

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Phase 1: June 12, 2026
Phase 2: September 11, 2026
Phase 3: December 31, 2026

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: \$11,574,000

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD RANGE: \$150,000 - \$2,500,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-TCRGP-011697

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.227

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

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Tribal Colleges Research Grant Program (TCRGP) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.227.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	<p>5:00 p.m. Eastern Time,</p> <p>Phase 1: June 12, 2026 Phase 2: September 11, 2026 Phase 3: December 31, 2026</p> <p>[Ref to Part I, C of this NOFO]</p>
Applicants Comments:	<p>Within six months from the issuance of this notice <i>(NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)</i></p>

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to the extent permitted by law, will no longer make grants or otherwise fund programs or activities that improperly discriminate on the basis of race or sex, including discrimination in the name of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies. Instead, USDA will prioritize merit and efficiency. USDA recognizes programs and initiatives will have the greatest impact when these programs and initiatives put American farmers, ranchers, and foresters first by:

- solving the most pressing challenges they face;
- protecting America’s food, fuel, and fiber supply to enhance national security;
- supporting production of healthy and safe food for consumers;
- expanding and developing domestic markets;
- training the next generation of agriculturalists; and
- fueling innovation to keep American farmers at the forefront of productivity.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is committed to advancing these principles and encourages applicants to actively engage farmers, ranchers, and foresters when applying for funding opportunities to ensure relevancy and adherence to them. NIFA also encourages agricultural leaders to engage in the peer review panel process to ensure American producers are better served through research, education, and extension activities.

Projects submitted under this NOFO should align with [USDA Secretary’s Memorandum 1078-020](#) Directive on Departmental Research and Development Priorities:

1. Increasing Profitability of Farmers and Ranchers
2. Expanding Markets and Creating New Uses of U.S. Agricultural Products
3. Protecting the Integrity of American Agriculture from Invasive Species
4. Promoting Soil Health to Regenerate Long-Term Productivity of Land

5. Improving Human Health through Precision Nutrition and Food Quality

Stakeholder Input. NIFA seeks comments on all Notices of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) 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 NOFOs 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@usda.gov. Please use the following subject line: Response to the Tribal Colleges Research Grant NOFO.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This notice identifies the objectives for TCRGP projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

NIFA requests applications for the TCRGP for FY 2026 to enhance research capacity at 1994 American Indian Land-grant Institutions hereafter referred to as 1994s; and develop research projects of Tribal, State, or national importance. This NOFO has several research options set at funding levels designed to provide 1994s with the opportunity to engage in research at the optimum level commensurate with their institutional capacity. All applications must include at least one research collaborator from the approved list of research institutions.

The amount available for the FY 2026 TCRGP is approximately \$11,574,000, which includes \$1,850,000 of FY 2024 funding, \$4,655,000 of FY 2025 and \$5,069,000 of FY 2026 funding.

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

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

Legislative authority for TCRGP is contained in section 536 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 as amended and codified at [7 U.S.C. 301](#). **Note:** the term "1994 Institution" means one of the 1994 Institutions defined in section 532 of the same Act.

B. Purpose and Priorities

Subject to the legislative authority described in Part I, A, and the availability of funds, the Secretary of Agriculture may award competitive grants to 1994s to conduct agricultural research that addresses high priority concerns of Tribal, national, or multistate significance.

TCRGP focuses on development of research capacity at Tribal colleges, specifically in agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. The program aims to teach leadership skills, knowledge, and qualities that are necessary to prepare students to be competitive with other students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, government, and academia.

Of interest are the projects involving innovative agricultural technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), data science, robotics, and other cutting edge digital tools. NIFA encourages incorporation of opportunities for training undergraduate students in these areas to equip them with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to adapt to and thrive in an increasingly digital society and expose them to educational and career pathways in AI for food and agricultural sciences.

Research Collaboration Requirement: All applications must, by Congressional authorization, include one of four research collaborators from the list below. The application must contain a signed collaboration agreement indicating the role the collaborating institution will play.

Additional collaborations are optional. The approved collaborators are:

1. An 1862 or 1890 Land-grant Institution.
2. The USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) headquarters, state, or regional laboratory.
3. A Non-Land-Grant College of Agriculture (NLGCA) (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977). Updated requirements and a list of certified NLGCA are located at [NIFA-21-003 Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture \(NLGCA\) List](#).
4. A forestry school funded under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program. The partner must be the McIntire-Stennis-funded department and not another entity.

