at 1890 Institutions (1890 Scholarships) Program**

**MODIFIED: Cover Page, Pages 2, 7, and 23  
(9/11/19)**

<b>FUNDING YEAR:</b>	Fiscal Year 2020
<b>APPLICATION DEADLINE:</b>	<b>November 8, 2019</b>
<b>LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE:</b>	Not Applicable
<b>AWARD AMOUNT:</b>	\$9.5 million
<b>ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER:</b>	10.524

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

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

*Assistance Listing [formerly known as Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA)].* The Scholarships for Students at 1890 Institutions (1890 Scholarships) Program is listed in the Assistance Listings under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number 10.524.

**Table 1:** Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, <b>November 8, 2019</b>
Letter of Intent:	Not Applicable
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice <i>(NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)</i>

**Stakeholder Input.** The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments, to the extent possible when developing RFAs and uses comments to help meet the requirements of [Section 103\(c\)\(2\) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 \(7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)\)](#). Applicants may submit written comments to [Policy@nifa.usda.gov](mailto:Policy@nifa.usda.gov) (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Scholarships for Students at 1890 Institutions RFA.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This notice identifies the objectives for 1890 Scholarships grants, deadline dates, funding information, eligibility criteria for applicants, and application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an 1890 Scholarships grant. NIFA requests applications for Scholarships for Students at 1890 Institutions (1890 Scholarships) Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 to provide multiple scholarships for students at each of the 1890 land-grant institutions and Tuskegee University.

The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2020 is approximately \$9.5 million. Eligible institutions may submit one application per institution in FY 2020.

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## PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

### A. Legislative Authority

Pursuant to the authority contained in Section 7117 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334), 7 U.S.C. § 3222a, grants will be awarded under the Scholarships for Students at 1890 Institutions (1890 Scholarships) Program to the 1890 land-grant institutions (those receiving funds under the Second Morrill Act; 7 U.S.C. 322 *et seq.*), including Tuskegee University, for purposes of awarding scholarships to students who meet the requirements described in Part I, B.

### B. Purpose and Priorities

#### *Program Purpose*

The purpose of the 1890 Scholarships Program is to provide scholarships to support recruiting, engaging, retaining, mentoring, and training of undergraduate students at the 1890 land-grant institutions, resulting in baccalaureate degrees in the food and agricultural sciences (see [Appendix III](#) for definition) and related fields. The scholarships are intended to encourage outstanding students at 1890 institutions to pursue and complete baccalaureate degrees in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields that would lead to a highly skilled food and agricultural systems workforce.

By developing a highly-skilled workforce, the 1890 Scholarships Program is aligned with [USDA Strategic Goal #4](#): Facilitate Rural Prosperity and Economic Development.

NIFA is soliciting applications for awarding scholarships to individuals who:

1. Have been accepted for admission at an 1890 institution;
2. Will be enrolled at an 1890 institution not later than one year after the date of acceptance at the 1890 institution; and
3. Intend to pursue a career in the food and agricultural sciences, including a career in agribusiness, energy and renewable fuels, or financial management.

#### *Program Priority*

*Scholarships for Students.* The 1890 Scholarships Program supports students at 1890 institutions through scholarships. Applicants are strongly encouraged to respond to this request with an institutional plan that will use USDA investment to:

1. Increase the number of students who attain baccalaureate degrees in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields; and
2. Support Scholars' intent on pursuing a career in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields in order to meet the technologically advanced needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century food and agricultural systems workforce.

Table 2: Program Key Information

	Title	Description
	Program Code:	SCST
	Program Code Name:	1890 Scholarships
	CFDA Number	10.524

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
Project Type:	Single-function Education Projects
Grant Type:	Standard Grants
Application Deadline:	<b>November 8, 2019</b>
Grant Duration:	24-36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	19
Anticipated Award Amount:	\$500,000

## **PART II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

The anticipated amount available for 1890 Scholarships in FY 2020 is \$9.5 million for grants. USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA.

### **B. Application Restrictions**

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. Applications for FY 2020 are limited to the following application types:

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

NIFA may choose to issue a new award on a continuation basis. A continuation award is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, funds are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the federal government and the public.

