

Notice of Funding Opportunity Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

APPLICATION DEADLINE: December 3, 2026

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: \$30,600,000

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD \$25,000 - \$1,200,000
RANGE:

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-HSI-011903

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.223

ANNOUNCEMENT

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSI) Education Grants Program is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.223.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, December 3, 2026
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (<i>NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month</i>)

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 Notice 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 HSI Education Grants NOFO.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This notice identifies the objectives for the HSI Education Grants Program projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions. In FY 2026, NIFA requests applications to promote and strengthen the ability of HSIs to carry out higher education programs that attract, retain, and graduate outstanding students capable of enhancing the nation's food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences (FANH) professional and scientific workforce.

The amount available for grants in FY 2026 is approximately \$30,600,000.

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
PART II. AWARD INFORMATION	9
A. Available Funding	9
B. Application Restrictions	9
C. Project and Grant Types	9
D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects	12
PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....	13
A. Eligibility Requirements.....	13
B. Cost Sharing or Matching.....	14
PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION	15
A. Method of Application	15
B. Content and Form of the Application	15
C. Funding Restrictions.....	21
PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS	23
A. NIFA's Evaluation Process	23
B. Evaluation Criteria.....	23
C. Organizational Management Information.....	24
D. Application Disposition.....	24
PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION	25
A. General	25
B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	25
C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements	25
PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION	26
A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget.....	26
B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards	27
C. Regulatory Information	27
D. Language Access Services.....	27
APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT.....	28
APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS.....	29
APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS	30

TABLE OF KEY INFORMATION

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines.....	2
Table 2: Program Key Information.....	8
Table 3: Steps to Obtain Application Materials.....	15
Table 4: Help and Resources	15
Table 5: Key Application Instructions.....	16
Table 6: Number of Students Supported by Level of Study	18

PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

Section 1455 of National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act (NARETPA) of 1977 ([7 U.S.C. 3241](#)) provides the Secretary of Agriculture with the authority to make competitive grants to HSIs for the purpose of promoting and strengthening their ability to carry out education, applied research, and community development programs.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The HSI Education Grants Program, under assistance listing number 10.223, will promote and strengthen the ability HSIs to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs. This program encourages innovative teaching, education, or related community development proposals with the potential to impact and become models for other institutions at the regional or national level. Applications may propose, as part of a formal education and teaching program, that students gain experience with an applied research and community outreach activity. While HSIs are the only eligible entities to apply for this NOFO, funded projects should benefit the entire population at the institution, not solely the Hispanic population.

Priority Need Areas. Projects supported by this program must address one or more of the following priority need areas:

1. Attract and support the domestic pipeline of undergraduate and graduate students to prepare them for careers related to the FANH sciences in the United States.
2. Enhance the quality of postsecondary instruction within the above disciplines.
3. Provide opportunities and access to FANH careers in the public, non-profit and private sectors.
4. Align the efforts of HSIs and other non-profit organizations to support academic development and career attainment of students.

Disciplines. The HSI Education Grants Program will support applications from any number of disciplines in FANH. More specific information on what is considered FANH can be found at [7 U.S.C. 3103](#). Other disciplines will be considered provided there is strong justification for their relationship with agricultural enterprises.

Social and Behavioral Science Disciplines. Projects that integrate social and behavioral sciences with FANH sciences to provide experiential learning opportunities for students are encouraged. Incorporation of social and behavioral sciences is important for addressing many of the challenges facing agriculture and rural communities.

USDA Partnerships. Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to partner with a USDA agency to leverage resources and expertise for the proposed project and to introduce students to federal careers. Partnerships with USDA agencies can be established after the grant has been awarded. Including letters of collaboration from USDA agencies is not a requirement.

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. The HSI Education Grants Program education/teaching

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; and
4. Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc.