Leadership Skills Development. The development of leadership skills, knowledge, and qualities are necessary to prepare students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, government, and academia. Tribal Colleges Research Grant Program applications must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to equip students with technical and leadership abilities upon graduation. Specific activities may include:

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

2. Connecting the academic classroom experience with daily leadership roles and organizational activities
3. Providing opportunities for mentoring and shadowing
4. Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc.

Table 2: Program Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	ZY
Program Code Name:	TCRGP
ALN:	10.227
Project Type:	Research
Grant Type:	Collaborative Grant Type
Application Deadline	Phase 1: June 12, 2026 Phase 2: September 11, 2026 Phase 3: December 31, 2026
Grant Duration:	24-36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	20
Minimum Award Amount:	\$150,000
Maximum Award Amount:	Research Capacity Center: \$2,500,000 Area of Expertise: \$650,000 New Discovery: \$350,000 Applied Faculty/Community: \$150,000 Workshop Grants: \$150,000

C. Program Area Description

The purpose of this program is to advance 1994 institutional research capacity to address priority issues of concern to the Tribal community and reservations. Research options are designed to provide opportunities for institutions with varying degrees of research capacity to participate in the program. NIFA encourages postdoctoral candidates, visiting researchers, and scientists to be located at the Tribal College and University (TCU) to help build research infrastructure. Release time for faculty with heavy teaching loads who are included in the proposal to conduct research is highly encouraged. NIFA encourages Project Directors to work with the prospective institution’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or Tribe to create a framework for data collection, storage, and data sovereignty. If the college or university is proposing to do research, teaching, and training on vertebrate animals, the proposed project must be approved by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). Project Directors (PD) will need to budget for one PD meeting with the location to be determined by NIFA. Please include this PD meeting in your budget.

Student Participation: All applications must contain a student component. NIFA will not make an award that does not involve some level of 1994 student participation. TCRGP projects that integrate social and biological sciences to provide experiential learning opportunities and internships for students in applied research and related community development programs are encouraged. Incorporation of social and behavioral sciences is important for addressing many of

the challenges facing agriculture and rural communities, such as increasing demand for food production in the face of limited natural resources, improving health by engaging in healthy lifestyles, and alleviating poverty by fostering economic opportunity.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for the FY 2026 Tribal Colleges Research Grants Program is approximately \$11,574,000, which includes \$1,850,000 of FY 2024 funding, \$4,655,000 of FY 2025 funding and \$5,069,000 of FY 2026 funding. USDA is not committed to fund any application or to make a specific number of awards.

TCRGP has an open submission for FY 2026. Projects can be submitted anytime between publication of this NOFO and December 31, 2026. NIFA will conduct three panels with funding split approximately evenly for each panel throughout FY 2026. There will be three phases of acceptance with three different panel dates. Phase 1 will accept applications through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) until 5 p.m. Eastern Time on June 12, 2026. These projects will be paneled together in Phase 1 of the panel process for TCRGP. NIFA intends to allocate approximately \$3,800,000 for Phase 1 funding. To be considered for Phase 2 of the panel process, applications must be submitted through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) to NIFA no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Time on September 11, 2026. The funding amount will be approximately \$3,800,000 for the second phase of funding. Applications submitted by 5 p.m. Eastern Time on December 31, 2026, will be considered for funding for Phase 3. There is approximately \$3,800,000 available for Phase 3 of the panel process. If there are unspent funds in Phase 1 and Phase 2, those funds will roll over to the next phase of the panel process.

For grant types Area of Expertise, New Discovery Research, Faculty/Community, and Workshop Grants, there are restrictions in the number of applications that an eligible institution may submit. NIFA will generally only award any one institution: (1) Up to two awards in the New Discovery grant type; (2) One award for Area of Expertise; (3) Up to two awards in Faculty/Community; and (4) one award for Workshop Grants. There is generally a limit of three awards total to any one eligible institution in response to this NOFO (Refer to [Part II, C](#). Project and Grant Types). For the grant type 1994 Research Capacity Center, an institution can only receive one award.

The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury's Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this NOFO.

B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this NOFO.

Applications for FY 2026 NOFO is limited to the following application types:

1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this NOFO and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).
2. *Resubmitted application*: Resubmitted applications must include the response to the previous review panel summary and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Resubmitted applicants must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application in the *Federal Field (Field 4)* on the application form (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).

C. Project and Grant Types

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

1. Project Types

Research Projects: Single-function Research Projects support fundamental or applied research conducted by individual investigators, co-investigators within the same discipline, or multidisciplinary teams. Fundamental research means research that (i) increases knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and has the potential for broad application; and (ii) has an effect on agriculture, food, or nutrition.