Applications should be submitted for a four-year period. NIFA anticipates making these awards by providing funding for the initial year and in subsequent years (i.e., the remaining three (3) years) as a continuation. A continuation is an award for which an application is approved, but each year of funding is awarded on an annual basis and subject to the availability of funding and satisfactory progress. It is expected that subsequent years of the project will be at the same funding level as the first year.

### **C. Project and Grant Types**

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

1. Project Types. In FY 2020, applicants may only submit proposals for Single-function Education Projects. Single-function Education Projects develop human capital relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. Projects must focus on developing skills necessary for entry- and mid-level technical employment or for entering graduate programs in the food and agricultural sciences (see [Appendix III](#) for definition) and related fields.

Single-function Education Projects must show direct alignment with one of the following:

- a. Increasing the number of graduates with the necessary technical skills for entry-level positions in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields;
- b. Improving the technical competencies needed for the workforce to ensure that U.S. agriculture remains globally competitive; or
- c. Enhancing the diversity of the workforce in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields.

2. Grant Types. Under the 1890 Scholarships FY 2020 program, NIFA intends to support scholarships for baccalaureate degrees within the food and agricultural sciences and related fields with *standard grants*.

A standard grant is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period. Standard grants support targeted original scientific Teaching/Education, Research, Extension, or Integrated Projects. An eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system may submit a grant application for project activities to be undertaken principally on behalf of its own students or faculty, and to be managed primarily by its own personnel. The project is to be executed, without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

**D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects**

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

## **PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligibility Requirements**

Applications may only be submitted by the nineteen 1890 land-grant institutions (as identified in the Second Morrill Act; 7 U.S.C. 322 *et seq.*), including Tuskegee University. Awards will only be made to 1890 land-grant institutions that have a competitive scholarships awards process (see [Part IV § B](#) of this RFA, Field 8, b.). Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or, preclude NIFA from making an award. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

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

***Student Eligibility as Scholars*** – Awards to Scholars are made by eligible institutions (grantees) receiving funds under this program. Scholars must:

1. Be an eligible participant (see [Appendix III](#) for definition). Any individual receiving Federal funds from this program must be a citizen or national of the United States;
2. Have been accepted for admission at an 1890 institution;
3. Will be enrolled at an 1890 institution not later than one year after the date of acceptance at the 1890 institution;
4. Study food and agricultural sciences (see [Appendix III](#) for definition), or other related disciplines;
5. Intend to pursue a career in the food and agricultural sciences, including a career in agribusiness, energy and renewable fuels, or financial management;
6. Have a minimum cumulative 2.8 grade point average (GPA) at the time of application, and maintain at least a 2.8 GPA on a quarter/semester and cumulative basis while receiving scholarship support; and
7. Be enrolled as a full-time student, as defined by the institution, in a program of study in the food and agricultural sciences or a related field leading to an undergraduate degree during each quarter/semester that he/she receives 1890 Scholarship support. However, the requirements for formal registration during part of this tenure may be waived if permitted by the policy of the grantee, provided that the Scholar is making satisfactory progress toward degree completion.

In regards to student eligibility, 1890 institutions have the discretion to identify a higher minimum cumulative GPA requirement, but that requirement cannot exceed a 3.2 GPA. Scholars must maintain this GPA on a quarter/semester and cumulative basis while receiving scholarship support (i.e. if an 1890 institution establishes the minimum cumulative GPA requirement for student eligibility as a 3.0, Scholars must maintain at least a 3.0 GPA on a quarter/semester and cumulative basis while receiving scholarship support). The minimum GPA that is established by the 1890 institution should be consistent for the life of the program.

Under the 1890 Scholarships Program, eligible institutions may make partial and/or full scholarship awards. The following outlines additional documents associated with student eligibility.

***Supporting Documents for High School Applications*** – 1890 institutions should consider the following documents/requirements in regards to applications from high school students:

1. Privacy Act Advisory Statement and Release Form;
2. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
3. Biographical Questionnaire;
4. Current Resume;
5. 500-800 word essay describing the applicant's interest and intent to pursue a career in the food and agricultural sciences or related fields;
6. Current official transcript with the school's seal and/or signature of an authorized school official (preferably through the most recent quarter/semester);
7. Letter of recommendation from High School Counselor;
8. Letter of recommendation from High School Teacher; and
9. Signed and dated application (including the signature of the parent or guardian, if the applicant is under the age of 18).