Table 2: Program Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	NJ
Program Code Name:	Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program
ALN:	10.223
Project Type:	Education Projects Community Development Projects
Grant Type:	Standard Grants, Bridge Grants, Collaboration Grants
Application Deadline	December 3, 2026
Grant Duration:	48 Months – Standard Grants, Bridge Grants, Collaboration Grants
Anticipated # of Awards:	25 Standard Grants including Bridge Grants 15 Collaboration Grants
Minimum Award Amount:	\$100,000 for Bridge Grant \$200,000 for Standard Grant \$450,000 for Collaboration Grant
Maximum Award Amount:	\$200,000 for Bridge Grant \$400,000 for Standard Grant \$1,200,000 for Collaboration Grant

For FY 2026, there is a five application limit on the number of Regular or Collaboration applications that can be submitted by an institution.

For FY 2026, a PD may not apply for a Collaboration Grant as the lead PD if they currently have an active USDA NIFA HSI Education Grants Program Collaboration Grant awarded in FY 2024.

For FY 2026, up to three awards can be made to the same lead institution, with up to one being a Collaboration Grant.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for the HSI Education Grants Program in FY 2026 is approximately \$30,600,000. 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. *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.** In FY 2026, the HSI grant program will accept:
 - a. **Education/Teaching Projects.** Single-function Education/Teaching Projects develop human capital relevant to overall program goals for U.S. agriculture. Projects should focus on developing skills necessary for entry- and mid-level technical employment or for entering graduate programs in FANH. The specific Educational Need Areas that support the HSI program goals are:
 - i. **Curricula Design, Materials Development, and Library Resources for Classroom or Laboratory Instruction.** To promote the development of courses of study and degree programs, new and improved curricula, and instructional materials and technology; promote the acquisition of library resources including books and journals relating to FANH; and stimulate the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects, new research on teaching and learning theory, and new applications of knowledge.
 - ii. **Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching.** To advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills. Examples include:
 - a. Obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications,
 - b. Expanding competence in innovative technologies and instruction delivery,
 - c. Developing new skills in a field of science or education including student advising skills; pursuing graduate-level study in a field related to FANH.
 - iii. **Instruction Delivery Systems.** To encourage the use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of

teaching programs. Examples include:

- a. Incorporating alternative instructional methodologies that respond to differences in student learning styles,
- b. Inter-institutional collaborations that deliver instruction in ways that maximize program quality and reduce unnecessary duplication,
- c. Consideration and implementation of innovative instructional techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems in response to advances in knowledge and technology.

iv. **Scientific Instrumentation for Teaching.** To provide students and faculty in science-oriented courses with suitable, up-to-date equipment to involve them in work central to scientific understanding. Examples include:

- a. Acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional, laboratory, classroom, and research scientific equipment.
- b. Upgrading existing equipment or replacing non-functional or obsolete equipment.

Note: Equipment acquisition-only projects are not allowed. Acquisition of equipment must be part of a project promoting student experiential learning and/or training.

v. **Student Experiential Learning.** To further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs that provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. Project focus may include:

- a. Preparing future graduates to advance knowledge and technology in FANH sciences and associated fields
- b. Enhancing student decision-making and communication skills and improving real-life technological expertise.
- c. Developing internships and practicum experiences.
- d. Participating with faculty on applied research and related community development projects.

vi. **Student Recruitment, Retention, Graduation, and/or Continuation into Higher Degrees.** The purpose of this initiative is to enhance educational opportunities for students, and to strengthen student recruitment and retention programs to promote the future strength of the Nation's scientific, professional, and technical work force in FANH. Examples include:

- a. Initiating new projects or supplementing current efforts to attract increased numbers of students to pursue postsecondary education.
- b. Developing agricultural and science literacy programs at the high school level to attract students to college and careers in FANH. Projects cannot focus solely on high school students but must also include components for postsecondary attainment to build a domestic pipeline for matriculation.
- c. Mentoring programs and other initiatives to improve student retention.
- d. Providing student financial support. Projects supporting the pipeline of students recruited to and retained in graduate school are encouraged. Any student scholarship recipients must be a citizen or national of the United States, or permanent resident.

