NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative
Competitive Grants Program
Education and Workforce Development

FUNDING YEAR:	Fiscal Year (FY) 2026
LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE:	Varies by Program Area Priority (see *Part I, C*)
APPLICATION DEADLINE:	Varies by Program Area Priority (see *Part I, C*)
ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING:	$39,700,000
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:	USDA-NIFA-AFRI-011596
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER:	10.310

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

Assistance Listing Number: The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) Education and Workforce Development (EWD) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.310.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, on the DATE 2026 deadline dates indicated in Part I, C
Letter of Intent:	Only required for A7001, 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, on the LOI deadline dates indicated in *Part I § C.7*
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)

Table 2: Program Area Priorities and Deadlines

Program Area Priority	2026 Review Cycle Deadlines[1]
1. Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy (A7501)	Thursday, March 19, 2026
2. Agricultural Workforce Training at Community Colleges (A7601)	Thursday, March 19, 2026
3. Food and Agricultural Non-formal Education (A7801)	Thursday, March 19, 2026
4. Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates (A7401)	Thursday, March 19, 2026
5. Predoctoral Fellowships (A7101)	Thursday, April 16, 2026
6. Postdoctoral Fellowships (A7201)	Thursday, April 30, 2026
7. Education and Workforce Development Workshop Grants (A7001)	Continuous throughout the year but at least 210 days before the start of the workshop and upon invitation after submission of a Letter of Intent at least 255 days before the workshop begins.

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[1] All applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the deadline date.

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.

Stakeholder Input. NIFA seeks comments on all Notice of Funding Opportunities (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 (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 AFRI Education and Workforce Development NOFO.

Centers of Excellence. Applicants are encouraged to visit NIFA's Centers of Excellence (COE) webpage for information on the COE designation process, including COE criteria, and a list of programs offering COE opportunities. A recording of COE outreach and COE implementation webinars are also available.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

The anticipated amount available for new grants for the deadlines in this NOFO is approximately $39.7 million in AFRI funding. Additional projects submitted under this NOFO may be considered should funding become available beyond the amount listed above.

The AFRI is America's flagship competitive grants program that provides funding for fundamental and applied research, education, and extension projects in the food and agricultural sciences. In 2026, NIFA requests applications for the AFRI's EWD program area priorities to support:
1. professional development opportunities for K-14 educational professionals;
2. non-formal education that cultivates food and agricultural interest in youth;
3. workforce training at community, junior, and technical colleges;
4. training of undergraduate students in research and extension;
5. fellowships for predoctoral candidates;
6. fellowships for postdoctoral scholars; and
7. education and workforce development workshop grants.

This NOFO solicits Standard Grants and Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement (FASE) Grants, whereas project types solicited in this NOFO are Research, Education, Extension, and Integrated Research, Education, and/or Extension projects. Grant types and project types solicited vary by program area priority, and not all grant types are solicited within each program area priority. See *Part I, C* for grant and project types solicited by each specific program area priority and *Part II, C* for a description of each individual grant type and project type.

Applications from and collaborations with institutions eligible for Strengthening Grants are welcome. More information is available on the AFRI FASE and Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) page.

2026 UPDATES

1. A Mentoring Plan (MentP) is now required for all AFRI grant applications solicited in this NOFO (excluding workshop grants) for projects that involve any type of education, training or mentoring of students or other individuals including high school students, undergraduate students, graduate students, professional degree students, postdoctoral scholars, other professionals or any other individual receiving any type of formal, or non-formal training on the proposed project. For additional important details, see the "FY 2026 AFRI Education and Workforce Development NOFO Additional Information for Part IV, C" on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage.
2. Year-round Workshop Grant applications are accepted after submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI), see Part I § C for more information. The LOI must be submitted a minimum of 255 days before the start of the workshop. The full Workshop Grant application must be submitted a minimum of 210 days before the start of the workshop.

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

Section 2(b) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (hereafter referred to as the Act) (7 U.S.C. 3157), as amended, authorizes the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), a competitive grant program, to provide funding for fundamental and applied research, education, and extension to address food and agricultural sciences in the following six priority areas:

1. Plant health and production and plant products;
2. Animal health and production and animal products;
3. Food safety, nutrition, and health;
4. Bioenergy, natural resources, and environment;
5. Agriculture systems and technology; and
6. Agriculture economics and rural communities.

To the maximum extent practicable, NIFA, in coordination with the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics (REE), will make grants for high priority research, education, and extension, taking into consideration, when available, the determinations made by the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB) pursuant to the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 3157). The Secretary delegates the authority to the Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics in 7 CFR 2.21, and the Under Secretary delegates that authority to NIFA in 7 CFR 2.66.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of AFRI (listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.310) is to support research, education, and extension projects that will help farmers, ranchers, foresters, and other agricultural producers address key problems of local, regional, and national importance in sustaining food and agricultural systems. These include farm and ranch production efficiency, profitability, and sustainability; domestic biofuels and bio-based products; forestry; aquaculture; rural communities and entrepreneurship; human nutrition; mitigating impacts of biotic and abiotic constraints on food production; food safety; prevention of agricultural pests and diseases, and genetic improvement of plants and animals. In addition, the economic sustainability of food systems is an overarching priority for the projects funded in response to this NOFO; therefore, projects focusing on plant or animal species or commodities that are important to small- or medium-sized farms or ranches are also welcome. Through this support, AFRI advances knowledge in both fundamental and applied sciences important to agriculture. Additionally, AFRI supports work in education and extension activities that deliver science-based knowledge to end users, allowing them to make informed, practical decisions. This AFRI EWD NOFO provides funding for research-only, education-only, extension-only, and/or integrated research, education, and/or extension projects addressing the six priorities identified in *Part I, A*. Each Program Area Priority within this NOFO may offer all or some of these project types.

Addressing agricultural challenges requires research, education, extension, and integrated programs in concert with science-based approaches that increase the production capability of agriculture and natural resources.

Background

AFRI is NIFA's flagship competitive grants portfolio for food and agricultural sciences, and funding is offered through the Foundational and Applied Science (FAS), Sustainable Agricultural Systems (SAS), and Education and Workforce Development (EWD) NOFOs for addressing critical societal issues.

The Program Area Priorities in this NOFO address the following legislatively-authorized sub-priorities:

    A. Plant Health and Production and Plant Products;
    B. Animal Health and Production and Animal Products;
    C. Food Safety, Nutrition, and Health;
    D. Bioenergy, Natural Resources, and Environment;
    E. Agriculture Systems and Technology; and
    F. Agriculture Economics and Rural Communities.

C. Program Area Description

The Program Area Priorities in this NOFO address projected shortfalls of qualified graduates in the agricultural, food, forestry, range, and energy resources sectors of the U.S. economy ([Employment Opportunities for College Graduates](#)). Applicants are encouraged to develop projects that equip students with the foundational knowledge and skills in Artificial Intelligence (AI), preparing them to thrive in an increasingly digital society or support educators with tools and training needed not only train students about AI, but also to utilize AI in their classrooms to improve educational outcomes. Projects may create training programs that equip participants with essential skills and competencies across the respective program area priority learning pathways. This NOFO seeks applications for education and training grants that focus on further enhancing the distinct components of the pipeline for developing the workforce in the food and agricultural sciences. The AFRI EWD Program Area Priorities have four overarching goals:

1. <u>Growing Agricultural Literacy and Workforce Development for the Future</u> offers institutional grants to provide K-14 teachers and administrators with increased knowledge of the food and agricultural sciences and help them develop improved curricula to train the agricultural workforce for the future. See *Part I, C.1* **"Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy" (Program Code A7501**).