***Supporting Documents for College/Transfer Applications*** – 1890 institutions should consider the following documents/requirements in regards to applications from college students (including transfer students):

1. Privacy Act Advisory Statement and Release Form;
2. FAFSA;
3. Biographical Questionnaire;
4. Current Resume;
5. Current official transcript with the institution's seal and/or signature of an authorized college or university official (preferably through the most recent quarter/semester);
6. 500-800 word essay describing the applicant's interest and intent to pursue a career in the food and agricultural sciences or related fields;
7. Two letters of recommendation (one from either the Department Head or Dean, and the other from a faculty member); and
8. Signed and dated application (including the signature of the parent or guardian, if the applicant is under the age of 18).

Within the framework of these guidelines, all decisions with respect to the appointment of scholars will be made by the 1890 institutions. Scholars must be identified and scholarships must be awarded within twelve (12) months of the effective start date of the grant. All 1890 institutions must request and obtain approval from the NIFA Program Office if scholarship funds cannot be allocated within this twelve-month period. The request must include the extenuating circumstances that prevented the allocation of scholarship funds. Failure to obtain this approval will result in the loss of funding for scholarships that were not awarded.

If an 1890 institution determines that a Scholar must be terminated from the program for any reason, the institution must request and obtain approval from the NIFA Program Office.

A Scholar who finds it necessary to interrupt his/her program of study because of health, personal, or other reasonable non-academic and non-disciplinary cause(s) must be allowed to resume funded study at any time within 12 months of the interruption, provided there is adequate time remaining before the award expires. A Scholar who finds it necessary to interrupt his/her

program of study more than one time cannot exceed 12 total months of cumulative leave without forfeiting 1890 Scholarship eligibility.

A replacement Scholar is a student who is recruited into the program to take the place of a Scholar who left the program prior to completion. The tenure of such a replacement Scholar is limited to whatever time is remaining on the grant before it expires; however, an institution may not appoint a replacement Scholar unless there is time for the student to complete at least one quarter/semester of study before the expiration date of the grant. Replacement Scholars must meet all of the eligibility criteria and other requirements established for Scholar selection and are subject to the same provisions as other Scholars during their tenure in the program.

**B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

The 1890 Scholarships Program has *NO* matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

**PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION**

**A. Method of Application**

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

**Table 3.** Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to <a href="http://Grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> must register early with <a href="http://Grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> prior to submitting an application ( <a href="#">Register Here</a> ).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install <a href="#">Adobe Reader</a> (see <a href="#">Adobe Software Compatibility</a> for basic system requirements)
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number <b>USDA-NIFA-1890SS-006911</b> , search for application here: <a href="#">Opportunity Package</a> .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization’s readiness to submit an electronic application.

**Table 4:** Help and Resources

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

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

The [Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the [Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. NIFA will accept subsequent submissions to an application until the application deadline. However, applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA’s review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all applications that

meet the requirements of this RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 5** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

**Table 5: Key Application Instructions**

Instruction	References (All references are to the <a href="#">Application Guide</a> )
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="#">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.	

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

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

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

1. Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the 1890 Scholarships Program. See **Part V § 4.7** of the [Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. Field 8. Project Narrative (PN). The PN must not exceed fifteen *1.5 spaced* pages of written text and up to two *1.5 spaced* additional pages for figures and tables (the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman). The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. The PN must include all of the following:
  - a. **Potential for Building the Food and Agricultural Workforce.** Discuss how the project will support Scholars' intent to pursue a career in the food and agricultural sciences (see [Appendix III](#) for definition) and related fields. This section must address the following:
    - i. Measurable objective(s) of how the scholarships impacts the institution, increases enrollment in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields,

