Capacity Building Grants for Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) Program

FY 2015 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 26, 2015

ELIGIBILITY: See Part III, A of RFA



United States Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS FOR NON-LAND GRANT COLLEGES OF AGRICULTURE PROGRAM (NLGCA)

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.326.

DATES: Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time** on **June 26, 2015**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks your comments about this RFA. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and we'll use them to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). Submit written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice via e-mail to: Policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Capacity Building Grants for Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Capacity Building Grants for Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture Program (NLGCA) for fiscal year (FY) 2015 to make competitive grants to Non-land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) Institutions to assist the NLGCA Institutions in maintaining and expanding the capacity to conduct education, research, and outreach activities relating to agriculture, renewable resources, and other similar disciplines. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2015 is approximately $4 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for NLGCA projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a NLGCA grant.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Legislative Authority

This program is administered under the provisions of Section 1473F of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA), as added by Section 7138 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, (7 USC 3319i).

B. Purpose and Priorities

The Department of Agriculture is designated as the lead Federal Agency that supports higher education in the food and agricultural sciences. In this context, NIFA has specific responsibility to initiate and support projects to strengthen higher education teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences.

The NLGCA Program is soliciting applications that will align to the mission and goals of the following: Strategic Goal of the United States Department of Agriculture: (1) USDA Strategic Plan (http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda-strategic-plan-fy-2014-2018.pdf). Goal 1 -– Assist rural communities to create posterity so they are self-sustaining, re-populating, and economically thriving; Research, Education and Economics Action Plan (March 2014 version)) (http://www.ree.usda.gov/ree/news/USDA_REE_Action_Plan_03-2014.pdf) specifically addressing: Goal 6- Education and Science Literacy; and the NIFA Strategic Plan (2014-2018) (http://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/NIFA%20Strategic%20Plan%20FY2014-FY2018.pdf), specifically addressing Strategic Goal No. 1, (Science-Catalyze exemplary and relevant research, education, and extension programs); Subgoal 1.7 – Ensure the development of human capital, communities, and a diverse workforce through research, education and extension and engagement programs in food and agricultural sciences to support a sustainable agriculture system.

As legislatively reauthorized, the purpose of this program is to assist the NLGCA Institutions in maintaining and expanding their capacity to conduct education, research, and outreach activities relating to agriculture, renewable resources, and other similar disciplines. NLGCA Institutions may use the funds to maintain and expand capacity:

(A) to successfully compete for funds from Federal grants and other sources to carry out educational, research, and outreach activities that address priority concerns of national, regional, State, and local interest;

(B) to disseminate information relating to priority concerns to — (i) interested members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities; (ii) the public; and (iii) any other interested entity;

(C) to encourage members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities to participate in priority education, research, and outreach activities by providing matching funding to leverage grant funds; and

(D) through — (i) the purchase or other acquisition of equipment and other infrastructure (not including alteration, repair, renovation, or construction of buildings); (ii) the professional growth and development of the faculty of the NLGCA Institution; and (iii) the development of graduate assistantships.

For the purpose of NLGCA Program, the following NIFA Priority Areas are considered as the national priorities:

- Agricultural & Natural Resources Science for Climate Variability and Change
- Food Security and Hunger
- Food Safety
- Water for Agriculture
- Childhood Obesity Prevention; and,
- Sustainable Bioenergy.

Under these priorities, priority will be given to those projects that focus on the national challenge to increase the number and diversity of under-represented students entering the food, agriculture and natural resource systems in the United States.

Applicants are encouraged to submit applications that will result in building linkages with other institutions (including other colleges and universities, units of State government, and private sector entities) having a significant ongoing commitment to the food and agricultural sciences generally and to the specific Need Area(s) for which a grant is requested (see below). The goals of such joint initiative should include maximizing the development and use of limited resources (including faculty, facilities, and equipment) by generating a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on a targeted Need Area(s); increasing cost-effectiveness through achieving economies of scale; strengthening the scope and quality of a project's impact; and promoting coalition building likely to transcend the project's lifetime and lead to future ventures.

Leadership Skills Development

All projects are required to provide leadership skills opportunities. The development of leadership skills, knowledge and qualities are necessary for preparing students for agricultural related careers in private sector, government and academia. NLGCA-funded projects must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to ensure that students are equipped with both technical and leadership abilities upon graduation. Specific activities may include:

- Developing practical applications to increase understanding of leadership roles, including critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills, ethics and professionalism, and working in teams;
- Connecting the academic classroom experience with daily leadership roles and organizational activities; and,
- Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc., and,
- Forming partnerships involving a broad range of diverse institutions to better understand how students learn, how to sustain their interests, and how to acquire those skills and occupational competencies expected by employers.

NLGCA encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through the Cooperative Extension System's eXtension Initiative. Funds may be used to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (COPs) or form new COPs that focus on **Stakeholder/Land Grant Institutions Partnership: Integrated Research, Extension and Education.** Projects must align with the eXtension vision, mission, and values. A letter of acknowledgement from eXtension is required, and a letter of support may be required from one of the Communities of Practice. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to http://create.extension.org/node/2057.

C. Program Category Description

The four activities, (A) through (D) noted in Part I, B. can be undertaken through a variety of mechanisms, approaches, or strategies, any of which shall be part of an applicant's response to addressing any two of the three Program Categories (education, research and/or outreach) described below in this subpart. While addressing the legislative intent of this grant program, an applicant may include, but is not limited to, the following activities (listed as discussed in Part I B.):

a) Successfully compete for funds from other sources:
By using NLGCA funds, grantees can -
- Develop pilot projects that may provide preliminary findings to support a full proposal.
- Build partnerships in order to develop collaborative projects that may be competitive for other funding sources.
- Leverage funds to support students and faculty time to work on developing new projects or instructional materials or tools, or
- Pursue other, similar activities to address this category.

b) Disseminate information to relevant groups:
NLGCA funds can be used to reach the relevant communities to increase awareness and participation in activities of high priority to agriculture and renewable resources through -
- Workshops, website development, or on-line discussions/forums, etc., that highlight community practices relevant to promoting partner engagement that advances food and agricultural sciences education, research and outreach opportunities, or
- Pursue other, similar activities to address this category.

c) Encourage relevant groups or communities to participate in education, research and outreach activities:
NLGCA institutions may use funds that will encourage communication, interaction, and participation in activities that will engage various communities and increase their interest in agriculture education, research and outreach through -
- Building partnerships with local communities.
- Building partnerships with land grant institutions.
- Reaching out to underrepresented and underserved groups, or
- Pursuing other, similar activities to address this category.

d) Increase NLGCA infrastructure capacity:

Grant funds can be used to support the capacity building of NLGCA institutions through -

- Purchasing equipment that may be used for research or instructional materials.
- Building library collections (including on-line subscription) to keep content knowledge of faculty and build research background of students.
- Supporting professional development for faculty through research sabbaticals, exchange or visiting scientists programs, etc., or
- Pursuing other, similar activities to address this category.

Applications submitted to the NLGCA Program must be **Integrated Project Applications**, meaning that projects must include at least two (2) of the three (3) components of research, education, or outreach. The resulting Integrated Project Application activities shall be interwoven throughout the life of the project, and shall complement and reinforce each other. Authorizing language for this grants program encourages "…members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities to participate in priority education, research, and outreach activities…," therefore, Integrated Project Applications are expected to strengthen the capacity of NLGCA Institutions through close collaboration among one or more of the communities/partners as mentioned above. A NLGCA-funded project must address at least two of the following three **Program Categories: C.1, Education; C.2, Research; or, C.3, Outreach or Applied Projects Category**.

1. <u>Education Program Category</u>:

Applications with an education focus must address at least one of the following, six **Education Need Areas** (C. 1. a- f) listed directly below, <u>and</u> applications must demonstrate how this chosen Need Area will support the legislatively authorized purpose of this program, listed in Part I. B.

Proposed education-focused activities shall support for-credit coursework (academic curriculum), leading to a degree within the broadly defined *food and agricultural sciences* disciplines. Projects shall address a documented issue/problem/challenge in education of national, regional, State, or local interest; be innovative; have potential for adoption by other academic institutions; exhibit broad-based applicability beyond a single course or an individual instructor; have a strong potential for institutionalization; and must be supported by evidence-based studies, publications or practices.

<u>Education Need Areas</u>:

a) Curriculum Design, Materials Development, Library Resources and Instruction Delivery Systems

This Need Area promotes developing new (or adapting existing) curricula and related instructional materials and library resources to meet changes anticipated within the food and agricultural sciences system. Projects shall encourage integration and be multidisciplinary. Learner-centered instructional techniques, or other improvements in teaching and student learning are encouraged, and are expected to demonstrate how the project will reach large audiences efficiently and effectively, provide hands-on learning experiences, extend learning beyond the classroom, reinforce recent research on how to motivate students to learn, retain,

apply, and transfer knowledge, skills, and competencies, and integrate and synthesize knowledge.

