

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Cochran Fellowship Program – U.S. Dry Beans Processing, Promotion, and Marketing for Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras

Deadline: January 18, 2023

A. Program Description

The Cochran Fellowship Program's Latin America and Caribbean Region is requesting the design and delivery of a training program for a cohort of up to seven Fellows from Costa Rica and seven Fellows from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras for a total of 14 Fellows.

BACKGROUND

Since 1984, the U.S. Congress has made funds available to the Cochran Fellowship Program for training agriculturalists from middle-income countries, emerging markets, and emerging democracies. Training opportunities are for senior and mid-level specialists and administrators working in agricultural trade and policy, agribusiness development, management, animal, plant, and food sciences, extension services, agricultural marketing, and many other areas. Individuals selected for Cochran trainings come from both the public and private sectors. All training occurs in the United States. Training programs are designed and organized in conjunction with U.S. universities, USDA and other government agencies, agribusinesses, and consultants. The Cochran Fellowship Program is part of the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service. Since its start in 1984, the Cochran Fellowship Program has provided U.S.-based training for over 19,000 international participants from 126 countries worldwide.

SCOPE

The program should provide participants with a thorough understanding of the different varieties and uses of U.S. dry beans. In particular, USDA notes an opportunity to introduce dry bean products as ingredients in processed foods.

The program should provide the Fellows an overview of the U.S. dry bean industry showcasing the quality, nutritional value, and versatility of U.S. dry beans. Topics should provide an overview of U.S. dry beans including variety and quality. The program should expose Fellows to the dry bean supply chain, farming practices and technology, storage, processing, grading, and inspection procedures. Additional topics should include U.S. dry bean market trends and practices, use of dry beans, and ingredients for processed products. The training program should include visits to farms, processing facilities, and retailers as well as a meeting with the U.S. Dry Bean Export Council. The program should occur in the Spring in time for Fellows to observe the dry bean planting season. The objective of the program is to educate the Fellows on U.S. dry beans, their varieties, and their uses. The goal of the program is to increase the Fellows' capacity for understanding applications of agricultural research, extension, and teaching; and to increase trade linkages between Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and the United States.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The recipient will ensure that the Fellows increase their knowledge in the following areas:

- Production and supply chain
- Dry bean varieties
- Quality specifications
- Nutritional value of U.S. dry beans
- Using dry beans as ingredients
- Dry bean consumer products
- Market and retail trends
- New product development

NOFO Number

USDA-FAS-10962-0700-10.-23-0001

Assistance Listing *(formerly Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance)*

10.962 Cochran Fellowship Program-International Training-Foreign Participant

Authorizing Legislation

National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, PL 95-113, as amended, 7 USC §§ 3291, 3293, 3319a

Announcement Type

New Agreement

B. Federal Award Information

Total Available Federal Funding:	up to \$140,000
Anticipated Number of Awards:	1
Cost Share/Match Requirement:	None/Not Required
Projected Period of Performance Start:	April 3, 2023
Projected Period of Performance End:	December 31, 2023

Extensions to this program may be permitted, subject to approval. Refer to Section H for additional information.

Type of Assistance Instrument:	Cost-Reimbursable Agreement
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C. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants:

U.S. State Cooperative Institutions or other colleges and universities in the United States.

All applicants must have an active registration in the U.S. Government System for Award Management (www.sam.gov) by the closing date of the announcement; applicants with inactive, expired, pending, or excluded listings will be deemed not eligible. Exceptions, waivers, or extensions will not be considered. Please contact the program officer(s) listed in Section G if you have questions about this requirement.

Cost Share/Match: Not required.

D. Application and Submission Information

This announcement contains all information necessary to apply.

Submission Dates and Times

Application Submission Deadline: January 18, 2023 at 11:59pm EDT

Applications received after this time will not be accepted. Applicants are advised to make their submissions 1-2 days before this deadline in case of technical problems.