Applied research means research that includes expansion of the findings of fundamental research to uncover practical ways in which new knowledge can be advanced to benefit individuals and society. Multidisciplinary projects are those in which investigators from two or more disciplines collaborate closely to address a common problem. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences.

2. Grant Types

A Collaborative Grant supports projects with at least one additional partner or a multi-partner approach to enhance research programs. Collaborative Grants should build linkages domestically to generate a critical mass of expertise, skill, and technology to address research programs related to the food and agricultural sciences. Grants can reduce duplication of efforts and/or build capacity and should be organized and led by a strong applicant with documented project management knowledge and skills to organize and carry out the initiative.

- a. A **1994 Research Capacity Center** (\$2,500,000 maximum dependent on available funding) grant will build a focused area of strategic research among multiple 1994 institutions. A minimum of two other 1994 institutions should benefit from this grant type. This Collaborative Grant Type aims to build the research capacity among 1994 institutions through funding the expansion of research by using innovative approaches to increase the ability of the 1994 institutions to conduct groundbreaking focused research. These institutions could provide research scientists, including postdoctoral fellows, research faculty, visiting scientists or Federal scientists who would be located at the 1994s to help expand research capacity, teach courses at the 1994s, mentor undergraduate students, etc. Collaboration with the American Indian Higher Education Consortium is highly encouraged. Establishing undergraduate research opportunities must be part of this Grant Type and a mentor plan is recommended. A data management plan indicating how data within the 1994 institutions will be protected is required. This Grant Type should be focused on developing strong research, which includes improving research grantsmanship and increasing scholarly publications and participation in professional societies to allow for research to continue in this space.
- b. An **Area of Expertise** (\$650,000 maximum) grant will enhance existing research completed or nearly completed for TCRGP New Discovery and Applied Faculty/Community grants awarded in the past five years; or enhance the area of expertise at an institution that has been previously funded by other

sources or by NIFA. It is designed for 1994 Land-grants that have, or are developing, focused areas of expertise in one or more of the food and agricultural sciences. This grant is intended to support research endeavors where existing research resources have already developed some level of expertise in an area that is important to their students and communities.

Explain thoroughly how your proposal is building on existing research at the institution previously funded by NIFA or other funding sources, and how this funding will assist the 1994 institution in becoming a top research institution in the area identified. Applications in the Area of Expertise grant type need to have a clear experimental design, citations and evaluation plan. Please describe the impacts and outcomes of the proposed project including any publications, students or community members impacted, and capacity building at the institution. Letters of commitment from collaborators, community members, and elders are required.

- c. **New Discovery** (\$350,000 maximum) grants should be on a level of research complexity that could lead to an enhancement in the body of scientific knowledge and problem solving on relevant Tribal issues. Applicants are expected to possess appropriate research capacity and faculty expertise to conduct scientific inquiry. Research undertakings should be at a standard where results may help solve problems at a regional, State, or national level. New Discovery projects are also required to offer meaningful research involvement for 1994 students. The maximum amount for a New Discovery award is generally \$350,000 total for the entire project period.
- d. **Applied Faculty/Community** (\$150,000 maximum) grants fund faculty, community, and student research that addresses practical Tribal community needs and opportunities. Investigations should result in knowledge or best practices useful to the Tribal community. Research may be on skillful adaptations of existing knowledge to address unique community needs.
- e. **Workshop Grants** (\$150,000 maximum) would host groups of 1994s, partners, other organizations, and Federal agencies to address the needs of Tribal communities and help to spur scientific inquiry. The grant can cover expenses associated with airfare, hotel, venue, per diem, incidentals, and materials.

D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects

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

documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research](#) for further information.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for the TCRGP must meet all the requirements discussed in this NOFO. 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 [About Grants](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

The eligible 1994s are listed below:

- 1) Aaniiih Nakoda College
- 2) Bay Mills Community College
- 3) Blackfeet Community College
- 4) Cankdeska Cikana Community College
- 5) Chief Dull Knife College
- 6) College of Menominee Nation
- 7) College of the Muscogee Nation
- 8) Dine College
- 9) Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College
- 10) Fort Peck Community College
- 11) Haskell Indian Nations University
- 12) Ilisagvik College
- 13) Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development.
- 14) Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College
- 15) Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College
- 16) Leech Lake Tribal College
- 17) Little Big Horn College
- 18) Little Priest Tribal College
- 19) Navajo Technical University
- 20) Nebraska Indian Community College
- 21) Northwest Indian College
- 22) Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College
- 23) Oglala Lakota College
- 24) Red Lake Nation College
- 25) Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College
- 26) Salish Kootenai College
- 27) Sinte Gleska University
- 28) Sisseton Wahpeton College
- 29) Sitting Bull College
- 30) Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
- 31) Stone Child College
- 32) Tohono O'odham Community College
- 33) Turtle Mountain Community College
- 34) United Tribes Technical College
- 35) White Earth Tribal and Community College

USDA **will not accept** competitive applications for grants and cooperative agreements submitted for dangerous gain-of-function research, as defined in [Section 8 of E.O. 14292](#).