2. <u>Training or Retraining of Agricultural Workers</u> provides institutional training grants to develop a technology- and data-savvy workforce ready for the field and industrial jobs. See *Part I, C.2* for **"Agricultural Workforce Training Grants at Community Colleges" (Program Code A7601).**

3. <u>Developing Pathways</u> provides formal or non-formal education and experiential learning for students to enter or gain skills applicable to the food and agriculture fields. This NOFO seeks to support the development of non-formal education activities that cultivate interest and build public confidence in the safe and enhanced use of technology in food and agricultural sciences. See *Part I, C.3* for **"Food and Agricultural Non-formal Education" (Program Code A7801)**. This NOFO also offers grants that propose formal experiential learning for undergraduates in food, agriculture, or allied disciplines and helps them learn the technical and leadership

skills required for employment in the food and agricultural sectors or for graduate programs. See *Part I C.4* for **"Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates" (Program Code A7401)**.

4. <u>Advancing Science</u> supports graduate and post-graduate education in food and agriculture disciplines. See *Part I C.5* and *Part I C.6* for **"Predoctoral Fellowships" (Program Code A7101)** and **"Postdoctoral Fellowships" (Program Code A7201)**, respectively.

Total AFRI EWD Program Funds – Approximately $39.7 million. Additional projects submitted under this NOFO will be considered should funding become available beyond the amount indicated above.

Key Information Applicable to all AFRI EWD Program Area Priorities:
1. All applications must adhere to the requirements in *Part IV*.
2. All applications to the AFRI EWD Program Area must be aligned with at least one of the six AFRI Farm Bill Priority Areas (*Part I, A*) and must address the Program Area Priorities described subsequently.
3. All AFRI EWD projects are required to provide opportunities for development of leadership skills which are necessary for preparing project participants for agriculture-related careers in the private sector, government, and academia. Projects must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component through competencies, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, communication skills, and training in ethics and professionalism.
4. The AFRI EWD Program Area Priorities anticipate funding projects with measurable outcomes/objectives. These may include but are not limited to: 1) number and duration of students and participants that are supported directly or undertaking internships, externships, certifications, and other experiential learning opportunities; 2) number of K-14 teachers, educational professionals, and/or students who indirectly benefit from the projects; 3) number of international experiences that promote American leadership in innovation and ingenuity; 4) number of publications, patents, and workshops; 5) quality of developed curricula materials, or academic programs; 6) success of recruitment and retention programs; 7) quality of collaborations developed among institutions; 8) measurable changes in student learning or engagement; and 9) measurable changes in the number of graduates in food and agricultural science disciplines.
5. Applications that include study abroad or collaborations with international mentors must also include a description of how that experiential learning will directly benefit U.S. food and agriculture production systems; improve agricultural education and teaching, as well as promote American leadership in innovation and ingenuity as described in this Notice of Funding Opportunities.
6. A MentP is now required for all AFRI grant applications (excluding workshop grants) for projects that involve any type of education, training or mentoring of students or other individuals including high school students, undergraduate students, graduate students, professional degree students, postdoctoral scholars, other professionals or any other individual receiving any type of formal, or non-formal training on the proposed project. For additional important details, see the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. For

predoctoral and postdoctoral fellowships, please consult the specific Program Area Priority's narrative guidance for MentP requirements.

Applications are solicited in the following seven Program Area Priorities:
1. Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy (PDAL)
2. Agricultural Workforce Training at Community Colleges (AWT)
3. Food and Agricultural Non-Formal Education (FANE)
4. Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates (REEU)
5. Predoctoral Fellowships
6. Postdoctoral Fellowships
7. Education and Workforce Development Workshop Grants

For a program informational webinar please visit the NIFA calendar for dates, event registration, and link. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any of the informational webinars listed, please contact the event host listed no later than 10 days prior to the event.

Program Area 1. Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy

Table 3: Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	A7501
Program Code Name:	Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy
Assistance Listing Number	10.310
Project Type(s):	Education, Extension, or Integrated Projects only
Grant Type(s):	a. Standard Grants and FASE (Strengthening Standard) Grants only b. See *Part II, C.2* for requirements specific to FASE Grant applications.
Application Deadline	**FY 2026:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)
Grant Duration:	36-48 months
Maximum Award Amount(s):	a. Including indirect costs: $500,000 b. A minimum of 50% of project direct costs requested must be for participant support. c. Each review cycle NIFA may award up to two grants per lead institution.
Program Area Priority Contact(s):	A7501@usda.gov

Program Area Priority:
The PDAL Program Area Priority seeks to increase the number of K-14 educational professionals trained in the food and agricultural sciences. Participants (teachers, post-baccalaureate pre-service teachers, counselors, administrators) are expected to develop and apply skills necessary for integrating food and agricultural science concepts in their classes; explore the opportunities available in food and agricultural science career paths; and/or forge mentorships with professional and business leaders, and faculty at two- and four-year institutions.

Education, Extension, or Integrated Projects must:
  a. Promote faculty expertise and encourage widespread implementation of educational innovation at K-14 levels in the food and agricultural sciences. This includes topics that contain elements of the human sciences (e.g., disciplines that address issues challenging individuals, youth, families, and communities).
  b. Provide immersive learning experiences (e.g., teacher hands-on research, teacher experiential learning), curriculum development and implementation, and teaching training for K-14 education professionals (e.g., teachers, counselors, administrators) and post-baccalaureate pre-service teachers to create and replicate best practices to improve student success outcomes within the food and agricultural sciences.
    1) Projects including curriculum development components must be led by or include key personnel with curriculum development credentials to ensure materials produced comply with the most appropriate pedagogy, teaching standards, and other applicable institutional, state, and national accreditation requirements.
    2) For the purposes of this Program Area Priority, immersive learning experiences refer

to those activities that allow the participant (i.e., K-14 education professionals) to learn by doing and participating in meaningful experiences. After being presented with a problem, participants research, try, solve, and reflect on the process allowing them to apply the lesson more broadly to their classroom, teaching, and lives.

 c. Non-exhaustive examples of projects include:
  1) Developing self-sustaining models for professional development that better prepare education professionals to provide outstanding teaching, guidance, institutional structures, etc., that enhance student outcomes in the food and agricultural sciences.
  2) Changing instructional approaches to effectively identify skill gaps and address conceptual areas particularly challenging to students.
  3) Integrating innovations in science and pedagogy into existing professional development programs (e.g., through hands-on research and extension experiences with partner institutions and laboratories).
  4) Exploring self-sustaining web-based approaches for professional development for education professionals.
  5) Adapting curricula to train or retrain agricultural workforce for the future.
  6) Other methods to fill the existing gap of professional development in advanced food and agricultural sciences for education professionals at the K-14 education level.

Additional Information:
 a. Requests exceeding budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed.
 b. Unless otherwise stated, grants are not renewable.
 c. Application and submission information, including page limits and narrative font sizes, for this Program Area Priority is available on the [AFRI NOFO Resources](#) webpage. Proposals that do not comply with these instructions may be excluded from review and consideration of funding.
 d. A minimum of 50% of project direct costs for PDAL projects must be for participant support, including items such as participant stipends, cost of subsistence (housing, meals) and dependent care for immersive experiences, reasonable travel, classroom materials and teaching kits, and laboratory use fees. Participant support costs included in subawards may count towards the 50% minimum.
 e. Use of undergraduate or graduate students as project staff is allowed under this Program Area Priority as long as the requested effort support is allocable, reasonable, and necessary for the execution of the project. Undergraduate and graduate student tuition remission costs are not allowed.
 f. Projects that create educator training opportunities that help effectively integrate Artificial Intelligence-based understanding, tools, and modalities into classrooms and curriculum focused on food and agricultural sciences are welcome.
 g. Projects in elementary and middle school education settings are welcome.
 h. Projects integrating participant interpersonal skill development activities and training for effective in-person and/or virtual teaching are welcome.
 i. Projects that involve participation from industry and nonprofit organizations through collaborating mentors and/or that connect education professionals to existing USDA and Federal resources (e.g., USDA Agricultural Research Service, USDA Forest Service, other Federal laboratories, open data resources) to enhance student outcomes in the food and agricultural sciences are welcome.

j. As applicable, if the majority of project activities are taking place off-site, off-campus indirect cost rates should be charged.
k. If organized by the Program Area Priority, the PD will be required to attend one NIFA AFRI EWD PD meeting during the performance period of the award. Reasonable travel expenses must be included as part of the project budget. While budgets should account for this travel, NIFA may consider virtual, or hybrid meetings.
l. Reasonable costs for evaluation and hiring of evaluation professionals may be included.
m. A MentP is required. For additional important details, see the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage.