Anticipated Funding Selection Date: February 3, 2023

Anticipated Award Date: February 17, 2023

Content and Form of Application Submission

A complete application package must include:

- Form SF-424, showing the Unique Entity Identifier, and signed by the applicant
- Form SF-424A, showing the budget categorization. Applicants are advised to consult 2 CFR 200 Subpart E for guidance on proper categorization of cost items. An improper categorization will not itself be grounds for denial of the application, but may delay approval and/or adversely impact the application's scoring.
- A detailed illustrative budget, in which cost items are described in sufficient detail to enable FAS to determine that the proposed costs are reasonable and allowable for the project and consistent with applicable regulations.
- A detailed project narrative or plan of operation: the project narrative should include the following elements to explain the overall program plan and the applicant's technical experience and expertise:
 - Indicate the name of the institution applying to host the fellow;
 - Provide an approach to achieve the objectives listed in each section, including topics to be covered, possible field visits and other activities;
 - A description of how the award, including the logistical elements, will be administered and the role of the university faculty and support staff;
 - A summary of relevant institutional capabilities for hosting international fellows in the applicable topic;

- A brief description of the expertise and international experience of the recipient in the group's field of interest and various countries;
- Demonstrated understanding of cultural context and needs of the trainees;
- The skills or knowledge expected to be acquired by the fellows at the end of the program;
- Means of flexibility to account for potential program changes and the ability to respond to unforeseen circumstances; this should include information on how unforeseen problems that can arise will be addressed.
- A quality assurance plan.
- Application following designated format:
 - Clearly outline all aspects of the program plan – what is planned, how this will be conducted, and the anticipated results;
 - Be written in English and free of excessive grammatical and spelling errors;
 - Be written using Times New Roman, 12-point font; tables and graphs may have a smaller font as appropriate, all other text font and size should be consistent throughout the application;
 - Be typed on standard 8.5" x 11" sized pages with 1-inch margins;
 - Be paginated with each page consecutively numbered;
 - Cite source information and/or provide an explanation of the analysis undertaken;
 - Be submitted in PDF.
- Form SF-LLL, if applicable to the applicant

Note: Several standard forms were discontinued as of January 1, 2020, and are no longer required, including the SF-424B, AD-1047, AD-1048, AD-1049, AD-1050, and AD-1052.

Unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application;
- (ii) Have assented to the federal assistance certifications in the SAM platform;
- (iii) Provide a valid Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) in its application; and
- (iv) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

Intergovernmental Review

For state and local government entities, including public universities, an intergovernmental review may be required pursuant to [Executive Order 12372](#). Applicants requiring an intergovernmental review must contact their state's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to find out about and comply with the state's process.

Funding Restrictions

Generally, funds may not be used in any manner that is prohibited by applicable regulations, including 2 CFR Part 200, 2 CFR Part 400, and the program-specific regulations identified in Section A (if any). Awards issued pursuant to this notice of funding opportunity may only be used for the purpose set forth in the award, consistent with the statutory authority for the award. Capital expenses, such as the purchase of equipment, not entirely attributable to this award, must be pro-rated.

For example, agreement funds and other support may not be used for matching contributions for other federal grants or cooperative agreements, lobbying, or intervention in federal regulatory or adjudicatory proceedings. Federal employees are prohibited from acting as an agent of the applicant in any capacity (paid or unpaid) on any proposal submitted under this program. Also, federal funds may not be used to sue the Federal Government or any other government entity.

Compensation for personal services: Employees, consultants, or other personnel, including those of subrecipients, and regardless of the method of engagement, may not exceed the pro-rata equivalent of GS-15 on the General Schedule (for 2021, \$143,598 per year, \$550 per day, or \$68.77 per hour). Non-monetizable fringe benefits, such as health insurance coverage, are not included to this ceiling.

Indirect Costs: In general, costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective but not readily assignable to specific awards, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved, are considered indirect costs. These may include facilities not specific to individual projects, enterprise-wide services such as IT, and enterprise management. For cost-reimbursable agreements, indirect costs may not exceed 10% of direct costs, as stipulated at 7 USC 3319a.

Pre-Award Costs: Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the Federal award, directly pursuant to the negotiation and in anticipation of the Federal award, and where such costs are necessary for efficient and timely performance of the scope of work, are not allowable.

Other Submission Requirements

Applications should be submitted through the ezFedGrants system at <https://grants.fms.usda.gov/>

Applicants who require technical assistance should reach out to the program officer(s) listed in Section G at least 5 business days in advance of the application deadline. Applicants should provide as much detail as possible to facilitate resolution of the issue.

E. Application Review Information

Review and Selection Process

In all cases, the agency will conduct an initial responsiveness review of all applications submitted to determine:

- 1) the application was submitted on time as specified in this announcement (*See Section D. Application and Submission Information*);

- 2) the applicant is eligible (*see Section C. Eligibility Information*);
- 3) all the required forms and documents are submitted timely as outlined (*See Section D. Application and Submission Information, Content and Form of Application Submission*).

If an applicant is determined to be ineligible or an application is determined to be incomplete, the agency will notify the applicant. An applicant that feels such a determination is made in error may request reconsideration, highlighting evidence supporting their claim.