b. **Community Development Projects.** Single-function Community Development Projects

must deliver science-based knowledge and informal educational programs that lead to practical decision making. Potential audiences for these projects include farmers, ranchers, families and local communities. Program delivery may range from community-based to national audiences and use communication methods from in-person, electronic, or hybrid modalities. Community Development Projects will be funded as Regular Grants. Community Development Projects may address one or more of the following:

1. Support informal education to increase food and agricultural literacy in youth and adults.
2. Promote science-based agricultural literacy by increasing understanding and use of FANH science data, information, and programs.
3. Build science-based capability to engage audiences and enable informed decision making.
4. Develop new applications of instructional tools and curriculum structures that increase technical competency and ensure global competitiveness.
5. Offer non-formal learning programs that increase accessibility to new ideas and technologies that are appropriate for community development.
6. Develop programs that increase public knowledge and citizen engagement leading to actions that protect or enhance the Nation's food supply and agricultural profitability.

- A. **Grant Types.** There are three grant types for the HSIs Education Grants Program: Standard, Bridge, and Collaboration. **Standard Grant.** Standard Grants support targeted, original, scientific Education/ Teaching Projects and Community Development Projects. Applicants may partner with other HSIs or non-HSIs without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners. Standard Grants will be funded up to \$400,000 total and must be for a period of 48 months.
- B. **Bridge Grant.** Bridge Grants, a subset of Standard Grants, may be available to enhance institutional capacity with the goal of strengthening the capacity of the applicant's education programs and the competitiveness of future grant applications. To be eligible for a Bridge Grant, applicant institutions must have not previously received USDA NIFA HSI Education Grants Program funds. Please note - applicants who receive a Bridge Grant will have applied for a Standard Grant. Bridge Grant recipients are identified by the peer-review panel from the pool of Regular Grants and are selected for funding based on their potential for enhancing agricultural education and the capacity of the applicant institution to be successful in future grant competitions. Awards made under this option will be funded up to \$200,000 for a project period of 48 months.
- C. **Collaboration Grant.** Collaboration Grants must be submitted by a group of two or more HSIs, forming a linkage arrangement for the purpose of carrying out common objective(s) on the group's behalf. The arrangement must be formed to promote and strengthen institutional abilities to carry out higher education programs related to FANH. Collaboration Grants must support Education Projects only. Collaboration Grants for Community Development Projects will not be accepted. The proposed project is expected to recruit, enroll, retain, and graduate a minimum of 25 students during the four-year life of the grant. Throughout the project, students must be closely tracked to monitor their academic progress from recruitment and retention to graduation. Additionally, the project should provide ongoing support to assist these

students in securing professional opportunities such as internships and shadowing experiences, ensuring that they are well-prepared to transition into careers in the field by the end of the grant period. The lead applicant can be a two-year or four-year institution. Collaboration Grants will be funded up to \$1,200,000 total and must be for a project period of 48 months. Applicants are encouraged to allocate at least 25% of the direct costs to participant support. This funding can be directed towards participant stipends, tuition and fees, cost of subsistence (housing, meals) and dependent care for immersive experiences, and reasonable travel for conferences and workshops. All partners must have a significant role in the collaboration and each institution's budget needs to be appropriate to support its activities.

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 HSI Education Grants Program 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.

Applications may only be submitted by Hispanic-Serving Institutions. For the purpose of the HSI Education Grants Program, an HSI is an institution of higher education that is an eligible institution as defined in [20 U.S.C. 1101a\(a\)\(2\)](#) and has a minimum of 25 percent undergraduate full-time Hispanic enrollment ([20 U.S.C. 1101a\(a\)\(5\)](#)).

Certification of Eligibility. Eligibility documentation must be submitted with the application. At the time of application, each primary applicant will be required to demonstrate or certify that it is an eligible institution under the HSI Education Grants Program. Collaboration grant applicants must also provide documentation to certify their HSI collaborators.