Program Area 2. Agricultural Workforce Training at Community Colleges

Table 4: Agricultural Workforce Training at Community Colleges Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	A7601
Program Code Name:	Agricultural Workforce Training Grants
Assistance Listing Number:	10.310
Project Type(s):	Education Projects only a. Education Projects only for **Standard Grants and Strengthening Standard Grants**
Grant Type(s):	a. Standard Grants, and FASE (Strengthening Standard) Grants only b. See *Part II C.2* for requirements specific to FASE Grant applications.
Application Deadline	**FY 2026:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)
Grant Duration:	a. **12-24 months for Design Projects** Standard Grants and Strengthening Standard Grants b. **36-48 months for Implementation Projects** Standard Grants and Strengthening Standard Grants
Maximum Award Amount(s):	a. Including indirect costs: $250,000 for Design Project Standard Grants and Strengthening Standard Grants b. Including indirect costs: $650,000 for Implementation Project Standard Grants and Strengthening Standard Grants c. Each review cycle NIFA may award up to two grants, in any project type combination, per lead institution
Program Area Priority Contact(s):	A7601@usda.gov

Program Area Priority:
The AWT Program Area Priority seeks to develop a workforce ready for the field as well as industry jobs in the food and agricultural sector. Through the development of new workforce training programs, or the expansion, improvement, or renewal of existing workforce training programs at community, junior, and technical colleges/institutes, this program will expand job-based experiential learning opportunities, acquisition of industry-accepted credentials and occupational competencies for students to enable a work-ready labor force for the 21st century. Proposals aimed towards developing baccalaureate or graduate degree programs or pathways towards these degrees are not supported under this Program Area Priority.

In order to strengthen the capacity of Community Colleges, the AWT program is offering two focus areas: Design and Implementation, with distinct requirements, goals, timelines, and maximum budgets. (1) Design projects seek to support faculty and staff to design and develop new credentialed workforce training programs that will train the workforce once the credential is recognized by the cognizant institution. Design projects do not support nor require student activities or training, but the development of training programs. (2) Implementation projects seek

to train students to acquire the skills and tools necessary to secure an industry-accepted credential and join the workforce. Implementation projects may update or expand existing workforce training programs, but these activities are restricted to the first year of the grant; the remaining project time must be allocated to student training. AWT applicants must design their proposal based on the focus area that best fits their project's goals, objectives, and timeline. Applicants need not have applied or received a Design or Implementation project grant to be eligible to apply or receive the other focus area award.

Design Projects must:
    a. Be developed and carried out by community/junior/technical colleges or institutes with active partnership of employers or other community partners.
    b. Design and develop new workforce training programs or stackable-credential frameworks in the food and agricultural sciences at community, junior, and technical colleges or institutes aimed at developing a workforce ready for field and industrial jobs.
    c. Describe how the project or frameworks may link high school and community college education to enable participants to gain credentials to join, rejoin or advance in the workforce.
    d. Describe the type and relevance of the industry-accepted credential the workforce training program will provide to intended participants.
    e. Describe the type and relevance of experiential learning opportunities that will allow participants to gain on-the-job training and exposure to work environments.
    f. Provide a timeline and plan for the developed program or credential to be recognized by cognizant institutions.
    g. Articulate benefits accrued from the design project and provide evidence of a high likelihood that quality future implementation applications will be submitted.

Implementation Projects must:
    a. Provide students the skills and tools necessary to secure industry-accepted credentials to join the workforce upon participation completion.
    b. Be developed by, or in active partnership with, community/junior/technical colleges/ institutes and their industry partners. All applications to this Program Area Priority must demonstrate committed and active partnership with and relevant to industry.
    c. Expand and improve existing workforce training programs in the food and agricultural sciences at community, junior, and technical colleges/institutes to develop a workforce ready for field and industrial jobs.
    d. Describe the type and relevance of industry-accepted credential(s) the workforce training program will provide to participants.
    e. Allocate a reasonable portion of the funds to student support, including items, such as participant stipends, course enrollment, hands-on training, laboratory use fees, credential testing fees, and other costs that will allow the participant to attain the credential they are being trained for.

Non-exhaustive examples of projects include:
    a. Industry-based training programs/apprenticeships allowing students to earn while they learn;
    b. Job-based, experiential learning opportunities that allow students more time working in

job simulation or 'on-the-job' training environments;
   c. Refreshing existing workforce development curriculum or development of stackable credential frameworks to meet the needs of the 21st century agricultural industry;
   d. Opportunities for students to utilize appropriate cutting-edge technology and advanced data skills in their learning experiences.

Additional Information for <u>ALL</u> Design and Implementation projects:
   a. Requests exceeding budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed.
   b. Unless otherwise stated, grants are not renewable.
   c. Application and submission information including page limits and narrative font sizes for this Program Area Priority is available on the [AFRI NOFO Resources](#) webpage. Proposals that do not comply with these instructions may be excluded from review and consideration of funding.
   d. Projects including curriculum development components must be led by or include key personnel with curriculum development credentials to ensure materials produced comply with the most appropriate pedagogy, teaching standards, and other applicable institutional, state, and national accreditation requirements.
   e. Curriculum for workforce training developed, expanded, or improved under this Program Area Priority must lead participants to earn a technical certificate, stackable credential, 2-year associates or technical degree or other industry accepted credential. (Certificates, training, or coursework for/part of baccalaureate or post-graduate degrees or training **are not** supported under this Program Area Priority).
   f. Projects developing training programs and curriculum that provide the skills and knowledge to acquire industry-accepted food and agriculture-supportive credentials in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology are welcome.
   g. Funds requested may include but are not limited to support for participant stipends and travel, costs of course enrollment, personnel salaries, software, and curricula.
   h. Use of 4-year undergraduate or graduate students as project staff is allowed under this Program Area Priority as long as the requested effort support is allocable, reasonable, and necessary for the execution of the project. Four-year undergraduate and graduate student tuition remission costs are not allowed.
   i. Projects that involve partnerships with local government, economic development organizations, and workforce-focused nonprofit organizations are welcome.
   j. Self-sustaining projects that will continue after grant funds expire, as well as those that serve high-unemployment geographic areas, are welcome.
   k. As applicable, if most project activities are taking place off-site, off-campus indirect cost rates should be charged.
   l. If organized by the program, the PD will be required to attend one NIFA AFRI EWD PD meeting during the performance period of the award. Reasonable travel expenses must be included as part of the project budget. While budgets should account for this travel, NIFA may consider holding virtual, or hybrid meetings.
   m. Reasonable costs for evaluation and hiring of evaluation professionals may be included.
   n. A Mentoring Plan (MentP) is required. For additional important details, see the [AFRI NOFO Resources](#) webpage.

Program Area 3. Food and Agricultural Non-Formal Education (FANE)

Table 5: Food and Agricultural Non-Formal Education Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	A7801
Program Code Name:	Food and Agricultural Non-Formal Education
Assistance Listing Number	10.310
Project Type(s):	Extension, Education, or Integrated Projects only
Grant Type(s):	a. Standard and FASE (Strengthening Standard) Grants only b. See *Part II C.2* for requirements specific to FASE Grant applications.
Application Deadline	**FY 2026:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)
Grant Duration:	36-48 months
Maximum Award Amount(s):	a. Including indirect costs: $650,000
Program Area Priority Contact(s):	A7801@usda.gov

Program Area Priority:
Major advances in agricultural productivity and rural prosperity in the past have resulted from transformative technologies, such as breeding tools and strategies and mechanization. There are several emerging technologies that hold a similar promise. This Program Area Priority will support content development and activities for non-formal education to foster development of technology-savvy youth. Projects must adopt or develop curriculum and activities to cultivate interest and competencies in STEM and in food and agricultural sciences supported by the six AFRI Farm Bill Priority Areas (*Part I, A*). Data science, including artificial intelligence, automation, robotics, gene editing, biotechnology and other projects involving emerging technologies will be supported in this Program Area Priority.