The purpose of this Need Area is to enhance the NLGCA Institution's capacity to promote new and improved curricula, instructional materials, and other learning resources to increase the quality of, and continuously renew, curricula in order to attract, recruit, and retain students in the food and agricultural sciences fields. The overall objective is to stimulate the development and use of exemplary education models and materials incorporating the most recent advances in subject matter and research on teaching and learning theory. Projects may emphasize, but are not limited to: the development of courses of study, degree programs, and instructional materials; incorporating alternative instructional methodologies that respond to differences in student learning styles; inter-institutional collaborations that deliver instruction in ways that maximize program quality and reduce unnecessary duplication; the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects; the introduction of new subjects, or new applications of knowledge pertaining to agriscience and agribusiness content. The end goal is to have these activities fully institutionalized so they can be sustained and not just a one-time activity, in order to show impacts on the institution's educational capacity.

The choice for which strategy to employ shall be based on the most current research or studies and references shall be included. Examples of eligible projects in this Education Need Area may include, but are not limited to, the following strategies:

- Designing course content around overarching and unifying concepts, skills and competencies, including innovative ways to integrate scientific research experiences, within the postsecondary curricula;
- Creating model curricula, laboratory, or student research experiences, especially activities that expand students' career interests in the food and agricultural sciences through mentoring or professional shadowing activities, internships or practicums including international learning experiences, visiting lecturers, or other similar experiential learning activities such as hands-on, remote, and virtual laboratories;
- Developing internet-based approaches and systems for multi-institutional delivery and sharing of curriculum content to improve effectiveness and efficiencies; and
- Implementing other approaches to achieve the legislatively authorized purpose of the NLGCA program.

b) Scientific Instrumentation for Teaching and Research

This Need Area is to provide students and faculty in science-oriented courses with suitable, up-to-date equipment in order to involve them in work essential to scientific understanding and progress. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional, laboratory, classroom, and research scientific equipment to help assure the achievement and maintenance of outstanding food and agricultural sciences education programs, upgrading existing equipment, or replacing non-functional or clearly obsolete equipment.

c) Student Recruitment, Retention, and Educational Equity

This Need Area is to enhance educational equity for under-represented students, and to strengthen student recruitment and retention programs in order to promote the future strength of

the Nation's specific, professional, and technical workforce in the food and agricultural sciences. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: initiating new projects or supplementing current efforts to attract increased number of students from under-represented groups, or communities/collaborators/partners to engage in a robust exchange of ideas on more effective use of the full breadth of the Nation's intellectual resources; agricultural and science literacy program at high school level to attract students to college and careers in the food and agricultural sciences; and, mentoring programs and other initiatives for student retention.

d) Student Experiential Learning

This Need Area is to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs including but not limited to:

- Fostering student experiential learning opportunities where students are placed in team-oriented, problem-solving, decision-making situations in the context of real-world situations. Experiential learning in laboratory research or field-based internships is encouraged, but any activity shall expose students to experiences directly supporting topics within the food and agricultural sciences. Such experiences must: (1) demonstrate how the experience will help meet students' career goals or produce 'society-ready' graduates, and (2) contain an evaluation process—involving the faculty and/or employer or mentor to assure that students meet project objectives;
- Establishing and promoting instructional methodologies to improve students' retention of subject content, develop students' analytical, interpersonal, leadership, communications, problem-solving, computational, and decision-making skills and abilities. These may take the form of undergraduate research opportunities, service learning, case studies, or other experiential learning activities;
- Creating career placement or higher education academic counseling activities, with the expected outcome of encouraging postsecondary graduates to pursue higher degrees, especially those that support the food and agricultural sciences. Also refer to **Leadership Skills Development** mentioned above.

e) Professional Development for Faculty Members

This Need Area promotes postsecondary-focused activities that improve faculty members' teaching competencies and subject matter expertise in order to address emerging student demographic composition and learning styles. Developmental activities may include both formal training and informal continuing education.

The purpose of this Need Area is to enhance the NLGCA Institution's capacity to advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills, in order to better advise and provide students the experience or knowledge that will encourage them to pursue advanced postsecondary degrees in the food and agricultural sciences, or prepare them for the food and agricultural sciences workforce. Training of targeted faculty recipients shall be intentional and relevant to the identified educational needs of the students, who will be the beneficiaries of such faculty development. Proposals may emphasize, but are not limited to: obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications in a discipline supporting the food and agricultural

sciences, expanding competence using innovative technologies and new methods of instructional delivery, or in improving student advising skills.

Any faculty recipient of support must meet the requirements of an eligible participant. The choice for which strategy to employ shall be based on the most current research or studies and references shall be included. Examples of eligible projects in this Education Need Area may include, but are not limited to, the following strategies:

- Developing a self-sustaining model for faculty professional development that better prepares new faculty for teaching careers, or provides retraining for experienced faculty;
- Promoting teaching and advising strategies to increase faculty understanding of how to recruit and retain students, especially within populations and cultures traditionally underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences workforce;
- Developing faculty awareness of the importance of increasing the number, quality and diversity of postsecondary-level students enrolled in agricultural education degree programs, and engaging these students (and/or existing faculty in agricultural education) to more effectively interact with K-14 programs, especially to increase food and agriculture sciences education and career awareness among secondary and two-year postsecondary students and teachers;
- Creating assessments that document student learning outcomes, or that identify conceptual areas or skills particularly challenging to students, followed by appropriate changes in instructional approaches to effectively address these issues;
- Establishing systems that improve student learning across a curriculum, and identifying ways to redesign curricula to meet goals for achieving improved student learning and competencies;
- Integrating current science and pedagogy into the teacher preparation curriculum or professional development program (this may involve actual hands-on research experiences for teachers, and as applicable, may be gained from partner institutions with strong research infrastructure and carried out as a summer sabbatical);
- Exploring Internet-based approaches for faculty professional development; or
- Supporting other approaches to achieve the legislatively authorized purpose of the NLGCA program.

f) Collaborative Interaction with Other Academic Institutions

This Need Area promotes postsecondary-focused activities and linkages between secondary, two-year postsecondary, and/or baccalaureate degree-granting institutions to maximize the development and use of resources supporting instruction within the food and agricultural sciences.

The purpose of this Need Area is to enhance the NLGCA institution's capacity to promote partnerships with secondary, two-year postsecondary, or other postsecondary academic institutions to support postsecondary instruction (i.e., providing coursework targeted at undergraduate students, but that may also be available for advanced placement credit for secondary students; for transfer credit from associate-degree programs into baccalaureate-level programs; or for postsecondary faculty development that includes research sabbaticals). The intent of these activities is to encourage and facilitate transfer and matriculation into

postsecondary programs within the food and agricultural sciences. Emphasis between secondary and higher education institutions may focus on, but is not limited to, the development and use of articulation agreements, 2+2 or 2+2+2 arrangements, advanced placement credit transfer, or the sharing of faculty and facilities. Partnerships, collaborative arrangements and shared resources between institutions (including course credit sharing arrangements) are encouraged.
Projects shall contribute to the academic community's understanding about how new strategies are transferred to diverse settings and about how they impact student learning. Evaluation plans shall explore opportunities for adapting new strategies in diverse educational settings. Projects that specifically address challenges to achieving widespread adoption of proven practice are especially encouraged.

The choice for which strategy to employ shall be based on the most current research or studies and references shall be included. Examples of eligible projects in this Education Need Area may include, but are not limited to, the following strategies:

- A project that focuses on developing and implementing comprehensive, multi-institutional practices proven to recruit and retain K-14 level graduates, with a focus on cultivating those students to pursue a postsecondary degree (**Note: NLGCA grant funding <u>may not</u> be used to provide student scholarships or other tuition-remission activity**);
- A collaborative project between faculty from K-12, two-year postsecondary, and baccalaureate-level schools that develops a functional plan facilitating seamless transfer of course credit between institutions;
- An activity promoting faculty exchanges to help update course content or to encourage increased, hands-on student research experiences;
- A pilot project that explores the practical aspects of using remote laboratories; moving research into the classroom; or instruction among several institutions;
- A program to reduce duplication of similar educational resources across institutions and to increase instructional efficiencies. Examples may include multi-institutional or interstate approaches to curriculum development, faculty sharing, cross enrollments, joint degrees, regionalization of academic programs, regional and national workshops and symposia, and similar methodologies;
- A project to establish and implement programs or procedures (faculty sharing, articulation agreements, electronic exchange of coursework, etc.) to disseminate curricula, instructional methods, or training practices to faculty across the state or region; or
- Other approaches to achieve the legislatively authorized purpose of this program.

2. <u>Research Program Category</u>:

Applications with a research focus must address at least one of the following two **Research Need Areas** (C. 2. a-b) listed directly below, <u>and</u> applications must demonstrate how this chosen Need Area will support the legislatively authorized purpose of this program, listed in Part I. B. Projects shall address a demonstrated, documented issue/problem/challenge in research of national, regional, State, or local interest within the broadly defined food and agricultural sciences.