An institution must submit a letter, signed by the institution's Authorized Representative (AR), certifying that it meets the requirements of an HSI as defined below. Data used for certification should be the most recently available but no older than the 2023-2024 academic year. Please indicate the timeframe that the relevant data is collected from in the letter. The AR must certify that:

1. The institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus, is legally authorized by the state in which it is located to provide an educational program for which it awards an associate or bachelor's degree, or that it is a junior or community college.
2. The institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus, is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or making reasonable progress toward such accreditation.
3. At least 50 percent of enrolled degree students are receiving need-based assistance under Title IV of the Higher Education Act, or that a substantial percentage of students are receiving Pell Grants in comparison with the percentage of students receiving Pell Grants at all similar institutions (institution of higher education, or junior or community college).
4. Unless waived by the Secretary of Education, the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student are low in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent student at institutions that offer similar instruction; and
5. At the time of application, enrollment of undergraduate full-time students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students

Eligibility documentation should be submitted in Field 12: *Other Attachments*. See [Part IV, B](#). Eligibility of undergraduate and graduate students supported by these grants through

scholarship or fellowships is limited to citizens or nationals of the United States, or permanent residents.

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

Duplicate Submissions – NIFA will not fund efforts that duplicate or overlap substantially with already funded efforts. The submission of duplicate or substantially similar applications to more than one program in the same funding cycle will result in the exclusion of the redundant application from NIFA consideration. Duplicate applications are not allowed for the same program and only one application will be accepted for peer review.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No Match Required - The HSI Education Grants Program has no matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion. However, cost share is encouraged.

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-HSI-011903 , 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, 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 5** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 5: 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 priority need areas of the HSI Education Grants Program. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for instructions and suggested templates. The summary must include the following:
 - a. Project Title: Title character limit is 140 characters. Descriptive of the project;
 - b. Program Code: NJ;
 - c. PD; Co-PD(s), if applicable (include institutional affiliation for each);
 - d. Priority Need Area(s): (See [Part I, B](#));
 - e. Educational Need Area(s): (See [Part II, C](#));
 - f. Primary Discipline(s)/Subject Matter(s): (the primary academic major focus of the project)
 - g. If a Collaboration Project: list all partners that will share grant funding
 - h. Total Funds Requested: List funds by partner/subaward (if applicable)
 - i. Summary Text: Provide a summary (maximum 250 word) of your project to include: Problem the project will address, number of intended beneficiaries and an impact statement in quantitative and qualitative terms.
2. **Field 8. Project Narrative (PN).** The PN must not exceed 20 *double-spaced* pages of written

text including figures and tables. Font size for written text should be no smaller than 12 points, Times New Roman, 1" margins. Tables and figure legends may be single-spaced and font size for tables and figure legends should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman. The page limits outlined here ensure fair competition. Appendices, up to 5 additional pages, are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. Examples of allowable documents for appendices include syllabi, event/internship sample schedules, advertisements or recruitment flyers. The PN must include all the following:

a. Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education:

- i. *Identification of Educational Problem(s) and Project Impact.* Clearly identify and explain how the proposed project will address at least one of the Educational Need Areas listed in [Part II, C](#). Briefly explain the project's anticipated, overall impact on improving the quality of FANH education and how it will advance the goals of the HSI Education Grants Program.
- ii. *Project Justification.* Clearly state the specific instructional problem or opportunity to be addressed. Describe how and by whom the focus and scope of the project were determined. Summarize the body of knowledge justifying the need for the proposed project. Discuss how the project will be of value at the state, regional, or national level(s). Describe any ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project for which previous HSI funding was received under this program.
- iii. *Innovation.* Describe the application's creative approach to improving the quality of FANH education, solving a higher education problem, or advancing educational opportunities. Projects should be informed by best practices and rooted in evidence-based strategies but have an aspect that is novel or new for the submitting institution.
- iv. *Multidisciplinary and/or Problem-based Focus.* Identify the Discipline(s) (described in [Part I, B](#)) supported. Discuss how the project may be adapted by or serve as a model for other institutions.
- v. *Level of Study.* Include a table describing the expected number of students benefiting from this project and the level of education, such as associate, baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degrees, at each of the institutions participating in the program. Please include in your project narrative a table similar to the one presented below (**Table 6**) summarizing the students supported by level of study. Collaboration Grants must include and clearly account for the 25 students the project will recruit and graduate.