FANE applications must:
  a. Develop curriculum and activities to increase youth's understanding of emerging technologies such as; artificial intelligence, data science, gene editing, biotechnology, robotics, automation, and other innovations. Curriculum will promote the food and agricultural enterprise by highlighting technology-based careers. Projects should prepare youth to meet the needs of the future workforce through enhanced non-formal education modules.
  b. Develop curriculum and/or outreach materials that clearly communicate the benefits of emerging agricultural technologies.
  c. Complement and build upon programs that have successfully demonstrated youth development strategies and outcomes (i.e., 4-H programming, Agriculture in the Classroom, FDA's Agricultural Biotechnology Education and Outreach Initiative, etc.).
  d. Involve youth in the design, execution, and evaluation of activities that lead to the development of consumer-friendly content that builds public confidence in the safe use of

artificial intelligence, data science, biotechnology and other emerging technologies in agriculture and the food system.

Additional Information:
a. Requests exceeding budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed.
b. Unless otherwise stated, grants are not renewable.
c. Application and submission information including page limits and narrative font sizes for this Program Area Priority is available on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. Proposals that do not comply with these instructions will be excluded from review and consideration of funding.
d. Projects that enhance access and interest in innovative agricultural technology (e.g., artificial intelligence and data science, robotics and automation, gene editing, biotechnology and other emerging technologies) in STEM education are welcome.
e. Projects that promote team, active learning, and resiliency are welcome.
f. Projects must institute an evaluation system to assess participant learning and outcomes throughout the duration of the project. This plan must include clear metrics of success.
g. Projects should be designed for youth in K-12, however if a youth development program serves a similar age range outside the K-12 boundaries, allowances can be made with justification.
h. Projects that involve participation from industry and nonprofit organizations through collaborating mentors and/or that connect education professionals to existing USDA and Federal resources (e.g., USDA Agricultural Research Service, Forest Service, Federal laboratories, open data resources) to enhance student outcomes in food and agricultural sciences are welcome.
i. As applicable, if the majority of project activities take place off-site, off-campus indirect cost rates should be charged.
j. If organized by the program, the PD will be required to attend one NIFA AFRI EWD PD meeting during the performance period of the award. Reasonable travel expenses must be included as part of the project budget.
k. Funds requested may include but are not limited to support of participant stipends and travel; provider personnel salaries; software; and curricula.
l. Reasonable costs for evaluation and hiring of evaluation professionals may be included.
m. A MentP is required. For additional important details, see the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage.

Program Area 4. Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates

Table 6: Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	A7401
Program Code Name:	Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates
Assistance Listing Number	10.310
Project Type(s):	Research, Extension, Education, or Integrated Projects
Grant Type(s):	a. Standard Grants and FASE (Strengthening Standard) Grants <u>only</u> b. See *Part II § C.2* for requirements specific to FASE Grant applications.
Application Deadline	**FY 2026:** Thursday, March 19, 2026 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)
Grant Duration:	a. 48 months
Maximum Award Amount(s):	a. Including indirect costs: $650,000 b. Each review cycle NIFA may award up to two REEU projects per lead institution.
Program Area Priority Contact(s):	A7401@usda.gov

Program Area Priority:

The REEU Program Area Priority promotes research and extension learning experiences for undergraduates such that upon graduation they may enter the agricultural workforce with exceptional skills. This initiative allows colleges and universities to provide opportunities for undergraduate students, including those from community colleges.

Projects must provide undergraduate students with experiential learning opportunities that include significant research, extension/outreach, and/or education components in the food and agricultural sciences. Of interest are projects that provide experiences in innovative agricultural technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), data science, robotics and other cutting edge digital tools. Incorporation of mentoring opportunities for undergraduates to train K-12 students in these areas to equip them with the foundational knowledge and skills and expose them to educational and career pathways in AI for food and agricultural sciences is encouraged.

Non-exhaustive examples of experiential projects include:
a. Research and extension apprenticeships, internships, or similar participatory learning within the six AFRI Farm Bill Priority Areas (*Part I, A*).
b. Practicums in agricultural laboratories, farms, or Cooperative Extension programs.
c. Externships in the private or public sector.

Additional Information:
a. Requests exceeding budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed.
b. Unless otherwise stated, grants are not renewable.
c. Application and submission information including page limits and narrative font sizes for

this Program Area Priority are available on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. Proposals that do not comply with these instructions may be excluded from review and consideration of funding.

d. Project costs for REEU projects must be predominantly for student support, including items such as participant stipends, housing, meals, travel, and laboratory use fees. Costs in budget categories outside Participant Support must be modest and reasonable (and may include justified support for the coordination of the program).

e. The budget for student stipends should reflect standard annual increases in costs-of-living commensurate to those requested for faculty salaries.

f. Tuition for course credit and promotional items are not allowable costs in this program.

g. At least 50% of the undergraduate fellows must come from outside the host institution or organization, particularly from small institutions where opportunities are not easily available for these experiences.

h. Participating students could also build their skills necessary for graduate studies; explore the opportunities available in academia, business, government, and other career paths; and forge mentorships with professional and business leaders and faculty.

i. Applications that involve new collaborations or enhance existing partnerships with community colleges and other institutions where limited research and extension opportunities exist in mission-relevant STEM fields are welcome.

j. Applications that involve industry participation (e.g., through collaborating mentors) and/or in a food and agricultural science industry setting where there is a documented shortage of talent or lack of adequate skills preparation for the needs of the industry are welcome.

k. Projects that will catalyze and result in the implementation of a self-sustaining model for increased or enhanced experiential learning for an undergraduate student population at the host and partner institutions are welcome.

l. Projects should develop a plan for tracking student outcomes, beyond their participation in the program, that demonstrates the impacts of the program on career choices and post-graduation employment and/or enrollment in higher education.

m. A comprehensive evaluation plan with measurable outcomes is required. For additional important details, see the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage.

n. If organized by the program or the coordination network, the PD will be required to attend one NIFA AFRI EWD PD meeting during the performance period of the award. Reasonable travel expenses must be included as part of the project budget. While budgets should account for this travel, NIFA may consider virtual or hybrid meetings.

o. Awarded projects are required to maintain a website, linked to a central REEU webpage hosted by the REEU Education Coordinated Network, which describes the program, eligibility for student participation, and application guidelines.

p. Previously awarded REEU projects that wish to continue their program, should reapply as a new application with justified novel elements, and include a progress report detailed in the "Related Documents" list on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. These applications should differ from the previously awarded applications and will be competed with new and resubmitted applications.

q. Reasonable costs for evaluation and hiring of evaluation professionals may be included.

r. A Mentoring Plan (MentP) is required. For additional important details, see the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage.

Program Area 5. Predoctoral Fellowships

Table 7: Predoctoral Fellowships Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	A7101
Program Code Name:	Predoctoral Fellowships
Assistance Listing Number	10.310
Project Type(s):	Research, Education, Extension, or Integrated Projects
Grant Type(s):	a. Predoctoral Fellowship Grants <u>only</u> a. See *Part II C.2* for requirements specific to FASE Grant applications.
Application Deadline	**FY 2026:** Thursday, April 16, 2026 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)
Grant Duration:	Up to 36 months

Maximum Award Amount(s):	a. Including institutional allowance: $180,000 <u>total per project</u> and are limited to a total of **$60,000 <u>per year</u>** for the following:
	  1) Up to $35,000 <u>per year</u> salary or stipend
	  2) Up to $22,000 <u>per year</u> for other expenditures (e.g. tuition, fees, fringe benefits, supplies, travel, workshops, publications, etc.)
	  3) Up to $3,000 <u>per year</u> institutional allowance, in lieu of indirect costs which are not permitted on Predoctoral Fellowship Grants
	  4) With the exception of the salary or stipend, awarded funds in other budget categories may be carried over from one year to other years. The salary or stipend is capped at $35,000 per year and cannot be carried over from year one to the next.