The agency will appoint a review panel, which may include both federal and non-federal reviewers, to review the eligible applications against the evaluation criteria described. The reviewers will ensure that the organization is capable of delivering the programs/activities as described in the announcement based on the applicant's project narrative and assign a score and provide summary comments based on the evaluation criteria identified above. The review panel will make a recommendation list to the selecting official, who is not a member of the panel.

The selecting official may select applications out of rank order in consideration of strategic program priorities, such as geographical distribution, incorporation of minority-serving institutions, congressional directive, or other documented considerations. These determinations are final and cannot be appealed.

Prior to selection, the agency may contact the highest-ranking applicants to seek clarification and to negotiate technical and programmatic aspects of the application. If an application includes a sub-awardee, FAS may request to speak with all parties included in the application to ensure sufficient planning and coordination has taken place prior to making an award.

Scoring Criteria

Technical Expertise and Experience (45 points)

Trainer must have appropriate technical background to provide the desired training. If necessary, other appropriate collaborating scientists should be identified to meet any of the objectives which the primary trainer cannot address. Trainer's experience and knowledge of relevant agricultural conditions within the Fellows' country(ies) or a similar location will be considered as appropriate. Also taken into account is the trainer's experience with international training and adult education.

Overall Program (40 points)

The overall program plan and design should be relevant to the specified training objectives and Fellows' backgrounds. The program plan should be thorough, well thought out, and will achieve the desired post-program deliverables. Relevant agricultural practices within the region of the university will be considered as appropriate. Relevant University resources should be identified. Additional resources/organizations should be identified as appropriate. Site visits and meetings should be meaningful to the content of the program. Overall Program will also be reviewed based on the recipient's ability to demonstrate flexibility and their quality assurance plan.

Budget (15 points)

The proposed budget should be appropriate for the number of Fellows and length of the program. The budget should include appropriate cost savings where available and narrative should accompany each line item.

Quality (5 points)

The overall proposal will be reviewed for overall quality, ensuring that proposal is comprehensive, well thought-out and contains correct spelling and grammar.

Integrity in Performance

Prior to making a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency is required by [31 USC 3321](#) and [41 USC 2313](#) to review information available through any OMB-designated repositories of government-wide eligibility qualification or financial integrity information. Therefore, application evaluation criteria may include the following risk-based considerations of the applicant: (1) financial stability; (2) quality of management systems and ability to meet management standards; (3) history of performance in managing federal award; (4) reports and findings from audits; and (5) ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

Program Expectations

- Ensure that each Fellow completes the Cochran Training Program Evaluation; and
- Development of an Action Plan by each Fellow, in accordance with the Action Plan template. The Action Plan identifies goals and outlines specific steps or activities which each Fellow will perform upon return to their home country. An Action Plan generally includes steps, milestones, measures of progress, responsibilities, assignments, and timeline. The recipient shall provide a copy of each fellow's Action Plan to the Cochran Fellowship Program.
- A brief final report (format at the discretion of the recipient).
- A pre-training questionnaire to determine Fellows baseline knowledge of the learning objectives. (Template will be provided)
- A post-training questionnaire to determine the knowledge gained in each of the learning objectives. (Template will be provided)
- Analysis of the pre and post training questionnaire. (Template will be provided)

Performance Expectations:

- Provide a thumb drive of the training highlights to each Fellow and the Cochran Fellowship Program;
- Ensure that each Fellow completes the Cochran Training Program Evaluation (which will be provided);
- Development of an Action Plan by each Fellow. The Action Plan identifies goals and outlines specific steps or activities which each Fellow will perform upon return to home country. An Action Plan generally includes steps, milestones, measures of progress, responsibilities, assignments, and a timeline. The applicant shall provide a copy of each Fellow's Action Plan to the Cochran Fellowship Program.

- A brief final report (format at the discretion of the applicant).
- A pre-training questionnaire to determine Fellows' baseline knowledge of the learning objectives. (Template and examples shall be provided upon request)
- A post-training questionnaire to determine the knowledge gained in each of the learning objectives. (Template and examples shall be provided upon request)
- Analysis of the pre- and post-training questionnaire.
- Deliverables are due two weeks after the completion of each training.
- All transportation within the United States, from the point of arrival to the point of departure.
 - The host institution is not responsible for international airfare of participants
 - Please include baggage fees for any domestic flights
- Lodging accommodation, in single occupancy
- Fellows' subsistence (meals and/or per diem allowance, please add a \$5/day supplement for incidentals)
- Implementors should offer appropriate cross-cultural activities for the purpose of sharing language, culture, or history in accordance with J-1 Visa requirements.
- Please note all meetings with Federal Government offices or officials must be initiated by the Fellowship Programs team.

