

NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY
FAS International Internship Program

Deadline: August 5, 2022

A. Program Description

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Foreign Agricultural Services (FAS), will support placement of eligible graduate students with USDA offices overseas, to assist with representing U.S. agricultural interests and increasing trade abroad.

BACKGROUND

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is the foreign affairs arm of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). FAS links U.S. agriculture to the world to enhance export opportunities and global food security for the expansion and growth of U.S. farmers and ranchers. In addition to its Washington, D.C. staff, FAS has a global network of 92 offices covering approximately 175 countries. These offices are staffed by agricultural attachés and locally hired agricultural experts who are the eyes, ears, and voices for U.S. agriculture around the world. FAS staff identify problems, provide practical solutions, and work to advance opportunities for U.S. agriculture and support U.S. foreign policy around the globe.

SCOPE

In support of teaching and research in the agricultural sciences, FAS seeks to support the placement of graduate students in USDA offices overseas, to work on assignments related to agricultural analysis, and to enhance trade linkages between eligible countries and agricultural interests in the United States. USDA anticipates an eight (8) week assignment for participants to gain knowledge, skills and abilities at assigned overseas offices, during the summer timeframe.

The recipient will manage the IIP for eligible participants, i.e. graduate students or recent graduates with studies in economics, analytics, or related fields. A complete set of expectations for such management is described in Section F, and should be reviewed carefully.

NOFO Number

USDA-FAS-10960-0200-10.-22-0008

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

10.960 Technical Agricultural Assistance

Authorizing Legislation

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

Announcement Type

New Agreement

B. Federal Award Information

Total Available Federal Funding:	up to \$304,000 (for two program cycles)
Anticipated Number of Awards:	1
Cost Share/Match Requirement: See section E.	Not required, but will be positively scored.
Projected Period of Performance Start:	October 1, 2022
Projected Period of Performance End:	September 27, 2024
Extensions to this program may be permitted, subject to approval. Refer to Section H for additional information.	
Type of Assistance Instrument:	Cost-Reimbursable Agreement

C. Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants: State Cooperative Institutions and other College 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: Refer to Section B. In-kind contributions are generally allowable towards meeting any cost share/match requirement.

D. Application and Submission Information

This announcement contains all information necessary to apply.

Submission Dates and Times

Application Submission Deadline: August 5, 2022 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 Selection Date: August 19, 2022

Anticipated Award Date: September 2, 2022

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.
 - If indirect costs are included in the budget, attach a copy of the latest indirect cost rate agreement negotiated with a cognizant federal agency. If an agreement does not exist, please attach a description of the basis for the indirect cost calculation.
- 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;
 - Indicate the housing stipend;
 - Indicate how the interns will be paid including how much and fringe benefits;
 - Indicate what the transportation stipend will include and how much it is;
 - Indicate any other assistance the university will offer them during their internship.
- 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 paper 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.

Selection Criteria

Factor 1: Technical Expertise and Experience (40 Points)

Applicants must have appropriate technical background to achieve the program objectives. The following competencies will be considered

Participant Recruitment Plan

- 1) Strong and diverse participant recruitment from multiple strategic medians nationwide including MSI and HBCU networks;
- 2) Appropriate and thorough participant selection process
- 3) Process for participant selection feedback such as strengths and weaknesses;
- 4) Comprehensive contingency plan in the event selected participants drop out;

Experience and Expertise in Agricultural Education and Extension Programs

- 1) Proposal evidences institution's ability to select safe and secure sites for Fellows in the proposed country;
- 2) Experience with international program implementation, training, and youth-focused experiential education;
- 3) Experience developing youth leadership and entrepreneurship programming;
- 4) Ability to monitor and evaluate the program, and respond to unforeseen circumstances;
- 5) Ability to align training topics with USDA's and the priority country's agricultural policy, development, and extension goals.

Factor 2: Overall Program (40 Points)

The overall program plan and design should be relevant to the stated objectives and should describe program strategy including:

Alignment with Institutional and USDA Priorities

Applicant demonstrates an awareness of USDA priorities, and shows how those will be furthered; in addition to how this program supports their own institutional priorities.

Program Implementation

Applicant demonstrates their understanding of the scope in Section A and the performance expectations shown in Section F.

Factor 4: Budget (20 Points)

Cost Effectiveness

The proposed budget should be appropriate for the number of participants and the length of the program. The budget should include appropriate cost savings where available, and a clear budget narrative should address each line item. Please ensure excel rounding errors are resolved so final numbers equate exactly to the budget line items, rounded to the penny.

