

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 10, 2026

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: \$9,583,300

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD \$1,000,000 - \$2,145,845
RANGE:

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-OP-012079

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.525

ANNOUNCEMENT

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.525.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, August 10, 2026 [Ref to Part I, C of this NOFO]
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)

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 Notice of Funding Opportunity (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 NOFOs 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 FRSAN NOFO.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NIFA requests applications for the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) Competitive Grants Program for FY 2026 to provide competitive grants to State Departments of Agriculture (SDA), State Cooperative Extension Service (CES), and nonprofit organizations to carry out programs to assist in addressing stress and behavioral and mental health challenges, including suicide risk, among farmers. The term “farmer” will be used in the broadest sense and may be interpreted to include agricultural farmers, ranchers, fishers, workers, business owners, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers. Similarly, the term “farming” will be used.

The anticipated amount available for grants in FY 2026 is approximately \$9,583,300. Awards will be administered as 4-year continuation awards.

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ANNOUNCEMENT	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
TABLE OF CONTENTS	5
TABLE OF KEY INFORMATION.....	6
PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	7
A. Legislative Authority.....	7
B. Purpose and Priorities.....	7
C. Program Area Description.....	8
PART II. AWARD INFORMATION	14
A. Available Funding	14
B. Application Restrictions	14
C. Project and Grant Types	14
D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects	14
PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....	15
A. Eligibility Requirements.....	15
B. Cost Sharing or Matching.....	15
PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION	16
A. Method of Application	16
B. Content and Form of the Application	16
C. Funding Restrictions.....	23
PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS	24
A. NIFA's Evaluation Process	24
B. Evaluation Criteria.....	24
C. Organizational Management Information.....	27
D. Application Disposition.....	28
PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION	29
A. General	29
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	29
C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements	29
PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION	31
A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget.....	31
B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards.....	32
C. Regulatory Information	32
D. Language Access Services.....	32
APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT.....	33
APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	34
APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS	35

TABLE OF KEY INFORMATION

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines.....	2
Table 2: Regional Centers Key Information.....	8
Table 3: National Farmer Distress Helpline Key Information.....	10
Table 4: Steps to Obtain Application Materials.....	16
Table 5: Help and Resources	16
Table 6: Key Application Instructions.....	17

PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

Section 7522 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 authorizes NIFA to make competitive grants to eligible entities to establish a network that provides stress assistance programs to individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations ([7 U.S.C. 5936](#)).

B. Purpose and Priorities

The FRSAN program, under assistance listing number 10.525, is to establish a network that connects individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations to stress assistance programs.

According to the [CDC/National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) (NIOSH) and the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) (BLS), agricultural work is one of the most hazardous professions, with risk of injury, disability, and death higher than most other career paths. Daily decision making in the context of long-term planning to ensure crop and livestock yields and profits can prove extremely difficult. Even the most proactive planning can be short circuited by factors beyond an individual's control, such as natural disasters or pest infestations.

Programs that offer access to resources (e.g., information and skills) and people (e.g., Cooperative Extension educators, health care providers and peer-to-peer farmer support) can help identify underlying causes of farm/ranch risk factors and work with farmers and ranchers to share the resources available, help farmers develop mechanisms to adapt to the unique stressors and behavioral and mental health challenges they face, and to know resources available when they seek assistance.

NIFA is seeking applications from regional partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include CES, SDA, Indian tribes, and nonprofit organizations with expertise in providing professional agricultural behavioral health awareness, counseling as appropriate, education, training, and referral for other forms of assistance as necessary to address stress and behavioral and mental health challenges, including suicide risk, among farmers.

The term "farmer" is used in the broadest sense and may be interpreted to include agricultural farmers, ranchers, fishers, workers, business owners, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers. Similarly, the term "farming" will be used.

Applicant organizations must have demonstrable prior experience working in the agricultural stress assistance space. For purposes of implementing FRSAN, a network is an organizational arrangement among three or more separately operated domestic public or private entities, including the applicant organization, with established working histories in the targeted region.