Table 6: Number of Students Supported by Level of Study

Institutions Participating in the Project (1 to X)	K to 12	Certificates/Credentials	Associate's	Bachelor's	Master's	Doctoral Degree
Institution 1						
Institution 2						
Institution 3						

- b. **Objectives:** Discuss the specific performance objectives of the project. Indicate how they align with the HSI Education Grants Program objectives. Performance-based objectives should be used as they will inform the evaluation plan.
- c. **Plan of Operation and Methodology:** Describe the activities for accomplishing the objectives of the project. Describe plans for management of the project to ensure its efficient administration. Describe the way in which resources and personnel will be used to conduct the project.
- d. **Timeline:** Provide a timeline of activities for conducting the project. Identify all important project milestones and dates as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination, and close-out.
- e. **Products, Results, and Measurable Outcomes:** Explain the expected products and results (outcomes) and their potential impact. (Important Note: "Products" may be actual items or services acquired with funds, e.g., "...developed three new Web-based courses containing supplemental materials;" "Results" are intended or unintended consequences of the project, e.g., "...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours;" and "Outcomes/Impacts" are a measure of the results by comparing what might have happened in the absence of the funded project, e.g., "...an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, web-based course materials.""). Quantify outputs and/or outcomes. Community Development projects must describe how the project leads to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group. In addition, these projects must synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results.
- f. **Evaluation Plan:** Provide a methodology and implementation plan for evaluating the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable outcomes during the project. Indicate the criteria, and corresponding weight of each, to be used in the evaluation process, describe any data to be collected and analyzed, and explain the methodology that will be used to determine the extent to which the needs underlying the project are met. Identify data to be used as baseline data. Demonstrate that the project's impact on improving education will be evaluated. Applicants are encouraged to obtain an independent evaluation, preferably from outside the applicant's institution, to secure appropriate documentation of the project's outcomes and impacts. PDs, Co-PDs, and collaborators should not be involved in the project evaluation. Applicants should

include appropriate justification for the costs associated with their evaluation in the budget justification.

- g. **Dissemination Plan:** Applications must include a description of how the applicant plans to communicate project accomplishments (i.e., products, results and impacts, etc.) to the broadest extent. Examples include: educational journals; professional discipline publications; online content; presentations at conferences and workshops; and the HSI Project Director's Meetings. Discuss the institution's commitment to disseminate project results and products. Identify target audiences and explain methods of communication.

As part of the award, you will be required to disseminate your findings and best practices at an annual PD Meeting every year during the life of the project which should be included in the project budget.

h. **Institutional Capability and Capacity Building:**

- i. *Institutional Commitment and Capability.* Demonstrate that the program administration is committed to the project and has the capability to ensure its completion. Discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution's long-term goals, explain how the project will help satisfy the institution's high priority objectives, or how the project is linked to and supported by the institution's strategic plan.
 - ii. *Institutional Resources.* Document that adequate institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials, career/internship recruitment services), and other appropriate resources, will be made available to the project.
 - iii. *Academic Enhancement.* Document how this project will improve and strengthen teaching at the institution (including any partner institutions, if applicable). Discuss how the benefits to be derived from the project will expand beyond the applicant institution and/or the project period.
 - iv. *Continuation Plans.* Discuss the likelihood of, or specific plans for, continuation or expansion of the project beyond the period of USDA support. For example, does the institution's long-range budget or academic plan provide for the realistic continuation or expansion of the initiative undertaken by this project after the end of the project grant period? Are plans for eventual self- support built into the project? Are plans being made to institutionalize successes of the program?
- i. **Key Personnel:** Discuss the adequacy and specific attributes and project responsibilities of each key person associated with the project. Also include the background and qualifications of personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering the project evaluation and reporting process.
- j. **Cost-effectiveness:**
- i. Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed project activities.
 - ii. Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale or leverages additional funds.
 - iii. If the application addresses more than one Educational Need Area or Discipline (e.g., student experiential learning and instruction delivery systems) (i) state which one (primary) is most representative and list all the others in descending order of importance, and (ii) estimate the proportion of the funds requested from USDA that will support each respective Educational Need Area (see [Part II, C](#)) or Discipline (see

[Part I, B](#)). Make sure you explain how the primary Educational Need (or Discipline) supports one or more of the four current Priority Need Areas (see [Part I, B](#)).