- improves retention rates, and supports completion of baccalaureate degrees by students in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields;
  - ii. Description of how the project will support Scholars' capacity to achieve competence in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields;
  - iii. Summary of relevant academic degree programs that are offered at the applicant institution and will be supported by the 1890 Scholarships Program; and
  - iv. Description of how the project will support Scholars' intent to pursue a career in the food and agricultural sciences, including a career in agribusiness, energy and renewable fuels, or financial management.
- b. **Recruitment and Selection Plan (Competitive Scholarships Awards Process).** Describe the competitive scholarships awards process that will govern the recruitment and selection of Scholars. This section must address the following:
  - i. Description of recruitment activities;
  - ii. Demographics of target population;
  - iii. Selection criteria (see Part III, Student Eligibility of Scholars);
  - iv. Identification of all members of the scholarships selection committee (if known at the time of the application); and
  - v. Detailed timeline of activities (i.e. recruitment, selection, etc.).
- c. **Management Plan (Institutional Support Mechanisms).** Describe how the scholarships will complement and not duplicate existing scholarships at the institution. Describe the management plan that will be implemented at the 1890 institution after the awarding of scholarships to students. Describe the existing institutional support mechanisms that will be included as a part of the management plan. This section must address the following:
  - i. Mentoring plans for Scholars (i.e. support and mentoring of Scholars by faculty, upper-level students and other professionals);
  - ii. Dissemination of existing career development activities that will provide Scholars with a broad exposure to careers in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields (i.e. internships, study abroad/international education activities, etc.);
  - iii. Mechanisms for monitoring Scholars' progress and performance (i.e. face-to-face meetings, skype meetings, etc.)
  - iv. Dissemination of opportunities for professionalization, including participation in workshops and professional meetings; and
  - v. Dissemination of information, experiential learning, and/or other opportunities that will broaden the engagement and communication skills of scholars.

*In consideration of best management practices (as they relate to the institutional management of the 1890 Scholarships Program), All applicants must consider [NIFA's guidance that provides clarification of the 1890 Authorized Representative.](#)*

- d. **Reporting Capacity and Evaluation Plan.** Describe the institutional capacity for collecting and reporting data. Describe the evaluation plan that will be used to measure the success of the 1890 Scholarships Program. Specifically, this section must address the following:

- i. Current tools, systems, mechanisms, etc. that will be used to collect and report data, including the number of scholarships awarded and the amount of each scholarship;
  - ii. Strategies for evaluating the success of the institutional 1890 Scholarships Program as a whole;
  - iii. Strategies for incorporating feedback into the program to improve performance; and
  - iv. Defined approach for longitudinal tracking of the Scholars after completion of the program.
3. Field 12, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V § 4.12** of the [Application Guide](#). The following attachments must be included in your 1890 Scholarships Program application:
- a. **Institution/School/Department Goals and Objectives.** Include an institutional letter indicating that the application is within the strategic plan of the institution in the food and agricultural sciences. The letter must describe which school or department at your institution would potentially benefit from funds to support student scholarships. The letter must be developed on official university letterhead and signed by the Dean, Agricultural Research Director, or Extension Administrator (limit to one page, PDF format). The institutional letter is required for all grant applications.
  - b. **Expected Outcomes – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment “Expected Outcomes” in the document header and save file as “ExpectedOutcomes.” Please use a format, similar to what is provided in Figure 1 below, to submit expected outcomes and attach it as the last page of the project narrative. A fillable version of this document can be found at: <https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/recommended-format-submitting-expected-impacts>.

**Figure 1: Expected Outcomes**

<b>Total expected impact during entire grant period</b>	<b>Expected Number</b>	<b>Justification for Expected Numbers</b>
Number of students directly supported by the 1890 Scholarships Program		
Number of full scholarships		
Number of partial scholarships		
Total number of scholarships (full and partial)		
Amount of funds awarded in full scholarships		
Amount of funds awarded in partial scholarships		
Total amount of funds awarded in full and partial scholarships		

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

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

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

1. Match – Not required.
2. Indirect costs (IDC) – Not Allowable.

Funding requests for this program are restricted to student scholarships. Per the legislation, the anticipated award amount for each eligible institution is \$500,000. Federal funds awarded for scholarships must ONLY be awarded to Scholars to cover the following:

1. Tuition
2. Student fees
3. Room and board
4. Textbooks (or e-books)

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

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

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name (1890 Scholarships) and the program code (SCST). Accurate entry is critical.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See **Part VI § 1.8** of the [Application Guide](#).