NIFA is also seeking applications from qualified entities to administer the National Farmer Distress Helpline. The purpose of the National Farm Distress Helpline is to provide immediate, confidential and competent crisis support to individuals engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations and their families across the United States. The helpline will serve as a critical entry point to the behavioral health crisis care continuum, ensuring timely access to skilled crisis counselors and linkage to local, regional, and national resources, in

alignment with the [*2025 National Guidelines for a Behavioral Health Coordinated System of Crisis Care*](#) prepared for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

C. Program Area Description

NIFA is soliciting applications under the following program areas:

1. Regional Center
2. National Farmer Distress Helpline

Regional Centers

FRSAN Regional Centers will implement education, training and services through a robust network of partners to assist farmers during times of stress. This network should serve as a conduit for improving behavioral health awareness, literacy, and positive mental health outcomes among agricultural producers, farm workers and their families. Centers must prioritize connecting these individuals with resources, support, and training at the state and local levels. Centers must also prioritize local, community-based organizations that provide community connections and engagement to build peer-to-peer support groups that can assist individuals in successfully navigating challenges while building sustainable farming and ranching enterprises.

Table 2: Regional Centers Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	FRSAN
Program Code Name:	Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network
ALN:	10.525
Project Type:	Extension Projects
Grant Type:	Standard Grants
Application Deadline	August 10, 2026
Grant Duration:	48 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	4
Maximum Award Amount:	\$8,583,300

The FRSAN Program will fund four (4) Regional Centers nationwide:

- 1. Northeast Region FRSAN**
Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, District of Columbia
- 2. North Central Region FRSAN**
Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin
- 3. Southern Region FRSAN**
Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands
- 4. Western Region FRSAN**
Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam

To achieve this, Regional Centers should:

- Develop strategic partnerships and collaborations with programs that can assist Centers in providing professional agricultural behavioral health counseling and referral, and community-based, direct-service organizations.
- Conduct outreach and provide training, including evidence-based prevention and intervention programs.
- Deliver accurate, evidence-based information to agricultural communities.
- Make referrals when appropriate.
- Facilitate community-based support groups, including peer-to-peer support programs.
- Maintain a regional website to disseminate information and materials.

Note: Regional Center funds cannot be used to support regional crisis lines or helplines. The FRSAN program will support a single National Farmer Crisis Line.

FRSAN Regional Centers must have the capacity to make State-level sub-awards, to include monitoring the performance of specific projects and active participation within the larger regional network. The applicant must articulate a plan and timeline for delivering training and direct services to every State and territory in the targeted region.

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

Funds may be used to map resources in each region, provide a framework for how those resources can be/are connected, and train individuals and entities working with agricultural producers (train-the-trainer model) to identify farmers under stress; about the existence of a given regional network; on the availability of specific resources and how to access them; on appropriate interventions and how and when to provide support; and how to make referrals to programs and personnel that are further equipped to provide direct behavioral care assistance. Such maps must link with USDA programs such as [Agriculture Mediation Program](#) and [Crop Insurance Mediation](#) and State and County-level USDA field offices with which producers may engage if and when appropriate.

Project Directors (PD) of the FRSAN Regional Centers will be responsible for participating in the FRSAN National Coordination Council (NCC). The NCC includes Regional Center and Helpline PDs, their core project staff, and the NIFA national program leaders. The NCC will meet quarterly to discuss the activities of the program, progress, outreach, and other relevant and time-sensitive opportunities that arise. Quarterly meetings will be hosted by the FRSAN Regional Centers on a rotating basis to set the agenda, organize meeting invitations, and record notes.

National Farmer Distress Helpline

The entity awarded the National Farmer Distress Helpline will operate a 24/7/365 crisis line dedicated to addressing the unique stressors and behavioral health needs of agricultural communities, including suicide prevention, mental health crises, substance use, and emotional distress.

Table 3: National Farmer Distress Helpline Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	FRS-C
Program Code Name:	FRSAN Crisis Line
ALN:	10.525
Project Type:	Extension Projects
Grant Type:	Standard Grants
Application Deadline	August 10, 2026
Grant Duration:	48 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	1
Maximum Award Amount:	\$4,000,000

The awarded entity will be responsible for the following:

1. Operations and Access

- Operate a national, toll-free, 24/7/365 distress helpline (phone and text modalities) specifically for the agricultural community.
- Ensure rapid response rates (targeting 90% or higher) for both modalities, with minimal wait times and high service availability.
- Provide language interpretation services and pathways to serve individuals with disabilities (e.g., TTY, text, chat).
- Maintain interoperability with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and other crisis lines, ensuring seamless warm transfers and referrals.