Either **Research Need Area** may encourage graduate assistantships. Such student learning opportunities shall emphasize team-oriented, problem-solving, decision-making situations in the context of addressing real-world research experiences. Experiential learning in laboratory research or other internships with business and industry, community organizations, federal agencies and other domains that provide knowledge and skills for graduate study shall be given priority. Projects addressing graduate assistantships must: (1) demonstrate how the experience will produce qualified and well trained graduates, (2) contain an evaluation process involving both the faculty or mentor to assure that students meet project objectives, and (3) document that the field of science under consideration is experiencing a shortage of scientific and professional personnel, and how the project plans to address this deficiency. Individual students may be supported under this experiential learning opportunity for up to three (3) years (including summers, semesters, or semester breaks). Requested grant funds may be used as stipends for students while they are working in research/field settings. (**However, a NLGCA grant may not fund student scholarships or other tuition-remission activity**). Students shall be required to prepare written and oral summaries of the experiential learning gained through this opportunity. To attract high-caliber students, stipends should be competitive with alternative employment options. A modest amount of funds may be requested for materials/supplies to facilitate a student's broad exposure to research/field techniques and methodologies. Grant recipients are encouraged to take advantage of any related paid internship opportunities provided by state, county, federal, business and industry sources.

Research Need Areas:

a) Studies and Experimentation in Food and Agricultural Sciences

The purpose of this Need Area (or initiative) is to advance the body of knowledge within the food and agricultural sciences. Projects addressing this Need Area are encouraged to focus on multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research activities addressing critical issues rather than single, discipline-specific research studies.

Examples of studies and experiments considering integrated or multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary research activities that address this Research Need Area include, but not limited to:

- Conceiving, designing, and evaluating new bio-processing techniques for eliminating undesirable constituents from, or adding desirable ones to, food products;
- Developing bio-energy/fuel alternatives;
- Conducting plant or animal breeding programs to develop higher yielding and improved quality products and improved disease resistance;
- Proposing and evaluating methods to enhance utilization of the capabilities and resources of food and agricultural institutions to promote rural development (e.g., exploitation of new technologies by small rural businesses);
- Identifying control factors that influence consumer demand for agricultural products;
- Analyzing social, economic, and physiological aspects of nutrition and health, food choices, and life-style choices, and community strategies for meeting the changing needs of different population groups;

- Advancing the body of knowledge in highly important scientific, food and agriculture program areas such as human nutrition, food safety, sustainable agriculture, global climate change, natural resources management and the environment, biotechnology and genomics, newly developed research areas such as proteomics, metabolimics, nanotechnology, pharmaceutical qualities of medicinal plants, agribusiness management and marketing, integrated pest management, and the human sciences.
- Addressing other research areas of critical need within the food and agricultural sciences.

b) Centralized Research Support Systems

The purpose of this Need Area is to establish centralized research support systems that: (1) meet national needs or serve regions of NLGCA institutions; or (2) provide research support more economically, thereby freeing up resources for other research uses. Examples of projects that address this Research Need Area include, but are not limited to:

- Storing, maintaining, characterizing, evaluating and enhancing germplasm for use by animal and plant breeders, including those using the techniques of biotechnology;
- Establishing computerized data banks of important scientific information (e.g., human nutrition, epidemiological, demographic, weather, economic, crop yields);
- Establishing expert service centers for sophisticated and highly specialized methodologies (e.g., evaluation of organoleptic and nutritional quality of foods, toxicology, taxonomic identifications, consumer preferences demographics, and efficacy of medicinal plants);
- Enhancing technology and instrumentation for research and instruction; and
- Supporting other approaches to achieve the legislatively authorized purpose of this program.

3. <u>Outreach or Applied Projects Category</u>:

In addition to the Education and Research Need Areas, applications may choose to develop studies that have relevancy and application within the communities that these institutions serve. Outreach or Applied Projects Category applications must demonstrate how this chosen Need Area will support the legislatively authorized purpose of this program, listed in Part I. B.

a) Applied Studies in the Food and Agricultural Sciences

The purpose of this Need Area is to apply the body of knowledge in those natural and social sciences that comprise the food and agricultural sciences to address real-world problems, including applied research activities focusing on community and economic development issues related to food, nutrition, conservation, and renewable natural resources. Illustrative examples, include, but are not limited to:

- Conduct plant or animal breeding programs to develop better crops, forests, or livestock (e.g., more disease resistant, more productive, yielding higher quality products);

- Conceive, design, and evaluate new bio-processing techniques for eliminating undesirable constituents from or adding desirable ones to food products;

- Propose and evaluate ways to enhance utilization of the capabilities and resources of NLGCA institutions to promote rural development (e.g. exploitation of new technologies by small rural businesses);

- Identify control factors influencing consumer demand for agricultural products;

- Analyze social, economic, and physiological aspects of nutrition, housing, and lifestyle choices, and of community strategies for meeting the changing needs of different population groups; and,

- Study other identified State, regional, community, national and global problems such as human nutrition and obesity prevention, sustainable agriculture, bio-energy, climate change, food safety, food security, biotechnology, agribusiness management and marketing, and aquaculture (see Part I.B on areas of priorities).

b) Applied Research Support Systems

The purpose of this Need Area is to establish centralized support systems to meet State, regional, or community needs, or serve clientele that cannot otherwise afford or no not have ready access to the support in question, or to provide such support more economically thereby freeing up resources for other applied research uses. Examples include, but are not limited to:

(i) Storage, maintenance, characterization, evaluation, and enhancement of germplasm for use by animal and plant breeders (including those using the techniques of biotechnology):

(ii) Computerized data banks of important scientific information (e.g., epidemiological, demographic, nutrition, weather, economic, crop yields, animal migration patterns); and,

(iii) Expert service centers for sophisticated and highly specialized methodologies (e.g., evaluation of nutritional quality of foods, toxicology, taxonomic identifications, consumer preferences and demographics).

c) Technology-based Information Delivery Systems

The purpose of this Need Area is to promote innovations and improvements in the delivery of benefits of food and agricultural sciences to producers and consumers, particularly those who are currently disproportionately low in receipt of such benefits. Examples include, but are not limited to:

(i) Computer-based decision support systems to assist small-scale farmers, ranchers, herders, or fishermen to take advantage of relevant technologies, programs, policies, etc.; and,

(ii) Efficacious delivery systems for nutrition information or for resource management assistance for low income families and individuals.

d) Other Applied Research and Community Development Applications

The purpose of this Need Area is to encourage other creative projects, outside areas previously outlined, that are designed to provide needed enhancement to the capacity of NLGCA institutions to conduct applied research and related community development projects.

Outreach Need Areas:

Applications with an outreach focus must address at least one of the following six **Outreach Need Areas** (C. 3. a-f) listed directly below, and applications must demonstrate how this chosen Need Area will support legislatively authorized purpose of this program listed in Part I. B. Outreach-focused projects generally result in a primary, target beneficiary consisting of individuals and communities outside of a formal, academic program setting. Projects shall address a demonstrated, documented issue/problem/challenge in outreach of national, regional, State, or local interest within the broadly defined food and agricultural sciences.

a) 4-H, or Other, Similar Youth Development Activity
The purpose of this Need Area is to cultivate important life skills in youth that build character and assist them in making appropriate life and career choices. At-risk youth targeted in such projects shall be encouraged to participate in academic retention and enrichment programs.

b) **Food and Agricultural Sciences**
The purpose of this Need Area is to increase research and educational programs that help individuals learn new ways to produce income through alternative enterprises, to improve marketing strategies and management skills, and to assist farmers, ranchers, and foresters to improve productivity through sound resource management strategies, including controlling crop pests, soil testing, livestock production practices, and marketing.

c) **Leadership Development**
The purpose of this Need Area is to train outreach professionals and volunteers to deliver programs in agriculture, gardening, health and safety, family and consumer issues, and to support Agriculture in the Classroom, 4-H youth development, or other similar programs that encourage greater involvement and leadership roles within the community.

d) Natural Resources
The purpose of this Need Area is to inform landowners and homeowners how to use natural resources wisely and to protect the environment with educational programs in water quality, timber management, composting, lawn waste management, and recycling.

e) Human, Family and Consumer Sciences
The purpose of this Need Area is to help families become resilient and healthy by teaching nutrition, food preparation skills, positive child care, parenting, family communication, financial management, and health care strategies.

f) Community and Economic Development

The purpose of this Need Area is to assist local governments, community, and non-profit organizations to investigate and create viable options for economic and community development, such as improved job creation and retention, small- and medium-sized business development, effective and coordinated emergency response, solid waste disposal, tourism development, workforce education, and land-use planning, as well as to help with the development of small family owned businesses.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for support of this program in FY 2015 is approximately $4 million. The funds will be awarded through a grant. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

Awards issued as a result of this RFA will have designated the Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Financial Management Service, as the payment system for funds. For more information see http://fms.treas.gov/index1.html.