3. Field 12. Add Other Attachments. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide. The following documents do not count against the page limit of the PN.

- a. Data management plan (DMP). 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](#)).
- b. Logic Model. *1-Page Limit*. Logic models are encouraged but not required. Title the attachment as 'Logic Model' in the document header and save file as 'LogicModel.' Applications for projects may include the elements of a logic model detailing the activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at [Logic Model Planning Process](#).
- c. Mentoring Plan. *2-page limit per application*. Required for all applications. Title the attachment as 'Mentoring Plan' and save file as 'MentoringPlan' A Mentoring Plan (MP) describes peer mentoring, layered mentoring, or similar mentoring activities. If various education levels of students are represented in the application, the MP must address how mentoring will be different and targeted to the specific education level (Undergraduate, Graduate, etc.), as appropriate. The MP should incorporate roles and responsibilities of the PD and Co-PDs, description of mentoring activities and timeline, and description of reasonable accommodations provided to program participants. The MP must also describe the training and/or credentials of individuals who will serve as mentors (i.e., mentor training), and demonstrate their ability to leverage existing institutional resources on professional advising, tutoring services, career services and community engagement and leadership services.
- d. Previous Award. *1-Page Limit*. If you are a PD or co-PD on a previous or current USDA HSI award, indicate to what extent the current application builds upon the outcomes of the prior award and the differences in the proposed approach and methodology. Explain why it is necessary to provide additional funds and how this application will complement any existing USDA HSI awards at the institution, if applicable.
- e. Response to Previous Review. *1-Page Limit*. This requirement only applies to "Resubmitted Applications" as described under [Part II, B](#) of this NOFO, "Resubmitted application." PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary. Title the attachment as "Response to Previous Review" in the document header and save file as "ResponsetoPreviousReview." If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.
- f. Letters of Support/Collaboration. If letters of support or collaboration are included as part of the application, they should be attached as a single PDF file titled as "Letters of Support" in the document header and save file as "LettersofSupport." Letters of support or collaboration are encouraged from partners but are not required.

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
2. Regular and Collaboration Grant applications must submit budgets reflecting a 48-month project period. Budgets for shorter project durations will not be considered for recommendation.
3. PDs are required to include attendance at an annual PD meeting in the proposed budget. While budgets should account for this travel, virtual or hybrid meetings may be considered.

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 “Hispanic-Serving Institutions” and the program code “NJ”. 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 unfavorable review.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any 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 equally weighted criteria to evaluate applications to this program:

1. **Potential for Advancing Quality of Education/Significance of the Problem.** This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food, agricultural, natural resources, and human sciences by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals, alignment with USDA's Goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing educational opportunities, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, and potential for adoption by other institutions.
2. **Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages.** This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, logic model, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. Emphasis is placed on the quality of educational or research support provided to the applicant institution through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project. Data management plan is appropriate, clearly described, and feasible.
3. **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 educational capacity. Elements include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (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.
4. **Key Personnel.** This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications 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 dissemination of these findings.
5. **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 the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority Educational Need Areas.

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](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this 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 HSIGrants@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

Fiscal Year – FY

Food, Agricultural, Natural Resources, and Human Sciences– FANH

Hispanic-Serving Institutions – HSI

Indirect Cost – IDC

Modified Total Indirect Costs - MTDC

National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 – NARETPA

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

Notice of Funding Opportunity – NOFO

Project Director – PD

Project Narrative – PN

Project Summary – PS

Research & Related – R&R

Total Federal Funds Awarded – TFFA

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

New Application:

An application not previously submitted to a program.

Resubmitted Application:

A project application that was previously submitted to a program, but the application was not funded.