2. Clinical Standards and Crisis Response

- Employ and train crisis counselors in evidence-based and trauma-informed crisis intervention, suicide risk assessment, safety planning, and de-escalation techniques.
- Maintain protocols for risk assessment, follow-up, and referral to local behavioral health, substance use, and social service resources, including warm hand-offs to other appropriate providers.
- Ensure connection and follow-up throughout local behavioral health crisis continuum services, leveraging local knowledge for faster connection to emergency response partners.
- Ensure all staff are trained in the unique stressors and cultural context of agricultural communities, including rural isolation, financial stress, and family dynamics.
- Provide additional staff training on workforce wellness, third-party conversations, best practices for data collection, support for caregivers and families of suicide attempt survivors, follow-up, and reduction of 911 intervention.

3. Data and Reporting

- Collect, manage, and report data on call volume, response times, outcomes, demographics, and service utilization, in accordance with federal privacy and data security standards.
 - Track operational metrics including average talk time, abandonment rates/time to abandon, warm transfers, and response rates by state.
 - Collaborate with USDA/NIFA and FRISAN regional centers to share aggregate data, identify trends, and inform outreach and prevention strategies.
- 4. *Outreach, Communications, and Coordination***
- Develop and implement outreach strategies to raise awareness of the distress helpline among agricultural producers, workers, families, and stakeholders.
 - Coordinate with FRISAN regional centers, Cooperative Extension, state departments of agriculture, tribal organizations, local and regional health professionals and other partners to ensure seamless referrals and follow-up.
 - Participate in joint outreach and public awareness campaigns with the 988 Lifeline and other partners.
- 5. *Evaluation and Federal Collaboration***
- Participate in federal evaluation and technical assistance activities as required by USDA/NIFA.
 - Respond promptly to federal requests for information.
 - Commit to continuous quality improvement, data-driven decision-making, and participation in federal evaluation activities.

Qualifications of National Farmer Distress Helpline Awardee

Eligible applicants must demonstrate the following:

1. *Organizational Capacity*

- Documented experience operating a national or large-scale behavioral health helpline or similar service.
- Demonstrated capacity to provide 24/7/365 distress response services nationwide, including infrastructure, staffing and technology.
- Experience serving rural and agricultural populations, with established partnerships or collaborations in the agricultural sector.

2. *Staffing and Expertise*

- Leadership and staff with expertise in behavioral health distress intervention and rural/agricultural mental health.
- Capacity to recruit, train, and supervise a workforce of crisis counselors, including those with lived experience in agriculture.

Ability to provide ongoing training in evidence-based practices and the unique needs of agricultural communities.

3. *Technology and Data Management*

- Proven ability to implement and maintain secure, scalable technology platforms for helpline operations, data collection, and reporting.
- Cybersecurity protocols for incident reporting, risk mitigation, and SOPs for technical outages/service disruptions.
- Connections to backup or redundant systems, learning management, data exchanges, and resource management.

4. *Collaboration and Coordination*

- Demonstrated ability to coordinate with federal, state, tribal, and local partners, including FRSSAN regional centers, Cooperative Extension, and other help/crisis lines.
- Experience in outreach, communications, and public awareness campaigns targeting rural and agricultural audiences.
- Coordination with local behavioral health crisis continuum service providers and use of SAMHSA's Treatment Locator.

5. *Evaluation and Quality Improvement*

- Commitment to continuous quality improvement, data-driven decision-making, and participation in federal evaluation activities.
- Ability to collect, analyze, and report on key performance indicators and outcomes, including technical connections, operational response, and quality of service.

988 Suicide & Crisis Line Coordination Requirements

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and the National Farmer Distress Helpline will collaborate to strengthen crisis support for agricultural communities across the United States. Both organizations commit to coordinated efforts that ensure individuals in crisis, including those in farming, ranching, and rural industries, have timely access to specialized emotional support, crisis intervention, and connection to local resources.

1. *Warm Transfers and Call Coordination*

SAMHSA will work through their 988 Network Administrator to ensure protocols are in place to effectively and appropriately connect help-seekers between the two systems.

When a National Farmer Distress Helpline help-seeker presents with an acute mental health or suicide related concern requiring specialized crisis intervention, and not specific to agricultural or farm-related stressors, the Distress Helpline may offer a warm transfer to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline when appropriate and with caller consent. Similarly, when a 988 help-seeker presents concerns specific to agricultural stress, related financial strain, or farm related pressures, 988 Crisis Contact Centers may offer a warm transfer to the National Farmer Distress Helpline when appropriate and with caller consent.