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

### **C. Funding Restrictions**

Indirect Costs (IDC) are **not** authorized or allowable for this RFA Program. Successful applicants may not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA for the costs of administering the scholarship program, or to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

## **PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. NIFA's Evaluation Process**

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, a scientific peer- review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that meet the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

#### **Scientific Peer Review Process:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

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 outcomes and impacts. These written reviews are used to begin peer review 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: (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

Each application will be evaluated by three peer reviewers. We will use the evaluation criteria below (which are listed in priority order of importance) to review Standard Grant applications submitted in response to this RFA:

- 1. Potential for Building the Food and Agricultural Workforce**
  - a. Clear justification for the project that demonstrates a national, regional and/or local need for graduates pursuing careers in the food and agricultural sciences (see [Appendix III](#) for definition) and related fields; and
  - b. Strength of curriculum in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields to produce a well-prepared workforce.
- 2. Overall Approach and Quality of the Proposal.**
  - a. Detailed competitive scholarships awards process; and
  - b. Degree to which the proposal complies with the application guidelines. The proposal is enhanced by its adherence to instructions; accuracy of forms; well-prepared vitae for all key personnel associated with the project; and presentation. Also assessed is how effectively ideas are presented, clearly articulated, and thoroughly explained, as well as the inclusion of all required forms.
- 3. Management of the Institutional 1890 Scholarships Program.**
  - a. Plan for retention of Scholars through the period of the grant;
  - b. Strong mentoring plan;
  - c. Defined mechanisms for monitoring Scholars' progress and performance;
  - d. Strategies for disseminating career and professional development opportunities to Scholars in support of their intent to pursue careers in the food and agricultural sciences and related fields; and
  - e. Support for any remaining Scholars to degree completion, after federal funding has ended.
- 4. Reporting Capacity and Evaluation.**
  - a. Demonstration of current capacity to collect and report data, including the number of scholarships awarded and the amount of each scholarship;
  - b. Plan and methods for evaluating the success of the institutional 1890 Scholarships program as a whole;
  - c. Plan for incorporating feedback into the program to improve performance; and
  - d. Defined approach for longitudinal tracking of the Scholars after completion of the program.

### **C. 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).

**D. Application Disposition**

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

## **PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

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

*Award Notice.* The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.210](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

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

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

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

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

## **PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget**

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

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

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring);
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award;
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project;
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, \(Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals\)](#), or [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#), unless waived by the federal awarding agency;
5. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([§200.75 Participant support costs](#));
6. 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;
7. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
8. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

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

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

### **C. Regulatory Information**

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

**APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACTS**

**Programmatic Contact**

Name	Email	Telephone	Fax
<b>Antonio McLaren</b>	<a href="mailto:antonio.a.mclaren@usda.gov"><u>antonio.a.mclaren@usda.gov</u></a>	<b>202-480-3494</b>	N/A

**Administrative Contacts**

Name	Email	Telephone	Fax
Awards Management Division (AMD)	<a href="mailto:SM.AMDAdministrativeContacts-NIFA"><u>SM.AMDAdministrativeContacts-NIFA</u></a>	N/A	N/A

**NIFA’s Mailing Address:**

Before September 30, 2019:  
 National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
 800 9<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
 Washington, DC 20024

After September 30, 2019  
 National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
 6501 Beacon Drive  
 Kansas City, MO 64133

## APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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

### APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

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

Terms	Definitions
Continuation Award	An award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the federal government and the public.
Eligible Participant	Eligible participant means an individual who is a citizen or national of the United States as defined in this section.
Food and Agricultural Sciences	Per Section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, the term “food and agricultural sciences” means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, including activities relating to the following: (A) Animal health, production, and well-being. (B) Plant health and production. (C) Animal and plant germ plasm collection and preservation. (D) Aquaculture. (E) Food safety. (F) Soil and water conservation and improvement. (G) Forestry, horticulture, and range management. (H) Nutritional sciences and promotion. (I) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability. (J) Home economics. (K) Rural human ecology. (L) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4–H clubs. (M) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis. (N) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture. (O) Biotechnology related to agriculture. (P) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products.

Terms	Definitions
Matching	The process through which a grant recipient match awarded USDA funds with cash and in-kind contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The matching funds must derive from non-Federal sources.
New Application	An application not previously submitted to a program.
Renewal Application	A project application that seeks additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award.
Resubmitted Application	A project application that was previously submitted to a program, but the application was not funded.
Resubmitted Renewal Application	A project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. This is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to but not funded.