B. Types of Applications

Applications may only be submitted as:

(1) New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the NLGCA Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

(2) Resubmitted application. This is a project application that had previously been submitted to the NLGCA Program but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

Applicants may submit one of the following four types of projects:

1. Conference/Planning Proposal

Applicants in this Project Type may request up to $30,000 (total conference, not per year) to facilitate strategic planning session(s) required of faculty, industry, professional association, community leaders, or other necessary participants for the specific purpose of developing a formal plan leading to a subsequent submission of either a Joint, or a Large-scale (state or regional) comprehensive initiatives (LCI), Project Proposal, as described directly below in C.3. or C.4. **A Conference/Planning grant application may not be submitted in the same year for which a Joint or LCI application for the same project is also submitted.**

2. Regular Project Proposal (Single Institution/Organization)

Applicants may request up to $150,000 (total, not per year) for a Regular Project Proposal. In a Regular Project Proposal, the applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

3. Joint Project Proposal (Applicant + <u>One</u> or more Partners)
Applicants may request <u>up to $300,000</u> (total, not per year) for a Joint Project Proposal. In a Joint Project Proposal, the applicant executes the project with assistance from at least one additional partner. The partner(s) must share grant funds (see explanation of required funds distribution percentage among partners in the definition of a Joint Project Proposal in Part VIII, E.). [Note: This 'Joint Project Proposal' Project Type may be dropped entirely in future NLGCA grant competitions and replaced by the Large-scale (state or regional) comprehensive initiatives (LCI) described directly below in item C.4.]

4. Large-scale (state or regional) comprehensive initiatives (LCI) (Applicant + <u>Two</u> or more Partners)

Applicants may request <u>up to $750,000</u> (total, not per year) for a large-scale (state or regional) comprehensive initiative (LCI) Project Proposal. In a LCI Project Proposal, the applicant executes the project with assistance from at least two additional partners. Additional partners must share grant funds (see explanation of required funds distribution percentage among partners in the definition of a LCI Project Proposal in Part VIII, E.). An LCI project differs from a *Joint Project Proposal* in project scope and impact. LCI Project Proposals must support a multi-partner approach to solving a major state or regional challenge facing the agricultural sciences at the postsecondary level. LCI Project Proposals are characterized by multiple partners (each providing a specific expertise) organized and led by a strong applicant with documented project management ability to organize and carry out the initiative.

Note: LCI Projects must include both the R&R Budget and the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment Forms. The forms shall clearly identify the total grant funding anticipated for the applicant and each partner to demonstrate the required sharing percentage. All expenditures for the applicant and all partners shall be further itemized in the Budget Justification. LCI Project Proposal funds do not have to be divided equally among project years, nor do they need to be divided equally among project partners.

Impacts for all LCI Projects: In addition to addressing the Evaluation Plan section of this program expected impacts from a LCI Project must include, but are not limited to:

- An assessment of significant progress toward addressing the national challenge of increasing the number of under-represented students and the diversity of food and agriculture sciences graduates, while addressing the specific state or regional opportunity defined in the grant application;

- Documented expansion of the number of students who enroll in postsecondary courses in the food or agricultural sciences disciplines;

- Documented enhanced retention rates of students exposed to LCI Project activities;

- A comprehensive project evaluation, with indicators and methods defined in this grants program, which informs the undergraduate food and agriculture sciences community and others about the effectiveness of this LCI Project. (Please refer to

Part V.B. for specific details regarding Evaluation Criteria and the Part VIII.F – Logic Model.);

- A description of completed or ongoing activities supported by this LCI Project, and a description of those same activities that will be sustained once grant funds end; and

- A description of any related activities expected to occur as an outgrowth of this funded project.

D. Project Duration

Project periods may range from twenty-four (24) to thirty-six (36) months. Projects shall conclude no sooner than twenty-four (24) months after the award start date to allow the applicant sufficient time to evaluate the results and report the impacts. LCI projects are expected to use the full, 36-month period. Conference projects may range between twenty-four (24) and thirty-six (36) months. The statutory limitation for this program is five (5) years.

E. Number and Size of Grant Awards

The number of grants awarded in FY 2015 will depend on the number and type of meritorious applications submitted in response to this notice. Based on the project scope and budget of all applications selected for awards, the actual, individual grant amounts awarded by NIFA under this grants program may differ from the funds requested by the applicant. In such cases, applicants may be required by NIFA to submit revised budgets and revised plans of work before an award is made.

F. Application Submission & Award Limitations

NLGCA applicants may submit (as the lead applicant) any number of applications in response to this RFA; however, your institution will be limited to a maximum of two (2) grant awards, as the lead (applicant) institution. Your institution may participate in any number of NLGCA-funded projects as a partner institution in any given year.

G. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

The responsible and ethical conduct of research (RCR) is critical for excellence, as well as public trust, in science and engineering. Consequently, we consider education in RCR essential to the preparation of future scientists. 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. Per award terms and conditions, grant recipients shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training.

Note that the training referred to herein shall be either on-campus or off-campus training. The general content of the ethics training will, at a minimum, emphasize three key areas of research ethics: authorship and plagiarism, data and research integration, and reporting misconduct. Each institution will be responsible for developing its own training system, as schools will need flexibility to develop training tailored to their specific student needs. Grantees should consider the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program for RCR (https://www.citiprogram.org/rcrpage.asp). Typically this RCR education addresses the topics of: Data Acquisition and Management - collection, accuracy, security, access; Authorship and Publication; Peer Review; Mentor/Trainee Responsibilities; Collaboration; Conflict of Interest; Research Misconduct; Human Subject Research; and Use of Animals in Research.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by a Non-Land Grant College of Agriculture (NLGCAs) certified as such by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. In order for an institution to qualify as a NLGCA, it must be a public college or university offering a baccalaureate or higher degree in the study of food and agricultural sciences, as defined in 7 U.S.C. 3103(9). A list of NLGCA's certified by NIFA can be found on the NIFA website. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply to this grants program, providing such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

Section 7101 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 required NIFA to establish a process through which institutions may apply for designation as a NLGCA. To request that NIFA provide certification of NLGCA status, an Authorized Representative must go to: http://www.nifa.usda.gov/webform/request-non-land-grant-university-designation and complete a web-based form indicating the institution meets the qualifications. Within 30 days of submission, NIFA will provide the administrative point of contact specified on the request, with a certification of NLGCA designation or a response indicating why the request for certification is being denied. **You must attach this certification to your application in order to be eligible to apply (see Part IV, B, 3. Field 12).**

Additionally, section 7101 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113-79), amended 7 U.S.C. 3103 to allow Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs) and State-certified non-land grant institutions eligible to receive funds under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act of 1962 to opt out of their respective designation to qualify as Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture. Please see the Federal Register Notice published on May 22, 2014 for more information (https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/05/22/2014-11851/process-for-non-land-grant-college-of-agriculture-nlgca-designation).

Institutions that are eligible to receive funds under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program and did not opt out of that status by April 30, 2015, will not be eligible to request designation as NLGCA and submit applications in response to this RFA.

For the purposes of this program, the individual branches of a college or university that are separately accredited as degree-granting institutions as indicated per the **Official List of Certified Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture** (Updated: April 27, 2015 as indicated above) are treated as separate institutions, and are therefore eligible to apply for NLGCA Program awards. Separate branches or campuses of a college or university that are not individually accredited as degree-granting institutions are not treated as separate institutions, and are therefore not eligible to submit an application. Accreditation must be conferred by an agency or association recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

NIFA does not require matching support for this grants program and matching resources will not be factored in the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA. We urge you to submit early to the Grants.gov system. For an overview of the Grants.gov application process see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/grant-application-process.html.

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, we recommend that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR, also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If not (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed **PRIOR** to submitting an application. It can take as long as 2 weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations, the AR should go to **"Register" in the top right corner of the Grants.gov web page (or go to** http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/register.html**) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov.** Item 2. below mentions the "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide." Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains additional explanatory language regarding the registration process.

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

To receive application materials:

1. You must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov to access, complete, and submit applications. For basic system requirements and download instructions, see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support/technical-support/software/adobe-reader-compatibility.html. Grants.gov has a test package that will help you determine whether your current version of Adobe Reader is compatible.

2. To obtain the application package from Grants.gov, go to http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html. Under Step 1 click on "Download a Grant Application Package," and enter the funding opportunity number

   Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-NLGCA-005175

   in the appropriate box and click "Download Package." From the search results, click "Download" to access the application package.

   Contained within the application package is the "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide." This guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If you require assistance to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms) **or submitting the application,** refer to resources available on the Grants.gov website (http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-resources.html). Grants.gov assistance is also available at:

Grants.gov customer support
800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on federal holidays.
Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov iPortal (see https://grants-portal.psc.gov/Welcome.aspx?pt=Grants)
Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self-service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7:00am - 9 p.m. ET). Get help now!

Have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of agency you are applying to
- Specific area of concern

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

You should prepare electronic applications following Parts V and VI of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., PDF) in Part III section 3. of the guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (e.g., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Grants.gov does not check for NIFA required attachments or that attachments are in PDF format; see Part III section 6.1 of the guide for how to check the manifest of submitted files. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. We will accept subsequent submissions of an application until close of business on the closing date in the RFA (see Part V, 2.1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further information).