2. *Shared Training and CrossEducation*

Both organizations may share training materials, best practices, and subject matter expertise. This includes helping 988 crisis counselors understand unique stressors faced by agricultural communities and helping farmer support line staff understand suicide risk assessment and crisis deescalation protocols.

3. *Data Sharing (Non-Identifiable)*

When permitted and in compliance with all privacy regulations, partners may share aggregate, nonidentifiable data to help track trends, identify emerging needs, and strengthen services for rural and agricultural communities.

4. *Joint Outreach and Public Awareness*

The agencies may share and/or coordinate public communication efforts to raise awareness of available crisis services and highlight the unique stressors and mental and behavioral health needs of farmers.

5. *Continuous Communication and Quality Improvement*

The organizations will maintain regular communication to address operational concerns, review transfer processes, and strengthen the overall collaborative relationship in support of those in crisis.

The PDs of the National Farmer Distress Helpline will be responsible for participating in the FRSAN National Coordination Council (NCC). The NCC includes Regional Center and Helpline PDs, their core project staff, and the NIFA national program leaders. The NCC will meet quarterly to discuss the activities of the program, progress, outreach, and other relevant and time-sensitive opportunities that arise. Quarterly meetings will be hosted by the FRSAN Regional Centers on a rotating basis to set the agenda, organize meeting invitations, and record notes.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for FR SAN in FY2026 is approximately \$9,583,300 and will be available to fund the first year of new projects as competitive awards. Of this amount, approximately \$8,583,300 will support four Regional Centers and approximately \$1,000,000 to support the National Farmer Distress Helpline. Similar funding levels may be awarded for up to an additional three years as continuation awards provided performance has been satisfactory, funding is available for this purpose, and continued support is in the best interests of the Federal government and the public. 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 NOFO.

B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this NOFO. Application for FY2026 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. *Renewal application*. Renewal applications must contain the same information as required for new applications and must contain a *progress report*. The progress report must include the implementation of the data management plan (DMP) of the previously funded project. Renewal applications are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Applicants submitting a renewal application must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously approved 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. Applicants must propose an Extension Project as described in Part I, C of this NOFO. Only Extension Projects will be considered for review.
2. Grant Types. Applicants must select the Standard Grant described in Part I, C of this NOFO. Only Standard Grants will be considered for review.

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 FRSAN 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.

Entities eligible to apply to FRSAN are:

1. an Indian tribe (as defined in [25 U.S.C. 5304](#));
2. a State department of agriculture;
3. a State Cooperative Extension Service;
4. a qualified nonprofit organization, as determined by the Secretary;
5. an entity providing appropriate services, as determined by the Secretary, in 1 or more States; or
6. a partnership carried out by 2 or more entities described in items (1) through (5).

Regional Center applications will only be accepted if submitted by a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or a partnership of qualified public and/or private entities. For purposes of implementing FRSAN, a network is an organizational arrangement among three or more separately operated domestic public or private entities, including the applicant organization, with established working histories in the targeted region. Regional Center applications submitted by individuals, or by organizations that do not involve other entities in a network or partnership, are not eligible for consideration and will be excluded from review.

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 – NIFA will accept the most recent application if an applicant submits duplicate or multiple submissions.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No Match Required - The FRSAN 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 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 4** 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 4: 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-OP-012079 , 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 5: 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, 7a.m. – 5p.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 6** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 6: Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the <u>NIFA Grants Application Guide</u>)
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 30 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 how the project goals align with the project goals of the FR SAN Program. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for instructions and suggested templates. The Project Summary must provide the following information in the order listed below:
 - a. Project title;
 - b. List of Project Directors (PDs) and Co-PDs and their institutions/organizations;
 - c. List of other collaborating institutions/organizations; and
 Concise (250 words or less) description of the project.
2. **Field 8. Project Narrative (PN).** The PN must not exceed 22 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text and at least 1-inch margins with font size no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman, and up to six (6) *1.5 spaced* additional pages for maps, 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 germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. Renewal Applications require an additional Progress Report for the previous FR SAN award. The Progress Report must not exceed 2 pages, and does not count against

the 22-page PN limit, with line spacing set at 1.5 and at least 1-inch margins with font size no smaller than 12-point Times New Roman.