Program Area Priority Contact(s):	nifafellows@usda.gov

Program Area Priority:

The Predoctoral Fellowships Program Area Priority helps develop new scientists and professionals to enter research, education, and/or extension fields within the food and agricultural sciences within the private sector, government, or academia. The aim of these fellowships is to cultivate future leaders who can solve emerging agricultural challenges of the 21st century. NIFA is particularly interested in supporting fellows that address (1) agricultural production capability; (2) new markets for agriculture and forestry products; (3) value-added innovation; and (4) agricultural science policy leadership.

Research, education, extension, and integrated research, education, and/or extension projects must include all of the following:

    a. Objectives that are aligned with one or more of the six AFRI Farm Bill Priority Areas (as described in Part I, A);

    b. Well-developed academic experiences;

    c. Productive and interactive MentPs;

    d. Appropriate and applicable training/career development activities; and

e. Substantive evaluation plans (see the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage for additional information).

Eligible Predoctoral Fellows – The individual predoctoral PD must be a citizen, national, or permanent resident of the United States and, as per 7 CFR 3430.303, have advanced to candidacy, as per institutional requirements, by:
  a. Fiscal Year 2026 competition: April 16, 2026

Documentation from the graduate advisor or the institution must be provided by the application deadline. Instructions for providing eligibility documentation can be found on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. The intent of the NIFA Predoctoral Fellowship Program is to support current doctoral students who are at the stage of conducting dissertation research, ultimately leading to completion of the dissertation and respective terminal degree. Predoctoral students, inclusive of those with baccalaureate or master's degrees, who meet the above criteria, may apply.

While the Predoctoral Fellowships Program Area Priority is a component of the AFRI Food and Agriculture Science Enhancement (FASE) grant types, the applicant fellow need not be from, or planning to carry out the fellowship project at, a Strengthening Grant eligible institution to be eligible for a Predoctoral Fellowship grant.

Additional Information:
  a. Requests exceeding budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed.
  b. Unless otherwise stated, grants are not renewable.
  c. Application and submission information including page limits and narrative font sizes for this Program Area Priority is available on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. Proposals that do not comply with these instructions may be excluded from review and consideration of funding.
  d. The predoctoral candidate must be the sole PD listed on the Key Personnel form of the application. The mentor should not be listed as a Co-PD. Select "Graduate Student" for the Predoctoral Fellowship applicant and "Other (Specify)" for the corresponding scientific mentor(s). We highly recommend that applications be submitted through the mentor's institution with the mentor institution listed as the applicant.
  e. At the time of the award and release of funds from NIFA to the sponsoring institution, Fellows are required to carry out their projects on a full-time basis (i.e., 100% effort), as specified by the sponsoring institution in accordance with its own policies.
  f. The applicant must identify the functional focus of the fellowship (i.e., Research, Education, Extension, or Integrated) leading to a doctoral degree.
  g. The selection of disciplines to address an issue is to be determined by the prospective applicant in consultation with appropriate mentors.
  h. Evidence of scholastic achievement should be demonstrated through current doctoral transcript, program of study, and/or other academic successes.
  i. This Program Area Priority welcomes multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and applied approaches that involve industry participation as appropriate.
  j. Fellows are expected to build the professional skills necessary for career agility; explore opportunities available in academia, industry, government, and other career paths; and forge mentorships with professional and business leaders and faculty. As part of the Fellows' professional development, attendance at scientific or professional meetings and

experiences in industry or at field locations aimed at the development of skills in the applied sciences are welcome.

k. Training opportunities to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology-based understanding, tools, and modalities into the Fellow's professional skill set are welcome.

l. If organized by the program, the PD will be required to attend one NIFA AFRI EWD PD meeting during the performance period of the award. Reasonable travel expenses must be included as part of the project budget. While budgets should account for this travel, NIFA may consider virtual, or hybrid meetings.

m. Consistent with the program goal of fostering career independence, NIFA Predoctoral Fellowships can be converted to Standard Grants under certain circumstances (e.g., if the Fellow obtains a faculty position). One condition is that the Fellow substantively completes at least 50% of the fellowship performance period (e.g., 12 months for a 24-month award, 18 months for a 36-month award). Note that actual performance may occur prior to the official award start date and must be validated by the Authorized Representative (AR). The conversion process includes the following:

   1. A letter (PDF) from the PD indicating objectives completed, funds remaining, timeline involved, etc. Said letter must be signed by the AR.

   2. A letter (PDF) from the mentor attesting to the fellowship accomplishments that might be considered towards substantive fellowship performance (i.e., commencement date of actual performance, time spent on career development and planning/training, mentoring, project planning, etc.).

   3. Email both letters to the National Program Leader (Program Point of Contact on the Notice of Award). If initially agreed upon by the National Program Leader, additional institutional administrative processes need to take place (e.g., relinquishment, submission of an application, revised budget, etc.). Said processes must be executed within the performance period of the original award. NIFA reserves the right to approve or deny the conversion request. Note: Predoctoral Fellowships cannot be converted into Postdoctoral Fellowships.

Program Area 6. Postdoctoral Fellowships

Table 8: Postdoctoral Fellowships Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	A7201
Program Code Name:	Postdoctoral Fellowships
Assistance Listing Number	10.310
Project Type(s):	Research, Education, Extension, or Integrated Projects
Grant Type(s):	a. Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants <u>only</u> b. See *Part II C.2* for requirements specific to FASE Grant applications.
Application Deadline	**FY 2026:** Thursday, April 30, 2026 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)
Grant Duration:	Up to 24 months

Maximum Award Amount(s):	a. Including institutional allowance: $244,000
	   1) Funds must be requested primarily for salary or stipend and be properly justified
	   2) Other expenditures (e.g., fringe benefits, supplies, travel, workshops, publications, etc.) may not exceed $60,000 <u>per year</u> and must be itemized and properly justified
	   3) Up to $3,000 <u>per year</u> institutional allowance, in lieu of indirect costs which are not permitted on Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants

Program Area Priority Contact(s):	nifafellows@usda.gov

Program Area Priority:
The Postdoctoral Fellowships Program Area Priority helps to develop new scientists and professionals to enter research, education, and/or extension fields within the food and agricultural sciences within the private sector, government, or academia. The aim of these fellowships is to cultivate future leaders who can solve emerging agricultural challenges of the 21st century. NIFA is particularly interested in supporting fellows that address (1) agricultural production capability; (2) new markets for agriculture and forestry products; (3) value-added innovation; and (4) agricultural science policy leadership.

Research, education, extension and integrated research, education and/or extension projects must include all of the following:
  a. Objectives that are aligned with one or more of the six AFRI Farm Bill Priority Areas (*Part I, A*);
  b. Well-developed academic experiences and global competencies;
  c. Productive and interactive mentoring;
  d. Appropriate and applicable training/career development activities; and
  e. Substantive evaluation plans.

Eligible Postdoctoral Fellows – As per 7 CFR 3430.303, all doctoral degree requirements must be satisfied by:

    a. Fiscal Year 2026 competition: no earlier than January 1, 2023, and no later than January 30, 2027.

Documentation from the graduate advisor, graduate committee, or the institution must be provided by the application deadline. Instructions for providing eligibility documentation can be found on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. The postdoctoral PD must be a citizen, national, or permanent resident of the United States.

While the Postdoctoral Fellowships program area priority is a component of the AFRI Food and Agriculture Science Enhancement (FASE) grant types, the applicant fellow need not be from or planning to carry out the fellowship project at a Strengthening Grant eligible institution to be eligible for a Postdoctoral Fellowship grant.