Government Furnished Items

USDA FAS will provide Fellows with J-1 compliant Emergency Medical Insurance and arrange for DS-2019/J-1 visas for Fellows.

Federal Award Notices

Applicants will be notified of the status of their application by email. This notification is not authorization to proceed, and such notification should be construed as provisional until

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All successful applicants for all grant and cooperative agreements are required to comply with the applicable Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions, which can be found at the link below. The applicant is presumed to have read, understood, and accepted these terms. Applicants with questions about the applicable terms should contact the program officer(s) listed in Section G.

https://www.fas.usda.gov/grants/general_terms_and_conditions/default.asp

The applicable Standard Administrative Terms and Conditions will be for the last year specified at that URL, unless the application is to continue an award first awarded in an earlier year. In that event, the terms and conditions that apply will be those in effect for the year in which the award was originally made unless explicitly stated otherwise in subsequent mutually-agreed amendments to the award.

Before accepting the award the potential awardee should carefully read the award package for instructions on administering the grant award and the terms and conditions associated with responsibilities under Federal Awards. Recipients must accept all conditions in this NOFO as

well as any Special Terms and Conditions in the Notice of Award to receive an award under this program.

Reporting

Financial Reports, using form SF-425, must be submitted annually, within 30 days of the end of the reporting period. A final financial report must be submitted within 120 days of the end date of the agreement.

Performance Progress Reports must be submitted annually, within 30 days of the end of the reporting period. A final performance progress report must be submitted within 120 days of the end date of the agreement. The recipient may use any appropriate format for performance progress reports, provided the report includes:

- a) a comparison of actual accomplishments to the for the period;
- b) The reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and
- c) Additional pertinent information including, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or high unit costs.

Recipients are encouraged to include photographs and other supplemental material in performance progress reports. For awards in which the total lifetime value exceeds \$500,000, additional reporting may be required as described in [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).

Monitoring

FAS through its authorized representatives, has the right, at all reasonable times, to make site visits to review project accomplishments and management control systems and to provide such technical assistance as may be required. During site visits, FAS will review recipients' files related to the funded program.

As part of any monitoring and program evaluation activities, recipients must permit FAS, upon reasonable notice, to review related records and to interview the organization's staff and clients regarding the program, and to respond in a timely and accurate manner to FAS requests for information relating to their program.

Close Out

Within 120 days after the end of the period of performance, or after an amendment has been issued to close out a grant, whichever comes first, recipients must submit a final FFR and final progress report detailing all accomplishments and a qualitative summary of the impact of those accomplishments throughout the period of performance. After final reports have been reviewed and approved by the agency, and any residual amount due to the recipient or due to be returned to the agency, the award is subject to closeout. Acceptance of final reports by the agency constitutes a closeout of the award with no further notice or obligation to either party. This acceptance will indicate the period of performance has expired, and any remaining funds will be deobligated. Records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the final reports are submitted.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact

For all inquiries, contact:

Name: Adam Scheinkman

Email Address: Adam.Scheinkman@usda.gov

Phone Number: (202) 205-9824

H. Other Information

Extensions

Extensions to this program are allowed.

Applicants may request a no-cost extension in order to complete all project activities. The request must be submitted 60 days prior to the expiration of the performance period. Requests for extensions are subject to agency approval.

Budget Revisions

Transfers of funds between direct cost categories in the approved budget when such cumulative transfers among those direct cost categories exceed ten percent of the total budget approved in this Award require written approval from the agency. The total budget amount may not be increased without a bilaterally executed amendment to the award.

The Recipient is not authorized at any time to transfer amounts budgeted for direct costs to the indirect costs line item or vice versa, without prior written approval of the agency.

Post-award program income

In the event program income becomes available to the recipient post-award, it is the recipient's responsibility to notify the FAS Program Manager to explain how that development occurred, as part of their request for guidance and/or approval. The Program Manager will review approval requests for program income on a case-by-case basis; approval is not automatic. Consistent with the policy and processes outlined in 2 C.F.R. Part 200, pertinent guidance and options, as determined by the type of recipient and circumstances involved, may be approved by the Grant Officer. If approval is granted, an award modification will be issued with an explanatory note in the remarks section of the face page concerning guidance and/or options pertaining to the recipient's approved recipient's approved request. All instances of program income shall be listed in the progress and financial reports.