The PN for **Regional Center grants** must include all the following:

a. Introduction

- i. The introduction must include a clear statement of need and significance of the regional network your project will continue to support. Identify the region (Northeast, South, North Central, or West). Provide the most relevant data for the region the project will be serving, including data on stressors faced by agricultural communities and workers in States within your region, as well as data on the effects of those stressors on agricultural producers and their well-being. Provide references for data. Explain and substantiate any assumptions made.
- ii. Include existing FR SAN and non-FR SAN stress assistance programs available to farmers in the identified region and briefly comment on how those programs currently collaborate/network with each other. If necessary, provide a map/table that clearly shows services currently offered to producers/agricultural businesses in the chosen region.
- iii. List key network members (organizations) collaborating on the proposed project. Describe how the proposed regional FR SAN objectives fit within the context of what is already available in the region. For example: Will the proposed objectives and activities add to/enhance/avoid duplication of any existing efforts? Are there programmatic gaps in the region and what are some specific resources other regions might have available that your network could tap into for the benefit of agricultural communities in your own region? What is the expected public value/significance of the proposed regional network objectives/activities?

b. Proposed Approach

FR SAN seeks to fulfill four programmatic goals in each region:

- i. Establish/enhance a regionally representative network of member organizations.
- ii. Develop and/or maintain a clearinghouse (see “Definitions” [[Appendix III](#)]) of farmer assistance programs in the region (include programs providing professional agricultural behavioral health counseling and referral). The clearinghouse should make nonproprietary information and resources available to the other FR SAN networks.
- iii. Educate individuals/teams in your region about FR SAN activities and how they can access and use existing resources and programs in their work with agricultural workers and communities under stress.
- iv. Provide a range of services referenced in the legislative authorities, (excluding a crisis line/helpline) including preventive care activities.
- v. Coordinate with the National Farmer Distress Helpline to ensure seamless referral pathways, warm hand-offs, and follow-up care for agricultural producers and workers. Participate in joint outreach and public awareness efforts.

Given these goals, proposals should concisely and clearly present objectives, activities, and expected outcomes associated with your proposed project. All activities listed under an objective must be presented in the sequence in which the activities are expected to be performed. The sum of activities under each objective must lead to completion of that objective within the four-year project duration. In addition, for each activity, indicate the following:

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

c. Project Performance Assessment Plan

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

- i. Present a logic model (see [logic model template](#)), a theory of change, or an alternative schematic that illustrates the causal linkages between planned activities and desired outcomes.
- ii. Provide a timeline to demonstrate the duration and sequence of proposed activities, as well as division of labor (as noted in “Section d” below). Each objective might have multiple activities. Chart against a quarterly scale, so that the timeline depicts 1 year/4 quarters for each year of the project.
- iii. Indicate who on the team will provide the project performance assessment oversight. NIFA encourages grantees to include on their teams a project performance measurement expert or an evaluator who can help develop the monitoring plan and conduct outcomes reporting. Indicate the amount of funding that will be set aside for monitoring, performance measurement, and outcomes reporting.

d. Institutional Capacity, Division of Labor, and Management Plan

It is critical to have a clearly articulated management plan that describes the roles and functions of all partners, collaborators, and organizations, as related to the proposed project. Strong partnerships among complementary organizations (e.g., Indian tribes, State Departments of Agriculture, State Cooperative Extension Service, and nongovernmental organizations) with shared leadership are essential to FR SAN projects.

- i. Provide justification for selection of new partner organizations. Clearly state each organization’s previous and current work that makes it a good fit for the proposed project. Briefly describe your institutions’ and teams’ ability to meet the gaps and limitations in services by detailing your accomplishments from similar projects and your experiences serving producers in your region, including prior efforts as the regional FR SAN lead organization.
- ii. Describe how the relationship between organizations partnering on the proposed project will be managed. Describe the plans for coordination,

communication, data sharing, and reporting among members of the project team, the National Farmer Distress Helpline and stakeholder groups, as well as with the other FRSAN regional networks as appropriate.

- iii. Provide a brief summary of key staff who will manage the proposed project, their respective roles, and the percentage of time they will be dedicating to the project.
- iv. Describe the commitment of the lead organization and its partners to this project, and how the collaboration and its impact will be sustained beyond the award period.
- v. Describe the project team's ability to establish processes for managing the FRSAN funds awarded from NIFA and the regionally selected sub-awards.