For any questions related to the preparation of an application, review the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide and the applicable RFA. If assistance is still needed for preparing application forms content, contact:

- Email: electronic@nifa.usda.gov
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. ET, excluding Federal holidays.

1. SF 424 (R&R) Cover Sheet
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V. 2.of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Complete all applicable fields. The following, additional information may be helpful:

Field 5. Applicant Information – This must be the legal name of the eligible college or university (See Part III. A, Eligible Applicant). Official correspondence will be directed to either the Project Director (Field 14) or the Authorized Representative (Field 19).

Field 8. Type of Application – Only 'New' or 'Resubmitted' applications are permitted.

Field 12. Proposed Project Start Date and End Date – A project's duration shall normally be at least 24 months (to allow time for assessment and evaluation) and no more than 36 months, which represents the statutory time limit.

Field 15. Estimated Project Funding –
Total Federal Funds Requested = Amount of Federal funds being requested for support of this project (See Part II. C. for maximum award amounts permitted). Lines 15a.and 15c.should be the same dollar amount.

Field 20. Pre-application – Not applicable to the NLGCA Program. No attachments needed.

2. R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V. 3.of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4.of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. The following is additional information to assist in the completion of the fields. **Complete all applicable fields. Note: If a 'Yes' response is provided for Fields 1, 2, or 4.a, the applicant may need to provide additional information prior to an award being made (e.g., if IRB or IACUC approval is pending at time of application then the approval information would be necessary prior to award).**

Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)
Include the following underlined text along with your responses:

- List the Project Title;
- List the Project Director (and any) Co-Project Director(s) (include institutional affiliation for each);
- List your project's two (2) Program Categories: (see Part I, C.1. through 3.); and within each of the two, selected Program Categories, further identify at least one Need Area; and
- List your project's *primary* Discipline Code/Academic Discipline: (Select one from the list below):

Discipline Codes & Academic Discipline

G - General Food, agricultural and human sciences (includes multidisciplinary projects)
M - Agribusiness (includes Management, Marketing, and Agricultural Economics)
E - Agriscience (includes Agricultural/Biological Engineering)
S - Agricultural Social Sciences (includes Agricultural Education, Agricultural Communications, and Rural Sociology)
A - Animal Sciences
Q - Aquaculture
C - Conservation and Renewable Natural Resources (includes Forestry)
J - Entomology – Animal
T - Entomology – Plant
L - Environmental Sciences/Management
F - Food Science/Technology and Manufacturing
N - Human Nutrition
H - Human Sciences/Family and Consumer Sciences (excludes Human Nutrition)
I - International Education/Research (enhancement of U.S. programs)
P - Plant Sciences and Horticulture
B - Related Biological Sciences (includes General/Basic Biotechnology, Biochemistry, and Microbiology)
D - Soil Sciences
V - Veterinary Medicine/Science
W - Water Science
O - Other (Describe only if not listed above)

- Joint or LCI Project Proposal: Yes or No? (If 'Yes', specify if 'Joint' or 'LCI' Project Application. See 'Definitions', Part VIII. E.);
- Partners: If Joint or LCI Project Proposal, list all partner institutions/organizations that will share grant funding (Note: Each Partner so identified needs to have their budget information submitted on a separate sub award budget attachment – see Part IV B.7.);
- Total Funds Requested: List total Federal funds requested for this application. (If this project is a Joint or LCI Project Proposal, also list each partner's total funds requested next to the institution/organization's name); and
- Summary Text - Provide a very concise (approx. 250 word) summary of your project to include:
  - Purpose: What is the major problem your project will address?
  - Audience: Who are the intended beneficiaries? Who will be impacted?
  - Products: What will be produced?
  - Outcome/Impact: What is the intended result (consequence) of your project? Describe the primary benefits to your audience. Note: outcomes/impacts shall be measurable, and shall be included in your project's assessment/evaluation plan to demonstrate how you will assess whether or not these benefits were achieved (see explanation of terms in Part IV, B. 3. Field 8.2.c., below).

Field 8. Project Narrative – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages of written text (excluding up to a maximum of 5 additional pages for supporting figures and tables). We have established this

maximum (25-page limit) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Project narratives that exceed this page limit requirement will not be accepted for review (no exceptions). Applicants are encouraged to revisit the page numbers after converting the narrative to PDF format and make the necessary adjustments if the required page limit has been exceeded. **Project narratives that exceed this page limit requirement will not be accepted for review.**

The Project Narrative in this Field 8 attachment contains the major description of your project. It follows the NLGCA Program's Evaluation Criteria (Part V. B). Accordingly, please provide your responses in the following format:

(Note: To facilitate application review and evaluation, **include the following, underlined wording as headings in your attached Project Narrative**, followed by your response for each item.)

1. **Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education, Research or Outreach; Significance of the Problem**:

a. Identification of Education, Research or Outreach Problem and Project Impact. Briefly state: (1) the specific problem/challenge (or opportunity) to be addressed within each chosen Program Category; (2) the anticipated project audience; and (3) the project's target objectives (what change in education, research or outreach is proposed?) and its anticipated, overall impact on improving the quality of *food and agricultural sciences* (Note: Your impact shall be a change you can measure at the project's conclusion.). Clearly identify and explain how the proposed project will address your Need Area under the Program Categories described in Part I, C.1.through 3.

b. Project Justification. Describe how and by whom the focus and scope of the project were determined. Summarize the body of knowledge justifying the need for the proposed project. Discuss how the project's Program Categories and Need Areas will be of value at the State, regional, national, or international level(s), and where applicable, how it will advance improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematical capabilities in food and agricultural sciences. Describe any ongoing or recently completed, significant activities related to the proposed project for which previous funding was received under this program.

c. Institutional Long-range Goals. Demonstrate how the institution/organization attributes a high priority to the project; discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution/organization's long-term (five- to ten-year) goals; explain how the project will help satisfy the institution/organization's high-priority objectives, or how the project is linked to and supported by the institution/organization's strategic plan.

d. Innovation. Describe the proposal's creative approach to improving the quality of teaching, research or outreach in the food and agricultural sciences in solving the specified problem. Describe how/why this approach was chosen.

e. Multidisciplinary and/or Problem-based Focus. Indicate how the project is relevant to multiple disciplines in food and agricultural sciences, or with other academic curricula, and how the project will enhance the grant recipient's understanding of complex agricultural systems. Also, discuss whether the project may be adapted by, or serve as a model for, other institutions.

2. **Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages:**

a. Plan of Operation and Methodology. Describe procedures for accomplishing the objectives of the project. Describe plans for management of the project to ensure its proper and efficient administration. Describe the way in which resources and personnel will be used to conduct the project.
b. Timetable. Identify all important project milestones (performance targets that indicate when project goals will be met) and dates as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination, and closeout.
c. Products, Results and Measurable Outcomes. Outline the expected products/results and their outcome (impact) on strengthening education in food and agricultural sciences in the United States. (**Important Note: Make sure to differentiate among the three terms:**
    1. "Products" may be actual items or services acquired with funds, e.g., "…developed three, new Web-based courses";
    2. "Results" are accomplishments related to the products, e.g., "...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours"; and
    3. "Outcomes/Impacts" are the benefits to your audience. Outcomes/impacts are the consequences of your project and the most critical elements in your Evaluation Plan. They are a measure of the results by comparison to what might have happened in the absence of the funded project, e.g., "…an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, Web-based course materials".)

d. Evaluation Plan. State the methodologies to be used in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable outcomes from the project. Discuss the strategies and metrics for evaluating progress toward meeting the legislatively authorized purpose of this program in Part I, B. Describe any data to be collected and analyzed. Demonstrate how the project will improve education. This section shall clearly indicate how you plan to measure outcomes/impacts. (See Part IV.E.2. for details of what is to be included in the Evaluation Plan).

e. Dissemination Plans. The application must document how project accomplishments (e.g. products, results and impacts) will be published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. Discuss the institution/organization's commitment to disseminate project results and products and potential for institutionalization. Identify target audiences and explain methods of communication. This section shall clearly indicate how you plan to publicize your project's outcomes/impacts.

f. Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts. Explain how the project will maximize partnership and collaborative efforts to strengthen education, research, or outreach in the food and agricultural sciences (e.g., involvement of faculty in related disciplines at the same institution, joint or LCI projects with other educational institution/organizations, or cooperative activities with business or industry). Also explain how it will stimulate academia, the States, or the private sector to join with the Federal partner in enhancing food and agricultural sciences education, research, or outreach. Provide evidence, via

letters from the parties involved in the partnership or collaborative arrangement. The letters should be included in Field 12, Other Attachments.