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No Match Required - The TCRGP 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 NOFO electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this NOFO and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 3** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process. [The NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is contained in the specific funding opportunity package or a sample of the guide can be found [here](#). When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

Table 3: Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application.
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements).
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-TCRGP-011697, search for application here: Opportunity Package .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization’s readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 4: Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
Grants.gov Online Support Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: support@grants.gov Self-service customer-based support: Grants.gov iPortal Customer service business Hours 24/7, except Federal holidays .	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET, except Federal holidays .

B. Content and Form of the Application

The [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this NOFO. The NOFO overrides the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. 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 NOFO. 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 NIFA Grants Application Guide)
Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.	Part IV
Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.	Part IV
Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.	Part IV
Follow the submission instructions.	Part IV
Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.	Part V
Contact the Grants.gov helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.	N/A
Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 90 days of the application deadline.	N/A

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

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

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

1. **Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract.** The PS must show which Collaborative Grant Type you are choosing. You must also outline how the project goals align with the project goals of the TCRGP. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. **Field 8. Project Narrative (PN).** The PN must not exceed 15 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text (Times New Roman) and up to 2 *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 competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly applicable to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. The PN must include all the following:
 - a. **Introduction:** Identify the Project Type clearly and the collaborating organization. Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed activities. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities that relate to the proposed project, including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. In addition, this section is to include in-depth information on the following,

when applicable:

- i. Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and the relevance to reservation and/or Tribal community, stakeholders, and ongoing State/Federal agricultural research, education, and extension programs;
 - ii. The role of Tribal stakeholders in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation, as appropriate;
 - iii. The likelihood that research capacity will be enhanced at the proposing institution; and
 - iv. If vertebrate animals are being used in the research project, an IACUC must be submitted to NIFA before the start of the project.
- b. **Objectives:** All applications must include a statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort in clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged terms.
- c. **Methods:** Explicitly state the procedures or methodology you will apply to the proposed effort. This section is to include:
- i. Proposed project activities;
 - ii. A clear hypothesis and experimental design or objectives;
 - iii. Plans to communicate results to Tribal stakeholders and relevant Tribal communities;
 - iv. Role of postdoctoral or visiting scientists, if applicable;
 - v. Plans for your college to subscribe to professional journals or publish results and/or share knowledge with the community;
 - vi. Role to be played by the collaborating institution(s);
 - vii. Role of students in the project;
 - viii. Possible limitations of the proposed procedures, obstacles, or unintended consequences and how they will be addressed; and
 - ix. If vertebrate animals are used, you must submit an IACUC to NIFA before the start of the project.
- d. **Project Timetable:** The proposal timetable is to include all important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project.
- e. **Project Directors Meeting:** Account for a Project Directors meeting in the budget. The location of the meeting will be at NIFA's discretion and will be mandatory for all Project Directors. Budget staff working on the TCRGP are recommended to attend the National Extension and Research Administrative Officers Conference (NERAOC).
- f. **Data Management Plan:** A DMP is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the 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 NOFO, [NIFA's Data Management Plan](#)). If you need help in preparing a data management plan or have questions about what constitutes a data management plan for this role (including questions about data privacy, etc.), please contact the NIFA program contacts listed at the end of this NOFO.
- g. **Summary of Previous Work:** Include a summary of previous research and who funded the research, where applicable.

3. Field 12. Add Other Attachments. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants 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** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)).