e. Budget and Budget Narrative

- i. There should be a direct relationship between the items in the budget and budget narrative, as well as between budget narrative and the objectives/activities contained in the Project Narrative.
- ii. Every item in the budget must be justified in the proposal. The amount of detail depends on the nature of the project and the breakdown of costs.
- iii. Proposed budgets must not exceed \$8,583,300 total (\$2,145,825 in FY26, \$2,145,825 in FY27, \$2,145,825 in FY28 and \$2,145,825 in FY29).
- iv. Budget breakdown and budget narrative should be provided for each project year (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4). The project start date must be no later than September 30, 2026.
- v. Annual budgets must include reasonable expenses for a two-day in-person meeting of current FRSAN regional project directors, co-project director(s), project evaluation leads and the National Farmer Distress Helpline project directors. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss accomplishments and lessons learned, engage in strategic planning, and support the alignment of efforts on indicators and outcomes measures. While budgets must account for this travel, virtual meetings may be considered.
- vi. In the budget narrative, costs (e.g., personnel, materials, travel, etc.) are to be broken down and itemized rather than shown as lump sums.

Note: The budget narrative does not count toward the maximum page count.

The PN for the **National Farmer Distress Helpline grant** must include all the following:

a. Introduction

- i. Describe the behavioral health needs and stressors specific to farmers and their families nationwide. Provide relevant data and evidence to justify the need for a dedicated National Farmer Distress Helpline.
- ii. Describe your organization's experience and success in serving rural and agricultural populations.

b. Program Approach

- i. Clearly describe your approach to operating a 24/7/365 national crisis line for the agricultural community, including phone and text modalities.

- ii. Outline crisis intervention protocols (risk assessment, de-escalation, safety planning, follow-up).
 - iii. Explain how you will ensure rapid response and integration with regional FRSAN centers and other crisis resources.
 - iv. Describe plans to coordinate with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Line, including warm transfer protocols and shared training or cross-education.
 - v. Outline your outreach, communications, and engagement strategies to reach agricultural communities and stakeholders.
- c. Organizational Capacity and Staffing**
- i. Describe your organization's experience and success in operating a national or large-scale behavioral health crisis line or similar service.
 - ii. Identify and describe the qualifications and expertise of key personnel, including leadership, crisis counselors, and support staff.
 - iii. Provide staffing plans for recruitment, training, supervision, retention, and workforce wellness.
 - iv. Describe technology and cybersecurity capacity, including redundancy, backup systems, and SOPs for outages.
- d. Data Collection, Quality Improvement, and Reporting**
- i. Provide a plan for collecting operational metrics (i.e., volume, abandonment, talk time, warm transfers, outcomes and demographics).
 - ii. Describe your commitment to continuous quality improvement, including mechanisms for user feedback, complaint resolution, and review of sentinel events.
 - iii. Explain your ability to comply with federal privacy, security, and reporting requirements, and to participate in federal evaluation and technical assistance activities.
- e. Collaboration and Coordination**
- i. Describe partnerships and collaborations with FRSAN regional centers, Cooperative Extension, state departments of agriculture, tribal organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. Explain your approach to seamless referrals, warm hand-offs, and follow-up with local and regional behavioral health and social service providers.
 - ii. Describe your capacity for coordination with other crisis lines (e.g., 988, Veterans Crisis Line) and integration into the broader behavioral health crisis care system.
- f. Budget and Budget Narrative**
- i. Provide a detailed budget and budget narrative that aligns with required activities.
 - ii. Explain how resources will be allocated to staffing, technology, outreach, training, and quality improvement.
 - iii. Proposed budgets must not exceed \$4,000,000 total (\$1,000,000 in FY26, \$1,000,000 in FY27, \$1,000,000 in FY28 and \$1,000,000 in FY29).
 - iv. Budget breakdown and budget narrative should be provided for each project year (Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 and Year 4). The project start date must be no later than September 30, 2026.

- v. Annual budgets must include reasonable expenses for a two-day in-person meeting of current FRSAN regional project directors, co-project director(s), project evaluation leads and the National Farmer Distress Helpline project directors. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss accomplishments and lessons learned, engage in strategic planning, and support the alignment of efforts on indicators and outcomes measures. While budgets must account for this travel, virtual meetings may be considered.
- vi. In the budget narrative, costs (e.g., personnel, materials, travel, etc.) are to be broken down and itemized rather than shown as lump sums.
Note: The budget narrative does not count toward the maximum page count.
- g. **Progress Report of Previous FRSAN Award** (for Renewal Applications).