3. **Institution Capability and Capacity Building:**

a. Institution/organizational Commitment and Capability. Demonstrate that the applicant's administration is committed to this project and has the capability to ensure its completion.
b. Institution/organizational Resources. Document how the institution/organizational resources (see Field 10, Facilities and Other Resources) to be made available to the project, when combined with the support requested from USDA will be adequate to carry out the activities of the project.
c. Academic Enhancement. Document how this project will improve and strengthen teaching, research or outreach at the institution (including any partner institution/organizations). Include how any project performance target(s) identified above (item 2.b., Timetable) will be incorporated into institutional procedures. Discuss how the benefits to be derived from the project will transcend the applicant institution/organization or the grant period.
d. Continuation Plans. Discuss the likelihood of, or specific plans for, continuation or expansion of the project beyond the period of USDA support. For example, does the institution/organization's long-range budget or academic plan provide for the realistic continuation or expansion of the initiative undertaken by this project after the grant period ends? Are plans for eventual self-support built into the project? Are plans being made to institutionalize the program if it meets with success? Are there indications of other continuing non-Federal support?

4. **Key Personnel**: Discuss the adequacy, specific attributes, and project responsibilities of each key person associated with the project. Also include the background and qualifications of those personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering the project evaluation and reporting process. Specific roles for each key personnel must be defined to ensure appropriate project leadership and to avoid any duplication of effort.

5. **Budget and Cost-effectiveness**:

a. Budget. In addition to the separate, required budget forms and budget justification, discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed project activities. Explain how such budget items as professional or technical staff time and salary, travel, equipment, etc., are necessary and reasonable to achieve project objectives. Justify that the total budget is allocated adequately between the applicant and any collaborating institution/organization(s), and will be appropriate to carry out the activities of the project.
b. Cost-effectiveness. Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, or leverages additional funds. For example, discuss how the project has the potential to generate a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on a Need Area, or to promote coalition building that could lead to future ventures.

For a **Conference/Planning project type**, in addition to providing responses to any appropriate items listed directly above in Field 8, items 1 through 5, the Project Narrative must also include all of the following:

1) Justification for the meeting;
2) Meetings related to this Conference/Planning application held within the past two years;
3) Names and organizational affiliations of the chairperson and other members of the organizing committee;
4) Proposed program (or agenda for the conference), including a listing of scheduled participants and their institutional affiliations; and
5) Method of announcement or invitation to be used.

Field 9. Bibliography & Cited References - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format) If needed, provide a complete list of all references cited in the application. **For each reference, provide the complete name for each author, the year of the publication, full title of the article, name of the journal or book published, volume, and the page numbers.** The references should be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author.

Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format) Describe the types, location, and availability of instrumentation and physical facilities necessary to carry out the work proposed. **If special academic, private or government laboratories or facilities are being used, include a letter in the application from the authorized representative of the facility describing the proposed arrangements and availability.** Any such letter should be included as a part of Other Attachments, see Field 12 below.

Field 12. Other Attachments - (Must be PDF format) as applicable.

- **Non-Land Grant College of Agriculture (NLGCA) Certification – PDF Attachment.** Applicants claiming exemption from the new matching requirement as NLGCA, must attach the NLGA certification letter they requested and received from NIFA. Title attachment 'NLGCA Certification' and save file as 'NLGCACertification'. To request certifications an NLGCA, complete the form at http://www.nifa.usda.gov/webform/request-non-land-grant-university-designation. Note that certification can take up to 30 days from submission of request form.
- **Response to Previous Review – PDF Attachment. 1 Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Response to Previous Review' in the document header and save file as 'ResponsetoPreviousReview'. This requirement only applies to "Resubmitted Applications" as described under Part II, B., "Types of Applications". PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary. If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.
- **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as 'Appendices' in the document header and save file as 'Appendices'. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations. Such appendices are not part of the 25-page application limit.
- **Collaborative Arrangements – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as 'Collaborative Arrangements' in the document header and save file as

'Collaborative-Arrangement'. If it is necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of the application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support signed by the AR of the consultant/collaborating organization) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.

- **Applications** shall include elements of a **logic model** (see sample at the end of this document) detailing the activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. This information may be provided as a narrative or formatted into a logic model chart. The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used to develop your project **before** writing your proposal. Two additional pages are allowed for this information. See Part IV.B.3 (Field 12) for details on where to attach this information to your application. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process at: http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html.
- **Expected Outcomes – PDF Attachment**
  Title the attachment "Expected Outcomes" in the document header and save file as "ExpectedOutcomes". Use a format similar to what is provided below ***(Recommended Format for Submitting Expected Outcomes*)** to submit expected impacts and attach it as the last page of the application.

Recommended Format for Submitting Expected Impacts

Project Functions: (Choose two)		
EDUCATION: ☐	EXTENSION : ☐	RESEARCH: ☐

DATA FOR NLGCA PROGRAM	
Total expected impact during entire grant period	**Expected Number**
Number of courses, curricula, or instructional methodologies employed	
Number of products to be developed for students through grant funds (i.e., curricula, academic programs, recruitment/retention programs, materials, peer-reviewed journals or articles/publications, patents, experiential learning opportunities, faculty/student conference poster presentations, etc.)	
Number of collaborations to be developed between institutions	
Number of faculty served and attending professional development: sabbaticals, workshops, conferences, etc.	
Number of individuals who indirectly will benefit from the projects (i.e., using the curriculum/instrumentation, enrolled in the program, recruited or retained) e.g., farmer/rancher/community or other stakeholder contacts, youth clubs, etc.	
Total number of students to be directly supported by grant (i.e., scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, internships)	
Number of underrepresented students to be supported during the grant period	
Number of other entities adopting/using products of the research, community contacts, health and wellness activities, etc.	
Number of students who will graduate as a result of the grant during grant period	
Number of students who will complete advanced or additional degree programs as a result of the grant (graduate, professional)	
Number of students who will complete internships and other experiential learning during the grant-period	
Number of students who will complete international experiential learning as a result of this grant	
Number of students who will complete post-doctoral experiences as a result of this grant	

4. R&R Senior/Key Person (Expanded)
Complete all applicable fields. Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- **Current and Pending Support –** See section 5.3 of Part V of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. **Also note that for this proposed project the time commitments stated on the Current and Pending Support should be consistent with the Federal percentage of salary on the budget (e.g., should not be lower).**

5. R&R Personal Data
As noted in Part V, 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award.

6. R&R Budget
Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. Complete all applicable fields. Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions. The following, additional information may be helpful:

Complete one R&R Budget Form for each 12-month period. If your project involves partners with whom you plan to share Federal funds (Joint or LCI Project Proposal), make sure (a) you include a sub award attachment for each project partner (sub award/consortium), for each 12-month period and (b) your budget figures reflect the required budget sharing criteria (See 'Definitions', Part VIII. E, Joint or LCI Project Proposal).

Reasonable travel expenses to attend the Project Director's Conference may be included in the travel expenses (see Part VI D.).

Field H. Indirect Costs – Section 715 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015 (Pub. L. 113-235) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. When preparing budgets, you should limit your request for the recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of your institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded. See Part V section 7.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further indirect cost information.

Field K. Budget Justification – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

(a) Provide a Budget Justification that reflects each 12-month period, plus a cumulative justification for the entire project. If your project involves partners with whom you plan to share Federal funds (Joint or LCI Project Proposal), make sure the attachment reflects information (a) for the applicant institution (each project partner (sub award/consortium), for each 12-month period, plus a cumulative column total for the entire project, and (b) your budget figures reflect the required budget sharing criteria (See 'Definitions', Part VIII. E, *Joint Project Proposal*). Letters of consent or collaboration or other evidence should be provided to show that collaborators have agreed to participate (such letters are to be included in Field 12).

The Budget Justification should follow a standard spreadsheet format ('Budget Line Item' = row; 'Budget Year' and 'Cumulative Project' = columns) including a detailed, itemized breakdown of each of the line item categories reported on the R&R Budget form. This Budget Justification attachment provides a more detailed, itemized breakdown for each budget line item reported on the R&R Budget Form. Items should be justified and include relevance to the project objectives. Include a description for each requested budget line item found on the R&R Budget form (i.e., total budget amount reported on the R&R Budget Form should equal the total budget amount reported on the Budget Justification attachment).

Allowable costs will be determined in accordance with the applicable program legislation, the purpose of the grant award, the terms and conditions for the grant award, and by the following Federal cost principles that are applicable to the type of organization receiving the award, regardless of the type of award or tier (i.e., prime awardee, sub award) as are in effect at the time of the award.

(b) **Matching:** See Part III B.

7. R&R Subaward Budget Attachment

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 8. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. **(Only required if submitting a LCI or Joint Project Proposal)**

8. Supplemental Information

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Field 2. Program Code -

For the 'Program Code Name' field, enter:

"**Capacity Building Grants for Non Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture**"

For the 'Program Code' field, enter: "**NLGCA**"

Field 8. Conflict of Interest List - (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

See format in NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, Section VI, 1.8, for instructions and a link to a suggested template. Include this one-page attachment even if your responses to the requested information are "N.A.".