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

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. Applicants should submit a budget for all years of the grant award including a cumulative budget.
2. Applicants should submit a budget narrative for each year and for the cumulative budget.
3. Applicants should include separate budget pages for subawards to collaborating institutions for all years of the award, including a cumulative budget.
4. The 1994s should retain at least 50 percent of the total grant award.
5. Budgets must follow the amounts indicated in the chosen Research Option:
 - a. 1994 Research Capacity Center - \$2,500,000
 - b. Area of Expertise - \$650,000
 - c. New Discovery Research - \$350,000
 - d. Applied Faculty/Community and Student Research - \$150,000
 - e. Workshop Grants - Approximately \$150,000
6. Indirect Costs (IDC) – See [Part IV, C](#) of this NOFO for funding restrictions regarding IDC, and **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for additional information

Funding Limitations Per Institution:

1. For each award, the submitting 1994 institution must retain at least 50 percent of the overall award.
2. While at least one approved research collaborator is required by legislation, there is no requirement for sharing funds if the collaborator agrees to the arrangement.
3. For further information and instructions regarding indirect costs, refer to Part V, section. of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#). For indirect cost funding restrictions, refer to Part IV, C. of this NOFO.

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. **Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying.** Enter the program name “Tribal Colleges Research Grant Program” and the program code “ZY”. Accurate entry is critical.
2. **Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

Other Attachments:

Mentoring Plan PDF Attachment: Title the attachment as “Mentoring Plan” in the document header and save file as “Mentoring Plan Undergraduate Students” or “Mentoring Plan Graduate Students” or “Mentoring Plan Postdoc,” as applicable. If the proposal anticipates requesting funding for student or postdoctoral support including scholarships or fellowships, it must include a maximum of a one- to two-page Mentoring Plan (MP) for all recipients. If various tiers of students or scholars are represented in the proposal, please provide separate mentoring plans for each educational or professional level targeted (e.g., high school students, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, etc.). The Mentoring Plan should incorporate:

- a. The roles and responsibilities of the Project Director and Co-Project Directors in managing the mentoring process
- b. Training for and/or credentials of individuals who will serve as mentors (i.e., mentor training): mentors may be-experienced mentors from academia, industry, or government, or student peers at various levels, who are expected to provide guidance, support, and sense of community with the activities and facilitate the amplification of program-specific perspectives and accomplishments of the mentees
- c. A description of mentoring activities that may include, but are not limited to, peer mentoring or layered mentoring, whereby a set of mentees are progressively mentored by others at a higher level in their careers; please incorporate these activities into the overall project timeline
- d. A description of processes to ensure reasonable accommodations for program participants with disabilities or challenges with accessing program activities; scholarship programs should include plans to accommodate scholarship recipients who find it necessary to interrupt their program of study because of health, personal, or other reasonable nonacademic and nondisciplinary cause(s).

C. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Cost (IDC) is not to exceed 30 percent of the recipient’s Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA). [7 U.S.C. 3310](#) limits the recovery of IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of the TFFA under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum allowable IDC amount recoverable under the award, including the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, is the lesser of the following and is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:
 - a. the sum of an institution’s negotiated indirect cost rate and the indirect cost rate charged by sub-awardees, if any; or
 - b. 30 percent of TFFA.

If the result of number one is the lesser of the two amounts, the grant recipient is allowed to charge the negotiated IDC rate on the prime award and the sub-award(s), if any. Any sub-awards would be subject to the sub-awardee’s negotiated IDC rate. The sub-awardee may charge its negotiated IDC rate on its portion of the award, provided the sum of the IDC amount 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 amounts, then the maximum IDC allowed for the overall award, including any sub-award(s), is limited to 30 percent of the TFFA. That is, the IDC of the prime awardee plus the sum of the IDC 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 IDC for the Federal portion (i.e., prime and sub-awardee(s)) and any applicable cost-sharing. Amounts exceeding the maximum allowable IDC are considered unallowable. See sections [408](#) and [410](#) of [2 CFR 200](#).

If the applicant does not have a negotiated rate and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant may request an IDC rate. Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process and need only to calculate a rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC. If awarded, the applicant will be required to submit a complete IDC proposal package to obtain a negotiated rate.

Organizations that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, may elect the de minimis rate ([2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#)). The Uniform Guidance offers the option of electing to charge a de minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. As described above and in [2 CFR 200.403](#), costs must be charged consistently as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If elected, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which it may do at any time.

See [NIFA Indirect Costs](#) for information including [additional resources](#) and [NIFA Indirect Cost Guidance Chart](#).

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 set forth in this NOFO. All administrative requirements must be met in order for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

Scientific Peer Review Process:

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

1. The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities.
2. The need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.
3. The need to include other experts (e.g., agricultural producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, educators, evaluators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to the reviewer's area of expertise, geographic area, and entity type, as appropriate.
6. The need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of NIFA will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or review results. Alignment to USDA Research and Development Priorities will also be considered.