3. **Field 12. Add Other Attachments.** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

- a. **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 NOFO, NIFA's Data Management Plan). The DMP should not be more than 2 pages.
- b. **Commitment Letters.** PDF attachment(s). No page limits. Letters of commitment from all partners (signed by the Authorized Representative (AR) of the partnering organization) stating that the partners involved have agreed to their stated roles in the project and have agreed to abide by the Management Plan. Letters from other organizations or people whose participation is important to the success of the project, committing those collaborators to specific roles, are also encouraged. Title the attachment(s) as 'Letter of Commitment – Organization Name' in the document header and save file as 'Letter of Commitment Organization Name'. Other more general letters of support (i.e., from those who are not committing to a specific role in the project) are not needed and should not be included.

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.

- 1. 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.

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 "*Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network*" and the program code "*FRSAN*."; or program name "*FRSAN Crisis Line*" and the program code "*FRS-C*." Accurate entry is critical.
- 2. **Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

C. Funding Restrictions

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.

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

NIFA will use the following criteria, weighted equally, to evaluate applications to this program:

Regional Center Evaluation Criteria

1. *Partnerships and Collaboration*

- a. The proposed project consists of a substantial and effective collaborative regional network or partnership of public and/or private entities.
- b. The proposal includes the necessary partners to meet the needs of the audience and makes appropriate use of the expertise and other strengths of each of the partners. Priority will be given to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include Indian tribes, SDAs, CES, and NGOs with expertise in providing stress assistance programs to individuals who are engaged in farming, ranching, and other agriculture-related occupations.
- c. Partner organizations have been involved and played an important role in the project's design and development. The project employs an appropriate decision-making and oversight process that includes all partners.
- d. *Note* - For purposes of implementing FR SAN, a network is an organizational arrangement among three or more separately operated domestic public or private entities, including the applicant organization, with established working histories in the targeted region.

2. *Relevancy*

- a. The explanation and documentation convey that the project is directed toward specific topic areas identified in [Part I, B](#) in this NOFO. These topics are designed to support and strengthen farmers through grants and programs as defined in [7 U.S.C. 5936](#).
- b. Description of the necessity of the project based on the needs identified for farmers, the development of project activities and the degree to which the project addresses audience needs and the geographic area(s) served.

3. *Technical Merit*

- a. Clarity and delineation of objectives, activities and outcomes.
- b. Conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the farmers in the identified region, including suitability and feasibility of the approach (e.g., social and economic relevance).
- c. Innovation and originality of objectives and activities.
- d. Performance targets and outcomes.
- e. Reasonableness of the budget for planned activities. (While the size of the budget is not an evaluation criterion, the reviewers will be asked to comment whether it matches logically with the program described in the narrative.)

4. *Achievability*

- a. Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality, identified region and budget for each activity.
- b. The applicant identifies potential challenges and provides realistic strategies to address them.
- c. The project directors and co-directors have committed sufficient time for program activities and overall management; the adequacy of the project's management plan and collaborative arrangements, including clearly defined roles and responsibilities, a sound decision-making framework, appropriate time allocations for achieving

- objectives, and effective plans for administering the project and maintaining partnerships.
- d. Providing training or direct services in every state or territory within the target region is not required in FY 2026; however, applicants must clearly explain where and why services will be offered, the rationale for any states or territories not served initially, and how all states (and territories, as appropriate) will be incorporated into the network in FYs 2027–2029.
- 5. *Expertise and track record of the applicants***
 - a. The applicant demonstrates expertise through successful prior experience in education, outreach, training and/or technical assistance for farmers experiencing stress. The successful prior experience can be demonstrated by number of training, assistance, or education activities previously carried out; number of participants of the program and/or referrals made; the number of years a program or activity has been offered; engagement with other USDA, HHS, and Veterans Affairs programs and resources that can assist; and/or other evaluation metrics.
 - b. Qualifications of the applicant (individual and team) to conduct the proposed project activities are detailed.
 - c. The applicant’s ability to evaluate project outcomes.
 - d. The applicant clearly delineates experience and competence in addressing the stressors and behavioral and mental health needs of the farmers.
- 6. *Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation.***
 - a. Expertise of consultants and collaborators, sufficiency of the network members and their facilities and equipment for the proposed project activities.
 - b. If the application proposes to develop and/or utilize tele-delivery services, adequacy of details provided on technological requirements that are available for the project and what is required (hardware/software) by those accessing such services.
- 7. *Adequacy of plans for outcome-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results.*** Includes the expertise of evaluation team members who have agreed to serve or who have been identified.
- 8. *Data Management Plan.*** Suitability and feasibility of the Data Management Plan.