Cost Sharing

If a cost share is proposed, one point per 10% of the federal share will be added to scoring, up to 10 points (for a 100% cost share).

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.

Prior to making a Federal award with a total amount of Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold, currently \$250,000, the federal agency is required to review and consider

any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS).

- An applicant, at its, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM.
- The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in [§ 200.206](#)

F. Federal Award Administration Information

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.

Recipient Performance Expectations

1. Within 30 days after the award is signed, FAS and the recipient will arrange a mutually available time to meet and discuss:
 - a. The IIP, its mission and expectations
 - b. Confirm roles and responsibilities among stakeholders
 - c. Establish a schedule of progress meetings:
 - d. Establish timeline and deadlines that includes but are not limited to:

- i. Start date for recruiting graduate students into the IIP
 - ii. Resource Sharing:
 - e. Training
 - i. Design training session for selected graduate students to prepare for working overseas on U.S. agricultural issues and trade.
 - f. Participant Application Process and Requirements
- 2. Promote the program widely and recruit current or recently-graduated graduate students who may be interested in working at a U.S. embassy and assist with representing U.S. agricultural interests in foreign markets. Participants should represent a wide variety of academic institutions, and should not be exclusive to the recipient.
 - a. Recruitment announcements to prospective graduate students should include information about the IIP, state cost considerations, timeline, stipend and any other critical information and deadlines.
 - b. Undertake an outreach and communication campaign to inform as many potential graduate students as possible with diverse backgrounds.
- 3. Collaborate with FAS to review competitive applicants (which may include interviews), selecting not less than six (6) for consideration into the IIP by meeting and reviewing their information. FAS may request further applicants if the list does not represent a diverse group of interns for the IIP and/or request information from others interested in the IIP but not selected.
- 4. Ensures that selected graduate students complete all requirements for foreign travel by collaborating with FAS, which may include:
 - a. Medical Clearance
 - b. Security Clearance and/or Training (CTAT).
 - c. Visas, if required for that posting
 - d. Passport application, if required
- 5. Work with FAS to place participants based on their academic studies, interests, foreign language skills, and other experience and suitability.
- 6. Address and manage all correspondence, notifications and communication to participants, which includes, but not limited to recruitment, selection, notification, responding to Inquiries, instructions, reminders, follow-up, and close-out.
- 7. Conduct Pre-Internship Orientation
 - a. Arrange Pre-Travel Orientation
 - i. Collaborate with FAS to determine the agenda, scheduling, and participation for session(s).
 - ii. Set up virtual platform
 - iii. Send invitation to participants and stakeholders
 - iv. Facilitate and conduct the session(s)
 - b. Communicate the IIP mission and expectation
 - c. Review Safety, Warnings and Notification Information

- d. Review request for current contact and emergency contact information.
 - e. Review how to handle a legal situation.
 - f. Review IIP agenda with dates/deadlines
 - i. Expected Date of Arrival
 - ii. Monthly Group Internship Sessions with date and times
 - iii. Office Hours (individual session, if desired)
 - iv. Expected Date of Departure
 - g. Review currency exchange and process
 - h. Review stipends/allowances, i.e. allowable uses
 - i. Respond to questions
 - j. Afterwards, sends a summary of the meeting to all attendees.
8. Complete travel arrangements, housing arrangements, and in-country transportation arrangements. The receiving FAS office and Embassy may serve as resources, if needed. This includes any changes, cancellations, etc.
 9. Track and maintain participant contact and emergency contact information, and contacts and collaborates with the FAS in an emergency for proper course of action and notification.
 10. Administer the financial support of participation, to include:
 - a. Salary/Stipend for participants, equivalent to a federal employee at grade GS-7
 - b. Housing Allowance
 - c. Costs of Travel (airfare, etc.)
 - d. Communicates to FAS any discrepancies to determine best course of action.
 11. Conduct Post-Internship Debrief with USDA to include, but not limited to,
 - a. Lessons Learned
 - b. Survey results

USDA/FAS Performance Expectations

1. Attend meetings to support the IIP as well as provide information, guide or mentor in collaboration with the recipient
2. Determine which USDA overseas posts will be participating in the program, considering (where possible) the interests and qualifications of proposed participants
3. Ensure proper communication among U.S. Government stakeholders once participants are selected for access to embassy.
4. Provide documents and information as needed to carry out the IIP

Reporting

Financial Reports, using form SF-425, must be submitted semi-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 semi-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: Cristina Stanley

Email Address: Cristina.Stanley@usda.gov

Phone Number: (202) 720-2568

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 request. All instances of program income shall be listed in the progress and financial reports.