Additional Information:

    a. Requests exceeding budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed.

    b. Unless otherwise stated, grants are not renewable.

    c. Application and submission information including page limits and narrative font sizes for this Program Area Priority on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. Proposals that do not comply with these instructions may be excluded from review and consideration of funding.

    d. The postdoctoral scholar must be the sole PD listed on the Key Personnel form of the application. The mentor should not be listed as a Co-PD. Select "Post-Doctoral" for the Postdoctoral Fellowship applicant. Select "Other (Specify)" for the corresponding scientific mentor(s). Enter "Mentor" for corresponding scientific mentor(s) in the Other Project Role Category Field.

    e. At the time of the award and release of funds from NIFA to sponsoring institution, Fellows are required to carry out their projects on a full-time basis (i.e., 100% effort), as specified by the sponsoring institution in accordance with its own policies.

    f. Note that the Program Area Priority Additional Information identified for Predoctoral Fellowships also applies to Postdoctoral Fellowships.

    g. Although a proposed project may fit in the context of the mentor's existing scientific area, the Postdoctoral Fellowship Grant should initiate an independent scientific program, rather than serve as an extension of ongoing projects in the mentor's laboratory.

    h. Note that postdoctoral proposals must indicate program code A7201 in the NIFA Supplemental Information Form (application package).

    i. The postdoctoral applicant, in their Project Summary/Abstract, should indicate the Farm Bill Priority Area name (*Part I, A*), Program Area name, and Program Area Priority Code from the AFRI FAS NOFO that most closely matches the topic of the proposed postdoctoral project plan. Postdoctoral proposals will be reviewed within a respective AFRI FAS Program Area. A table of the AFRI Foundational and Applied Science Priority and Program Areas, along with Program Codes can be found in the AFRI FAS NOFO. Additional information is on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. Do not use a FAS program code in the NIFA Supplemental Information Form, or the application is at risk of being returned without review.

j. This Program Area Priority welcomes multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and applied approaches that involve industry participation as appropriate.

k. Training opportunities to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology-based understanding, tools, and modalities into the Fellow's professional skill set are welcome.

l. If organized, the PD will be required to attend one NIFA AFRI EWD PD meeting during the performance period of the award. The PD is also required to attend a PD meeting of the Foundational and Applied Science Program Area Priority with which the project is most closely aligned during the performance period of the award. Reasonable travel expenses must be included as part of the project budget. While budgets should account for this travel, NIFA may consider virtual, or hybrid meetings.

m. Consistent with the program goal of fostering career independence, NIFA Postdoctoral Fellowships can be converted to Standard Grants under certain circumstances (e.g., if the Fellow obtains a faculty position). One condition is that the Fellow substantively completes at least 50% of the fellowship performance period (e.g., 12 months for a 24-month award, 18 months for a 36-month award). Note that actual performance may occur prior to the official award start date and must be validated by the Authorized Representative (AR). The conversion process includes the following:

1. A letter (PDF) from the PD indicating objectives completed, funds remaining, timeline involved, etc. Said letter must be signed by the AR.

2. A letter (PDF) from the mentor attesting to the fellowship accomplishments that might be considered towards substantive fellowship performance (i.e., commencement date of actual performance, time spent on career development and planning/training, mentoring, project planning, etc.).

3. Email both letters to the National Program Leader (Program Point of Contact on the Notice of Award). If initially agreed upon by the National Program Leader, additional institutional administrative processes need to take place (e.g., relinquishment, submission of an application, revised budget, etc.). Said processes must be executed within the performance period of the original award. NIFA reserves the right to approve or deny the conversion request.

Program Area 7. Education and Workforce Development Workshop Grants

Table 9: Education and Workforce Development Workshop Grants Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	A7001
Program Code Name:	Education and Workforce Development Workshop Grants
Assistance Listing Number	10.310
Project Type(s):	Research, Education, Extension, or Integrated Projects
Grant Type(s):	a. Workshop and Strengthening Workshop grants only b. See *Part II, C.2* for requirements specific to Workshop grant and FASE Grant applications.
Letter of Intent Deadline:	a. Required. The LOI must be submitted a minimum of 255 days before the workshop begins. b. LOIs must follow the instructions in Part IV, A and be emailed to the program contact(s) below
Application Deadline:	Continuous throughout the year after submission of an approved LOI. If invited, the full Workshop Grant application must be submitted a minimum of 210 days before the start of the workshop.
Grant Duration:	Up to 60 months
Maximum Award Amount(s):	$50,000
Program Area Priority Contact(s):	A7001@usda.gov

Workshop grant applications should focus on at least one of the four overarching goals of this AFRI EWD Program Area:
1. Growing Agricultural Literacy and Workforce Development for the Future
2. Training or Retraining of Agricultural Workers
3. Developing Pathways for formal or non-formal experiential learning
4. Advancing Science via career development of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars in the food and agricultural sciences

Workshop grants submitted to the EWD NOFO may encompass any project type (research, education, extension, or integrated) but must focus on education and workforce development of K-14 students, undergraduates, graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, or educators. Workshop topics related to Artificial Intelligence (AI) related professional development for educators and students, workforce readiness, and experiential learning are welcome. Applications for scientific workshops that exclusively focus on disseminating the findings of fundamental or applied research or advancing areas of science unrelated to education, workforce training, or career development will not be accepted. Such requests should be directed to the AFRI Foundational and Applied Science NOFO.

Workshop grants must develop activities and programing that bring stakeholders together to discuss, coordinate, and advance innovations supportive of food and agriculture-related disciplines and workforce; activities should be interactive learning sessions with the goal of producing a collaborative result. A seminar activity (lecture/presentation) with a selected speaker is an eligible activity if it includes other engagement among workshop participants that advances agricultural literacy.

Additional Information:
1. Requests exceeding budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed.
2. Applications submitted less than 210 days before the start of the workshop will be declined without review.
3. Unless otherwise stated, grants are not renewable.
4. NIFA will not fund workshop grants with the sole purpose of supporting travel and subsistence to attend conferences/workshops.
5. Workshops may be held in conjunction with or complementary to other organization's events (conferences) but are to have their own identity and purpose. NIFA will not support workshop grants where funds are used as sponsorship of other conferences.
6. Application and submission information, including page limits and narrative font sizes for this Program Area Priority, are available on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. Proposals that do not comply with these instructions may be excluded from review and consideration of funding.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding
The anticipated amount available for the AFRI Education and Workforce Development NOFO in FY 2026 is approximately $39,700,000. Additional projects submitted under this NOFO may be considered should additional funding become available beyond the amount listed above. USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

Of the total amount available to make awards for the AFRI program, no less than 30 percent will be made available to fund integrated research, education, and extension projects. Of the AFRI funds allocated to research activities, no less than 60 percent will be directed toward grants for fundamental (or basic) research and 40 percent toward grants for applied research. Of the AFRI funds allocated to fundamental research, not less than 30 percent will be directed toward research by multidisciplinary teams. It is expected that no less than 15 percent of the funds will be made available for Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement (FASE) Grants, and no more than two percent of the funds available for fundamental research will be made available for Equipment Grants (see *Part II C* for information about FASE Grants including Equipment Grants).

Of the amount available to support the Program Area Priorities in this NOFO, no less than 11.25% will be made available for Strengthening grant types under the FASE program.

The funds will be awarded through a grant for performance periods of up to five years. NIFA may choose to issue a grant on a continuation basis. A continuation award is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest 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*. Application for this FY 2026 NOFO is limited to the following application types:
1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in *Part V* and are subject to the due dates herein (see *Appendix III* for definition).
2. *Resubmitted application*: Resubmitted applications must include the one-page "Response to Previous Review" 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.** Applicants must propose one of the AFRI project types specified within the relevant Program Area Priority descriptions in Part I C. Only project types specifically solicited under each Program Area Priority described in Part I C will be considered for review. A detailed description of the project types (Research, Education, Extension, and Integrated Research, Education, and/or Extension) available across all AFRI NOFOs is in the "AFRI Project Types" PDF in the "Related Documents" list on the [AFRI NOFO Resources] webpage. An Integrated Project includes at least two of the three functions of the agricultural knowledge system (i.e., research, education, and extension) within a project.