National Farmer Distress Helpline Evaluation Criteria

- 1. *Population of Focus and Statement of Need***
 - a. The extent to which the applicant demonstrates a clear understanding of the unique stressors and behavioral and mental health needs of farmers and their families nationwide.
 - b. Quality and relevance of data and evidence used to describe the unique stressors and mental and behavioral health challenges facing farmers.
 - c. Applicant’s experience and success in serving rural and agricultural communities.
- 2. *Program Implementation and Approach***
 - a. Clarity, feasibility, and innovation of the proposed approach to operating a 24/7/365 national helpline for the agricultural community, including phone and text modalities.
 - b. Extent to which the applicant’s protocols and practices align with evidence-based and trauma-informed crisis intervention standards, suicide risk assessment,

de-escalation, safety planning and follow-up procedures tailored for agricultural communities.

- c. Clear plans for warm transfers between the National Farmer Distress Helpline and the 988 Lifeline and other crisis lines, including consent-based routing.
- d. Adequacy of plans for rapid response and integration with regional FR SAN centers and other crisis resources.
- e. Strength of the applicant's outreach, communications, and engagement strategies to reach agricultural communities and stakeholders.

3. *Organizational Capacity and Staffing*

- a. Demonstrated experience and success in operating a national or large-scale behavioral health crisis line or similar service.
- b. Expertise of leadership and staff in rural and agricultural behavioral health and crisis intervention.
- c. Adequacy of staffing plans, including recruitment, training, supervision, and retention, with attention to appropriate competencies related to farmers.
- d. Organizational capacity to operate secure, scalable technology and backup systems.

4. *Data Collection, Quality Improvement, and Reporting*

- a. Quality and feasibility of the data management plan, including collection of call volume, talk time, abandonment rates, warm transfers, response rates by state, outcomes, and demographic indicators.
- b. Commitment to continuous quality improvement, including mechanisms for user feedback, complaint resolution, and review of sentinel events.
- c. Ability to comply with federal privacy, security, and reporting requirements, and to participate in federal evaluation and technical assistance activities.

5. *Collaboration and Coordination*

- a. Strength of partnerships and collaborations with FR SAN regional centers, Cooperative Extension, state departments of agriculture, tribal organizations, and other relevant stakeholders.
- b. Approach to seamless referral, warm hand-offs, and follow-up with local and regional behavioral health and social service providers.
- c. Ability to interoperate with the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and other federal, state, and local partners.

6. *Budget and Sustainability*

- a. Reasonableness and alignment of the proposed budget and budget narrative with project goals.
- b. Adequacy of resources allocated to staffing, technology, outreach, training, and data reporting.

7. *Data Management Plan.* Suitability and feasibility of the Data Management Plan.

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 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 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.

The grantees must submit an annual and final report to USDA NIFA that summarizes all significant activities undertaken towards achieving the outcomes of the project. The report should include:

1. Summary paragraph about the FRSAN region or Distress Helpline (include in the “Non-Technical Summary” section of the report template in REEport).
2. A numbered list of project objectives with a paragraph describing the activities (completed in project year) that support each of those objectives. For each objective’s narrative, include:
 - a. Information that can be quantified such as the number of webinars/seminars held and total number of attendees, number of participants in support groups, number of referrals, number of helpline calls, response times, and warm transfers (include in the “What was accomplished under these goals?” section of the report templated in REEport)
 - b. Links to relevant online resources/digital content created (include in the “Other Products” section of the report template in REEport)

- c. A bibliography of any research/publications, conference presentations/podcasts, or other speaking engagements, if relevant (include in the “Products” section of the report template in REEport)
- 3. Include sections that provide information on the following (include in the “What was accomplished under these goals?” section of the report template in REEport):
 - a. Data on effective stress response strategies
 - b. Emerging trends in rural economic and healthcare needs resulting from stress interventions, or trends in behavioral health concerns among farmers
 - c. Impact of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network program
- 4. Finally, provide a narrative on the following (include in the “What was accomplished under these goals?” section of the report template in REEport):
 - a. Lessons learned during the project year
 - b. What constitutes success of the FRSAN grant in the respective regions or the National Farmer Distress Helpline

Annual reports must be received in REEport no later than September 1 of the end of the performance period. The final report must be submitted within 120 days after the end of the period of performance.

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:
FRSAN Mailbox -- SM.REE.NIFA.FRSAN@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

Assistance Listing Number – ALN

Authorized Departmental Officer – ADO

Authorized Representative – AR

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 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.