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 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 a 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 NOFO. The criteria below are not weighted equally in merit but are listed in descending order of importance. Applications are evaluated primarily for overall merit, with emphasis placed on the proposed approach to advance quality of research using sound program management and strong cooperative linkages in order to build institutional capacity.

1. Potential for Advancing the Quality of Research

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals; identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed; project justification; innovation; advancement of a multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus; and potential for adoption by other institutions and contribution to current body of knowledge in areas addressed. The proposed project must also show how it will contribute to the legislatively authorized purpose of this program. Potential project impacts must be stated. Information detailing how the project will enhance research at 1994 institutions is required.

2. Budget and Cost Effectiveness

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel (and whether release time is included in the budget for teaching faculty); and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority research.

3. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages

This criterion evaluates the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, project evaluation, and dissemination plans. The project evaluation plan will be reviewed to determine the appropriateness of the methodologies to be used in assessing the accomplishment of the project's stated products, results, and measurable outcomes. The proposed approach will be evaluated based on the soundness of the research concepts which may be documented through background literature or actual institutional data. Emphasis is placed on the quality of research support provided to the applicant

institution/organization through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project. The application will also be reviewed to assess the effectiveness in addressing any perceived pitfalls and alternative strategies or approaches. Reviewers will also assess whether the application includes a sustainability plan to ensure continuity of relationship building with proposed partners.

4. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building

This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its research capacity. Elements considered include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (i.e., administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic or research enhancement, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support. The level of institutional data provided to show the institution's ability to support the proposed project will also be assessed.

5. Key Personnel

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number, qualifications, and expertise of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts and the dissemination of the findings. If applicable, reviewers will assess whether an application describes the abilities of knowledge holders without higher education degrees to conduct meaningful research.

USDA NIFA will consider alignment to USDA Research and Development priorities in making their recommendations for funding.

C. Organizational Management Information

Applicants must submit specific management information prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only need to provide an update if there was a change in previously provided 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 non-financial 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 NOFO. 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 NOFO may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the program-specific laws and regulations, NIFA General Awards Administrative Provisions ([7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E](#)), USDA Regulations for Grants and Agreements ([2 CFR Chapter IV](#)), Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance ([2 CFR part 200](#)), [NIFA-specific terms and conditions](#), [USDA General Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards](#), and approved budget and project plans

The Notice of Award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Output and reporting requirements are included in the [award terms and conditions](#). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the Award Notice.

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 required);
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 [2 CFR Part 300 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, [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
5. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
6. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a Federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR 200.333, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved Federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services;
7. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-Federal entity;
8. The need for additional Federal funds to complete the project;
9. Salary rates of pay exceeding an Executive Level IV salary range (see “Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule” under the “Executive & Senior Level Employee Pay Tables” header at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>) require prior NIFA approval. This rate does not include any fringe benefits, general and administrative (G&A), overhead, or other expenses. Requests for approval must include the salary rate of pay and a justification for the rate and be sent to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) to awards@usda.gov;
10. No more than 50 percent of the total dollars of this award may be subcontracted to another party(ies) without prior written approval of the ADO, except subcontracts to Federal agencies;
11. Transferring funds between the construction and non-construction work under a Federal award: and
12. A no-cost extension (meaning, an extension of time that does not require the obligation of additional Federal funds) of the period of performance, other than any one-time extension authorized by the Federal agency in accordance with paragraph [2 CFR 200.308\(g\)\(2\)](#). All requests for no-cost extensions should be submitted at least 10 calendar days before the conclusion of the period of performance. The Federal agency may approve multiple no-cost extensions under a Federal award if not prohibited by Federal statute or regulation.

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](#).

D. Language Access Services

NIFA offers language access services, such as interpretation and translation of vital information, free of charge. If you need interpretation or translation services, please visit [NIFA Language Access Services](#).

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

For Programmatic questions please email.

NIFATribalprograms@usda.gov

For administrative questions related to;

1. Grants.gov, see [Part IV](#) of this NOFO
2. Other NOFO or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
3. Awards under this NOFO, please email awards@usda.gov

U.S. Postal Mailing Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

Courier/Package Delivery Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of Terms

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – AFRI

Assistance Listing Number – ALN

Authorized Departmental Officer – ADO

Authorized Representative – AR

Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 – AREERA

Coordinated Agricultural Project – CAP

Centers of Excellence – COE

Data Management Plan – DMP

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

Notice of Funding Opportunity – NOFO

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.

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.

Matching:

The process through which a grant recipient matches 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 but not funded.