C. Submission Dates and Times

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time** on **June 26, 2015**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. **Applicants who have problems with the submission of an application to Grants.gov are encouraged to FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV. A. for Grants.gov contact information.**

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received a confirmation message from NIFA within 30 days of the established deadline, please contact the Agency Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA 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, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Consistent with other competitive grant programs, NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for student tuition remission, on-campus room and board, academic fees or other financial assistance (no scholarships or fellowships). Also, funds may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment (e.g., equipment that is unmovable or unusable if detached) in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities (i.e., no greenhouses, laboratories, barns, or other structures). Promotional items (e.g., T-shirts and other give-a-ways) and food functions (e.g., cookouts or other social meal gatherings) are considered 'entertainment' expenses, and are, therefore, also ***not allowed*** under this grants program.

A teacher or student recipient receiving Federal funds from this grants program must be an *eligible participant.* Where eligibility is claimed under 8 U.S.C. 1101(a) (22), documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to NIFA upon request.

See Field H. under Part IV B. 6. for indirect cost limitations.

E. Other Submission Requirements

1. **The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV, section 1.9 in the document entitled "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide."**

   For information about the **status of a submitted application**, see Part III., section 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

2. **Evaluation Plan**
   All projects, regardless of the scope or program component they address, must have an evaluation plan as part of the Project Narrative (see Part IV, B.3., Field 8, 2.d.). The evaluation plan must include both a strategy for monitoring the project as it evolves (to provide feedback to guide these efforts), as well as a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the project in achieving its goals and for identifying positive and negative findings when the project is completed.

a) Legislatively authorized purpose of this program. An evaluation plan that only indicates a desire to develop assessment measures once the project is underway, and an eventual description of resulting project activities and outcomes, would be considered a poorly prepared and inadequate evaluation plan.

b) The project budget shall contain funding to either hire an outside project evaluator, or to present convincing evidence that an appropriate evaluator is already on staff and available to provide assistance with assessment and evaluation throughout the life of the project. As a guide, up to 10 percent of grant funds may be used to support this purpose. The following activities are examples of items that may be included in the Evaluation Plan: project objectives that lend themselves most readily to measurement and evaluation, baseline assessment data and a planned collection process from a possible comparison or control group, possible measurement instruments (surveys, student journals, standardized tests, interviews, focus groups, analysis of e-portfolios or capstone projects, cost-benefit analyses, etc.), a strategy for what assessment measures will be a part of the annual and final Project Performance Reports (Part VI. D.), and how this information will eventually be disseminated to interested parties and to the public.

c) Finally, the Evaluation Plan itself shall contain measures of 1. **student/faculty or other stakeholder learning and engagement** and 2.the **number of students/faculty or other stakeholders impacted by your project as a result of the proposed activities,** either directly (through stipends, experiential learning opportunities, workshops, teaching experiences, etc.) or indirectly (through taking a developed course or program, or participating in a recruitment or retention program). In addition, the PD shall specify metrics summarizing who benefited the most (and the least) from your project, an explanation of what revisions, improvements, or enhancements you would make, funding permitting, to increase the value of this project in the future, and ideas about how to make projects like yours more cost-effective. The final project assessments shall be reported both annually and in the final performance report (Part VI. D.). The following, suggested evaluation examples are derived from the Department of Education's Report of the Academic Competitiveness Council, May 2007, Federal STEM Goals and Metrics, Education Undergraduate National Goals and Metrics.

To demonstrate progress toward increasing the quality of instruction, the following metric is suggested: first **provide baseline data** for the year preceding the grant award showing the current number and/or percentage of graduates who either graduate and pursue a vocation in the food and agricultural sciences, or who pursue advanced degrees within the food and agricultural sciences; and second, provide similar data for the final year of the grant and include an assessment of the impact of your project on changes from the baseline data.

Suggested resources to obtain quantitative, baseline, student enrollment, degrees granted and employment data for comparison purposes; postsecondary institutions may find appropriate information in the Food and Agricultural Education Information System (FAEIS) at: http://faeis.ahnrit.vt.edu/, and from the publication: *Employment Opportunities for College*

Graduates in Food, Renewable Energy, and the Environment United States, 2010-2015 at: http://www.ag.purdue.edu/usda/employment/pages/default.aspx. Other, similar source(s) may also be consulted.

Suggested Resources for Project Evaluation:

- Department of Education's Report of the Academic Competitiveness Council, May 2007, Federal STEM Goals and Metrics, Education Undergraduate National Goals and Metrics.
- NSF 02-057: The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation, a basic guide to quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods for educational projects http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm.
- Field-Tested Learning Assessment Guide (FLAG): This website is designed for Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology Instructors who are interested in new approaches to evaluating student learning, attitudes, and performance. It has a primer on assessment and evaluation, classroom assessment techniques, discipline-specific tools, and resources - all in a searchable, downloadable database, copy and paste the link into an address bar on Internet Explorer http://www.flaguide.org/.
- American Evaluation Association. Online Resources (http://www.eval.org/resources.asp)
- For resources to obtain quantitative, baseline, student enrollment, degrees granted, and employment data for comparison purposes, postsecondary institutions may find appropriate information in the Food and Agriculture Education Information System (FAEIS) at: http://faeis.ahnrit.vt.edu/, and from the publication: *Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Renewable Energy, and the Environment United States, 2010-2015* at: http://www.ag.purdue.edu/usda/employment/pages/default/aspx. Other similar sources may also be consulted.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

We evaluate each application in a 2-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, a technical review panel will evaluate applications that meet the administrative requirements.

We select reviewers based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) 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; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers 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; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

When each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of **NLGCA** will recommend that the project: (a) be approved for support from currently available funds or (b) be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

NLGCA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or with 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.

B. Evaluation Criteria

We will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

Potential for Advancing Quality of Education, Research or Outreach/Significance of the Problem (25 points). This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences education, research or outreach, by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, and potential for adoption by other institutions and contribution to current body of knowledge in areas addressed. The proposed project must also show how it will contribute to the legislatively authorized purpose of this program. Potential project impacts must be stated.

2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages (30 points). This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, project evaluation, and dissemination plans. The project evaluation plan should state the methodologies to be used in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable outcomes from the project. The approach must be based on sound research concepts and educational principles and may be documented through background literature or actual institutional data. Emphasis is placed on the quality of education, research or outreach support provided to the applicant institution/organization through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project. Any perceived pitfalls and alternative strategies or approaches should be addressed. A thorough evaluation plan must be included that includes both a strategy for monitoring the project as it evolves (to provide feedback to guide these efforts), as well as a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the project in achieving its goals and for identifying positive and negative findings when the project is completed.

3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building (20 points). This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its teaching, research or outreach capacity. Elements include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic or research enhancement, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support. Level of institutional data provided to show the institution's ability to support the proposed project.

4. Key Personnel (15 points). This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number, qualifications and expertise of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts and the dissemination of these findings.

5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (10 points). This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority education, research or outreach.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, we take extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, we determine the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 1801 Robert Fulton Drive, Suite 340, Reston, VA, 20191. Phone: (888) 349-7715. Web site: http://www.hepinc.com.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, are kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process, to the extent permitted by law; therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one-time basis, with updates on an as needed basis. This requirement is part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. We will provide you copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, 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 involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the NIFA awarding official shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant shall 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 RFA 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 at 7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E.

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to which the Administrator has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;

(2) Title of project;

(3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;

(4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;

(5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;

(6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;

(7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;

(8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;

(9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to the ones listed below.

2 CFR Part 25, “Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration”

2 CFR Part 170, “Reporting Subaward and Executive Compensation Information”

2 CFR Part 175, “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”

2 CFR Part 180, “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement)”

2 CFR Part 182, “Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”

2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”

2 CFR Part 400, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards”

2 CFR Part 415, “General Program Administrative Regulations”

2 CFR Part 416, “General Program Administrative Regulations for Grants Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”

2 CFR Part 417, “Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension”

2 CFR Part 418, “New Restrictions on Lobbying”

2 CFR Part 421, “Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3407—USDA procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

7 CFR 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Financial Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions.

NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide—a compendium of basic NIFA policies and procedures that apply to all NIFA awards, unless there are statutory, regulatory, or award-specific requirements to the contrary.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in federally-assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in federally-assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

44 U.S.C. 3541 et seq. (Pub. L. 107-347) - Federal Information System Security Management Act of 2002 (FISMA), to improve computer and network security within the Federal Government. Applies to awardees if it will collect, store, process, transmit, or use information on behalf of NIFA.

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions (see http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html for information about NIFA award terms). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those, if any, will be identified in the award.

1. Project Directors Conference

During the tenure of a grant, Project Director(s) may be invited to attend at least one national Project Directors meeting, if offered, in Washington, D.C., or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, future directions for education reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in your proposal's travel expenses.