2. **Grant Types**. Applicants must select the appropriate AFRI grant type specified within the relevant Program Area Priority Descriptions in Part I C. Only grant types specifically solicited under each Program Area Priority described in Part I C will be considered for review. A detailed description of the grant types (Standard Grants, Workshop Grants, and FASE Grants) available across all AFRI NOFOs is in the "AFRI Grant Types" PDF in the "Related Documents" list on the [AFRI NOFO Resources] webpage.

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 AFRI 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.

Eligibility is linked to the project type as specified below.
1. **Research, Education, or Extension Projects**
   Eligible applicants for single-function Research, Education or Extension Projects include:
   a) State Agricultural Experiment Station;
   b) colleges and universities (including junior colleges offering associate degrees or higher);
   c) university research foundations;
   d) other research institutions and organizations;
   e) Federal agencies;
   f) national laboratories;
   g) private organizations or corporations;
   h) individuals who are U.S. citizens, nationals, or permanent residents; and
   i) any group consisting of two or more entities identified in a) through h).

   Eligible institutions do not include foreign and international organizations.

2. **Integrated Projects**
   Eligible applicants for Integrated Projects include:
   a) colleges and universities;
   b) 1994 Land-Grant Institutions; and
   c) Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities (see NIFA's Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities page).

   For item a) under Integrated Projects, the terms "college" and "university" mean an educational institution in any state which:
   a) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
   b) is legally authorized within such state to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
   c) provides an educational program for which a bachelor's degree or any other higher degree is awarded;
   d) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
   e) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.

   A research foundation maintained by a college or university is eligible to receive an award under this program.

3. **Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement Grants**
   Part II, C.2 contains the eligibility details for Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement (FASE) Grants. Note that under FASE opportunity, only Strengthening Standard, Predoctoral Fellowship Grants, Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants, and Strengthening Workshop are solicited in this NOFO.

Applicants must respond to the Program Area Priorities and deadlines found in *Part I, C*. Grant recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award (see *Part III, B*).

USDA **will not accept** competitive applications for grants and cooperative agreements submitted for due dates after June 20, 2025, and/or research and development (R&D) contract proposals submitted to solicitations issued after June 20, 2025, for dangerous gain-of-function research, as defined in Section 8 of E.O. 14292.

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – submission of duplicate or predominantly overlapping applications is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits multiple applications that are duplicative or substantially overlapping to NIFA programs within the same fiscal year.

B. Request for Determination of Status

1. **Strengthening Grant Eligibility**
   If an institution is applying for a Strengthening Grant under the FASE program refer to the "AFRI Grant Types" PDF in the Related Documents list on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage).

2. **Multi-Campus Institution**
   All institutions grouped under one main campus as listed in Table 1 following Appendix III, unless located in an Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) state (listed in *Part II, C.2*), are excluded from eligibility for all strengthening funds. However, if any campus within a multi-campus listing can provide information demonstrating that it is administratively independent or has an independent accreditation, then the institution may petition for an exemption to this rule and request eligibility for strengthening funds. The LOI (if required) and the application must include a letter indicating how the institution is independent of the main campus, either through accreditation or administration, how the institution is eligible for a Strengthening Grant, and total Federal funds received for science and engineering research and development. The letter must be signed by the Authorized Representative (AR).

C. Cost Sharing or Matching
Applicants MUST provide matching contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all Federal funds awarded under AFRI for applied research grants unless a waiver applies. Matching funds requirements for AFRI programs included in this NOFO may be found at 7 U.S.C. 3157 (b)(9) (A-C).

For Applied Research Grants:

Match Required –If an applied Research (see [Appendix III](#)) Project or Integrated Project with an applied research component, is commodity-specific and not of national scope, the grant recipient is required to match the USDA funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and/or in-kind contributions. ([7 U.S.C. 3157(9)C](#))

1. Match not required – If the applied research or integrated project with an applied research component is not commodity specific or is national in scope, then no match is required.

D. Centers of Excellence

Pursuant to Section 7214 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 ([7 U.S.C. 5926](#)), NIFA will recognize and prioritize Center of Excellence (COE) applicants that carry out research, extension, and education activities that relate to the food and agricultural sciences. A COE is composed of one or more of the following entities that provide financial or in-kind support to the COE.

1. State agricultural experiment stations.
2. Colleges and universities.
3. University research foundations.
4. Other research institutions and organizations.
5. Federal agencies.
6. National laboratories.
7. Private organizations, foundations, or corporations.
8. Individuals; or
9. Any group consisting of two or more of the entities described in (1) through (8).

COE designation is available only for the **Standard Grant and the Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) Grant** applications submitted to the Program Area Priorities in the Education and Workforce Development, Foundational and Applied Science, and Sustainable Agricultural Systems NOFOs. If applicable, *Part IV, C*, of the NOFO contains additional requirements for COE consideration.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Letter of Intent

A Letter of Intent is only required for Education and Workforce Development Workshop Grants (A7001) workshop grants and must be submitted 255 days prior to the start of the workshop. For detailed guidance on LOI submission, see "AFRI Letter of Intent Instructions" in the "Related Documents" list on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage.

B. 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 and Grants 101. **Table 10** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the 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 10: Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	New Users to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
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-AFRI-011596**, 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 11: 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

C. 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 12** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 12: 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

AFRI Specific Application Instructions. Application and submission information including page limits and narrative font sizes for AFRI Education and Workforce Development NOFO applications are available in the "FY 2026 AFRI Education and Workforce Development NOFO Additional Information for Part IV, C" in the "Related Documents" list on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage.

We recommend that you conduct an administrative review of the application before submission of it via Grants.gov to ensure that it complies with all preparation instructions. An application checklist is included in Part VII of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide to assist with this review.

You should check the application for completeness. The application should be checked for the following required items, which must include:
1. Project Summary/Abstract
2. Project Narrative.
3. Bibliography & References Cited
4. Logic Model for Integrated Projects (if applicable)
5. Management Plan for Integrated Projects (if applicable)

6. Data Management Plan
7. Mentoring Plan (if not included within the project narrative).
8. Facilities & Other Resources
9. Curriculum Vitae
10. Conflict of Interest Lists
11. Current and Pending Support
12. Budget
13. Budget Justification

This is not an exhaustive list of required items; it only serves to highlight items that may be overlooked. **Failure to include any of the three critical required documents of Project Summary/Abstract, Project Narrative, or Bibliography & References Cited sections as PDF attachment will result in the application not being reviewed or considered for funding by NIFA.**

We send email correspondence to the AR regarding the status of submitted applications. We strongly encourage you to provide accurate email addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence from NIFA regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact the Program Contact identified in *Part I, C* and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Federal Indirect Costs (IDC) not to exceed 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded (TFFA). Section 1462(a) and (c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a) and (c)) limits IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum IDC rate allowed under the award is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:
1. the sum of an institution's negotiated IDC rate and the IDC rate charged by sub-awardees, if any; or
2. 30 percent of TFFA.

The maximum allowable IDC rate under the award, including the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, is the lesser of the two rates above.

If the result of number one above is the lesser of the two rates, 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 rate charged under the award by the prime awardee and the sub-awardee(s) does not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

If number two above is the lesser of the two rates, then the maximum IDC rate 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 IDC 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 must calculate an IDC rate in order to request IDC. Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process. Applicants need only to calculate an IDC rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC, please see National Institute of Food and Agriculture (usda.gov) for additional resources. 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 also elect the De Minimis rate (2 CFR 200.414). The Uniform Guidance offers the option of electing to charge a de Minimis rate of 15 percent of modified total indirect 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.

Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this NOFO for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

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 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 criteria to evaluate applications to these programs:
A reviewer's written evaluation entails two levels of assessment. First, the reviewer summarizes how well the application addressed each evaluation criterion. After the application has been assessed for strengths and weaknesses of each criterion, the reviewer then evaluates the overall likelihood that the project will have significant outcome and impact. The written reviews are used to begin panel discussions with other reviewers serving on the peer review panel. Through these discussions, peer review panelists come to consensus on the final ranking of the applications. A complete description of NIFA's peer review process can be found on the NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications page.

Detailed evaluation criteria for each project type, grant type, and centers of excellence are found in the "AFRI Review Criteria" PDF in the "Related Documents" list on the AFRI NOFO Resources webpage. We will use the appropriate evaluation criteria to review applications submitted in response to this NOFO.

C. Centers of Excellence

In addition to evaluating applicants using the criterion listed in *Part V, B of this NOFO*, NIFA will use the COE standards described in this NOFO to evaluate applicants that rank highly meritorious and requested to be considered as a COE. In instances where applicants are found to be equally meritorious with the application of a non-COE applicant, NIFA will prioritize the COE applicant meeting the COE criteria. NIFA will effectively use the COE prioritization as a "tie breaker." Applicants that rank highly meritorious but who did not request consideration as a COE or who are not deemed to have met the COE standards may still receive funding.

Applicants that meet the COE requirements will have the COE designation in their notice of award. Entities recognized as COE will maintain that distinction for the duration of their period of performance or as identified in the terms and conditions of that award.

D. 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).

E. Application Disposition

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

PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General
Within the limit of funds 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 approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable Federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions, 7 CFR Part 3430, subparts A through E.

Award Notice. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in 2 CFR 200.211 (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 statue 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.

Additional requirements on expected performance goals, indicators, and targets may be required as a condition of an award issued per this NOFO.

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; and
8. The need for additional Federal funds to complete the project.
9. Transferring funds between the construction and non-construction work under a Federal award.
10. 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.
11. 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.

12. 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.

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 or contact Lois Tuttle, Equal Opportunity Specialist, at Lois.Tuttle@usda.gov or (443) 386-9488.

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

AFRI Program Office E-mail: AFRI@usda.gov

Specific questions pertaining to technical matters may be directed to the appropriate Program Area Priority Contacts:

Program Area Priority Contacts

Program Area Priority	Program Area Priority Contacts
Professional Development for Agricultural Literacy (A7501) Grants	A7501@usda.gov
Agricultural Workforce Training (A7601) Grants	A7601@usda.gov
Food and Agricultural Non-formal Education (A7801)	A7801@usda.gov
Research and Extension Experiences for Undergraduates (A7401)	A7401@usda.gov
Predoctoral Fellowships (A7101)	nifafellows@usda.gov
Postdoctoral Fellowships (A7201)	nifafellows@usda.gov
Education and Workforce Development Workshop Grants (A7001)	For LOIs, A7001@usda.gov

For administrative questions related to
1. Grants.gov, see *Part IV*
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
United States Department of Agriculture
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of Terms
Agriculture and Food Research Initiative – AFRI
Assistance Listing Number – ALN
Authorized Departmental Officer – ADO
Authorized Representative – AR
Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 – AREERA
Coordinated Agricultural Project – CAP
Centers of Excellence – COE
Data Management Plan – DMP
Education and Workforce Development – EWD
Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research – EPSCoR
Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement - FASE
Indirect costs – IDC
Mentoring Plan – MentP
Management Plan - MP
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.

Terms	Definitions
Applied Research	Research that includes expansion of the findings of fundamental research to uncover practical ways in which new knowledge can be advanced to benefit individuals and society.
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.
Co-Investigator	Co-Investigators (CI) are Senior or Key Personnel including collaborators or cooperators who are responsible for achieving specific objectives within the project. They have the same status as a Co-Project Directors in terms of contribution to the project, but they can't assume the responsibilities of the Project Director. The budget associated with CIs should be listed under the Senior or Key Personnel budget lines.
Co-Project Director	A Co-Project Director (Co-PD) is someone who could assume the Project Director's (PD) responsibilities if the PD steps out of that role prior to the completion of the project term. Co-PDs on an application are presumed to be approved by the lead institution. Note that NIFA makes awards to institutions, not individuals. Therefore, Co-PDs ideally should serve at the same institution as the PD. Team members responsible for achieving specific objectives should be listed as Co-Investigators. International partners are ineligible to serve as PD or Co-PD and should be listed as Co-Investigator.
Education Activity	Education activity or teaching activity means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

Terms	Definitions
Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research	EPSCoR is a list of eligible states that are eligible for USDA EPSCoR funding which is determined every year by NIFA. This list includes states having a funding level no higher than the 38th percentile of all States based on a 3-year rolling average of AFRI funding levels, excluding FASE Strengthening funds. The current list is included in the "AFRI Grant Types" PDF in the "Related Documents" list on the [AFRI NOFO Resources](#) webpage.
Extension Activity	Extension activity means an act or process that delivers science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions.
Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement Grants	FASE Grants mean funding awarded to eligible applicants to strengthen science capabilities of Project Directors, to help institutions develop competitive scientific programs, and to attract new scientists into careers in high-priority areas of National need in agriculture, and food sciences. FASE awards may apply to any of the three agricultural knowledge components (i.e., research, education, and extension). FASE awards include Pre- and Postdoctoral Fellowships, New Investigator grants, and Strengthening grants.
Fundamental Research	Fundamental research means research that (i) increases knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and has the potential for broad application; and (ii) has an effect on agriculture, food, or nutrition.
Limited Institutional Success	Limited institutional success means institutions that are not among the most successful universities and colleges for receiving Federal funds for science and engineering research. A list of successful institutions is provided in the "Table 2 Least Successful Institutions" PDF in the "Related Documents" list on the [AFRI NOFO Resources](#) webpage.
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.
Multidisciplinary Project	A project on which investigators from two or more disciplines collaborate to address a common problem. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences.
New Application	An application not previously submitted to a program.

Terms	Definitions
Project Director	The PD is legally responsible for management, progress, and completion of the project and for ensuring that project funds are used to accomplish project objectives. The PD submits reports to NIFA periodically and communicates with the National Program Leader. PD has also been historically known as Principal Investigator.
Renewal Application	A project application that seeks additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award.
Resubmitted Application	A project application that was previously submitted to a program, but the application was not funded.
Resubmitted Renewal Application	A project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. This is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to but not funded.
Strengthening Grants	Funds awarded to institutions eligible for FASE Grants to enhance institutional capacity, with the goal of leading to future funding in the project area, as well as strengthening the competitiveness of the investigator's research, education, and/or extension activities. Strengthening grants consist of Standard, Coordinated Agricultural Project, and Workshop Grant types as well as Seed Grants, Equipment Grants, and Sabbatical Grants.
Transdisciplinary Team	A team composed of investigators from multiple disciplines that cross boundaries using holistic approaches to address complex challenges that cannot be solved using single-disciplinary approaches.

APPENDIX IV: OTHER AFRI RESOURCES

AFRI program information is available on the NIFA AFRI website. The following are among the materials available:

1. Notice of Funding Opportunities
2. AFRI Annual Review
3. Frequently Asked Questions
4. Interagency Programs
5. AFRI NOFO Resources
   a. ***Most Successful Universities and Colleges.*** Any institution listed on this list, Most Successful Universities and Colleges Receiving Federals Funds, is not eligible for Strengthening Grants from the FASE program unless they are located in an EPSCoR state. See "Table 1 Most Successful Institutions" in the "Related Documents" list.
   b. ***Lowest One Third of Universities and Colleges Receiving Federal Funds.*** The lowest one third of universities and colleges receiving Federal funds is used to determine eligibility for possible waiver of matching funds requirement for Equipment Grants (see "Table 2 Least Successful Institutions" in the "Related Documents" list).
   c. ***Flow Chart for Strengthening Grant Eligibility.*** The Flow Chart for Strengthening Grant Eligibility will help to determine your eligibility to apply for strengthening grants (see "Strengthening Eligibility Decision Tree" in the "Related Documents" list).
6. AFRI Deadlines