2. Annual Performance Report

An Annual Performance Report must be submitted within 90 days after the completion of the first year of the project, and annually thereafter during the life of the grant. Generally, the Annual Performance Reports shall include a summary of the overall progress toward meeting

project objectives, current problems or unusual developments, the next year's activities, progress assessing outcomes as part of the project Evaluation Plan (Part I. C. 3.), and any other information that is pertinent to the ongoing project or which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award. Annual project reports must contain data to document the outputs and outcomes and will need to be collected by the grantee. A specific format for these reports will be provided on an annual basis by NIFA.

3. Final Performance Report

A Final Performance Report must be submitted within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The expiration date is specified in the award documents and modifications thereto, if any. Generally, the Final Performance Report shall be a summary of the completed project, to include results of the project Evaluation Plan (Part I. C. 3.), a review of project objectives and accomplishments; a description of any products and outcomes resulting from the project; activities undertaken to disseminate products and outcomes; partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from the project; future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project; the impact of the project on the Project Director(s), students, the departments, the institution, and the food, agricultural and human sciences higher education system; and data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The report must document how project accomplishments (products, results and impacts, etc.) have been published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. The Final Performance Report should be accompanied by samples or copies of any products or publications resulting from or developed by the project. The Final Performance Report also must contain any other information which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award. A specific format for the final report will be provided by NIFA. Further, PDs are advised to refer to Part IV of the RFA for examples of expected impacts to be reported.

PART VII - AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Dr. Saleia Afele-Faamuli; National Program Leader; Division of Community and Education; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; STOP 2251; 1400 Independence Ave, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2251; Telephone: (202) 720-0384; Fax: (202) 720-2030; E-mail: sfaamuli@nifa.usda.gov.

Administrative/Business Contacts –

Duane Alphs; Team Leader, Team II, Section II; Office of Grants and Financial Management; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Stop 2201 Washington, DC 20250-2201; telephone: (202) 401-4326; fax: (202) 401-6271; email dalphs@nifa.usda.gov.

Rochelle McCrea; Team Leader, Team I; Office of Grants and Financial Management; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; STOP 2271 Washington, DC 20250-2271; telephone: (202) 401-2880; fax: (202) 401-6271; email: rmccrea@nifa.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

We will send copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. 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.

2. Changes in Project Plans

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all changes in approved goals or objectives prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests be approved for changes that are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel, prior to effecting such changes.

d. The awardee must request, and the ADO must approve in writing, all transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not federal funds are involved, prior to instituting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed any applicable statutory limit or expiring appropriation limitation. The terms and conditions of award include information about no-cost extensions of the award and when ADO’s prior approval is necessary.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes, if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of

amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of NIFA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

This program is excluded from the scope of the 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.

E. Definitions

Please refer to 7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions, for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program. The following are additional definitions that apply to this program.

Agriculture, renewable resources, and other similar disciplines means -specifically for this NLGCA Program- those *food and agricultural sciences* topical areas defined below.

Capacity Building means enhancing and strengthening the quality and depth of an institution's research and academic programs as evidenced by its: faculty expertise, scientific and technical resources, research environment, curriculum, student experiential learning opportunities, scientific instrumentation, library resources, academic standing and racial, ethnic, or gender diversity of its faculty and student body, faculty and student recruitment and retention programs, and organizational structures and reward systems for attracting and retaining first-rate research and teaching faculty or students.

Citizen or national of the United States means (1) a citizen or native resident of a State; or, (2) a person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a) (22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States.

"College" and "university" – From 7 U.S.C. 3103, mean an educational institution in any State which: (i) 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, (ii) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of *education* beyond secondary education, (iii) provides an educational program for which a bachelor's degree or any other higher degree is awarded, (iv) is a public or other nonprofit institution, and (v) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Inclusions: The terms "college" and "university" include research foundations maintained by a college or university.

Education – See 'Teaching", below.

Eligible institution means a NLGCA institution (non-land-grant college of agriculture), as defined in this Section below.

Eligible participant means an individual who is a citizen or national of the United States as defined in this section.

Food and agricultural sciences – From 7 USC Section 3103, means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable energy and natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, including activities relating to the following:

(a) Animal health, production, and well-being.
(b) Plant health and production.
(c) Animal and plant germ plasm collection and preservation.
(d) Aquaculture.
(e) Food safety.
(f) Soil, water, and related resource conservation and improvement.
(g) Forestry, horticulture, and range management.
(h) Nutritional sciences and promotion.
(i) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability.
(j) Home economics (Family and Consumer Sciences).
(k) Rural human ecology.
(l) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4-H clubs.
(m) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis.
(n) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture.
(o) Biotechnology related to agriculture.
(p) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products.

Joint project proposal means an application for a project: (1) which will involve the applicant institution working in cooperation with **one or more** other entities not legally affiliated with the applicant institution, including other schools, *college*s, *universities*, community colleges, junior colleges, units of State government, private sector organizations, or a consortium of institutions; and (2) where the applicant institution and each cooperating entity will assume a significant role in the conduct of the proposed project. To demonstrate a substantial involvement with the project, **the applicant institution/organization submitting a joint project proposal must**

retain at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the awarded funds and no cooperating entity may receive less than 10 percent of awarded funds. Only the applicant institution must meet the definition of an *eligible institution*/organization as specified in this RFA; other entities participating in a joint project proposal are not required to meet the definition of an *eligible institution*/organization.

Large-scale, Comprehensive Initiative (LCI) project proposal means an application for a project: (1) which will involve the applicant institution/organization working in cooperation with **two or more** other entities not legally affiliated with the applicant institution, including other schools, *college*s, *universities*, community colleges, junior colleges, units of State government, private sector organizations, or a consortium of institutions; and (2) where the applicant institution and each cooperating entity will assume a significant role in the conduct of the proposed project. To demonstrate a substantial involvement with the project, **the applicant institution/organization submitting a LCI proposal must retain at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the awarded funds and no cooperating entity may receive less than 10 percent of awarded funds.** Only the applicant institution must meet the definition of an *eligible institution* as specified in this RFA; other entities participating in a *joint project proposal* are not required to meet the definition of an *eligible institution*. LCI Project Proposals must support a multi-partner approach to solving a major state or regional challenge in agricultural sciences education at the postsecondary level. LCI Project Proposals are characterized by multiple partners (each providing a specific expertise) organized and led by a strong applicant with documented project management ability to organize and carry out the initiative.

NLGCA institution; (non-land-grant college of agriculture) – From 7 USC Section 3103, means a public *college* or *university* offering a baccalaureate or higher degree in the study of agriculture or forestry. **Exclusions - The terms "NLGCA Institution" and "non-land grant college of agriculture" do not include** (and, therefore, the following institutions **are not eligible to apply** to this grants program):

1. Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities:

The list of the institutions certified and therefore eligible to apply as HSACUs for grants under FY 2015 RFAs, including this RFA, is available at http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/official-list-hispanic-serving-agricultural-colleges-and-universities-hsacu. Institutions appearing on this list are granted HSACU certification by the Secretary for the period starting October 1, 2014, and ending September 30, 2015. Certifications are valid for FY 2015 only. Additional questions on HSACU eligibility can be addressed to Lisa DePaolo, Senior Policy Specialist, by email at ldepaolo@nifa.usda.gov or phone at (202) 401-5061.; or

2. Any institution designated under:
    a. the Act of July 2, 1862 (commonly known as the "First Morrill Act"; 7 U.S.C. 301 et seq., or the '1862 Land Grants');
    b. the Act of August 30, 1890 (commonly known as the "Second Morrill Act") (7 U.S.C. 321 et seq., or the '1890 Land Grants');
    c. the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-382; 7 U.S.C. 301 note, or the '1994 or Tribal Colleges Land Grants'); or
    d. Public Law 87-788 (commonly known as the "McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act") (16 U.S.C. 582a et seq.).

Outcomes means specific, measurable project results and benefits that, when assessed and reported; indicate the project's plan of operation has been achieved. Measurable outcomes include:

- Results are intended or unintended consequences of the project, (e.g., "...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours");
- Products may be actual items or services acquired with funds, (e.g., "…mechanisms and content to transition existing course(s) or elements of course(s) for Web-based access" or "created new and innovative prevention and intervention initiatives"); and
- Impacts are a measure of the results by comparing what might have happened in the absence of the funded project, (e.g., "…an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, Web-based course materials".)

Regular project proposal means a proposal for a project: (1) where the applicant institution will be the sole entity involved in the execution of the project; or (2) which will involve the applicant institution and one or more other entities, but where the involvement of the other entity(ies) does not meet the requirements for a *joint project proposal* as defined in this section.

Sustainable Agriculture - From 7 USC Section 3103, means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long-term—(A) satisfy human food and fiber needs; (B) enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends; (C) make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; (D) sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and (E) enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

Teaching and education - From 7 USC Section 3103, means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters relating thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by *colleges* and universities offering baccalaureate or higher degrees.

Underrepresented means proportionate representation as measured by degree recipients that is less than the proportionate representation in the general population--(i) As indicated by (A) The most current edition of the Department of Education's Digest of Education Statistics; (B) The National Research Council's Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities; or (C) Other standard statistical references, as documented by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary on a case-by-case basis.

E. Logic Model

