

# **Notice of Funding Opportunity Tribal Colleges Extension Program Special Emphasis**

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 2, 2026

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: \$1,500,000

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD \$50,000 - \$200,000  
RANGE:

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-SLBCD-012281

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.517

## ANNOUNCEMENT

National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture

**Assistance Listing Number (ALN):** The Tribal Colleges Extension Program-Special Emphasis (TCEP-SE) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.517.

**Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines**

| Task Description            | Deadline                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Application:</b>         | 5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, November 2, 2026<br>[Ref to <a href="#">Part I, C</a> of this NOFO]                           |
| <b>Applicants Comments:</b> | Within six months from the issuance of this notice<br>(NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month) |

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to the extent permitted by law, will no longer make grants or otherwise fund programs or activities that improperly discriminate on the basis of race or sex, including discrimination in the name of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies. Instead, USDA will prioritize merit and efficiency. USDA recognizes programs and initiatives will have the greatest impact when these programs and initiatives put American farmers, ranchers, and foresters first by:

- solving the most pressing challenges they face;
- protecting America's food, fuel, and fiber supply to enhance national security;
- supporting production of healthy and safe food for consumers;
- expanding and developing domestic markets;
- training the next generation of agriculturalists; and
- fueling innovation to keep American farmers at the forefront of productivity.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is committed to advancing these principles and encourages applicants to actively engage farmers, ranchers, and foresters when applying for funding opportunities to ensure relevancy and adherence to them. NIFA also encourages agricultural leaders to engage in the peer review panel process to ensure American producers are better served through research, education, and extension activities.

Projects submitted under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) should align with [USDA Secretary's Memorandum 1078-020](#) Directive on Departmental Research and Development Priorities:

1. Increasing Profitability of Farmers and Ranchers
2. Expanding Markets and Creating New Uses of U.S. Agricultural Products
3. Protecting the Integrity of American Agriculture from Invasive Species
4. Promoting Soil Health to Regenerate Long-Term Productivity of Land
5. Improving Human Health through Precision Nutrition and Food Quality

**Stakeholder Input.** NIFA seeks comments on all NOFO so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments to

the extent possible when developing NOFOs and uses comments to help meet the requirements of Section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 ([7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)](#)). Applicants may submit written comments to [Policy@usda.gov](mailto:Policy@usda.gov). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Tribal Colleges Extension Program - Special Emphasis NOFO.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

NIFA requests applications for the TCEP-SE for FY 2026 to provide informal, community-focused extension pilot projects and/or workshops at 1994 Land-grant institutions. Pilot projects may focus on community needs that may address youth, agriculture, natural resources, economic development, healthy lifestyles or other issues important to Tribal communities. Approximately \$500,000 from FY 2026 and \$1,000,000 from FY 2025 will be available to fund new TCEP-SE projects as competitive awards.

This notice identifies the objectives for TCEP-SE projects, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

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## **PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority**

This program is authorized under Section 534(b) of the Equity in Educational Land-grant Status Act of 1994 ([7 U.S.C. 301note](#)), as amended by the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) ([7 U.S.C. 7601](#)). This section amends Section 3 of the Act of May 8, 1914 (Smith-Lever Act) ([7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.](#)). Under this authority, appropriated funds are to be awarded to the 1994 Land-grant Institutions (hereinafter referred to as 1994 Institutions) for extension work. Funding is awarded on a competitive basis to legislatively eligible institutions as authorized ([7 U.S.C 343\(b\)\(3\)](#)).

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The TCEP-SE under assistance listing 10.517, provides informal, community-focused extension pilot projects at 1994 Institutions. Pilot projects may focus on community needs that address emerging issues such as agricultural productivity, improving food systems, community vitality, workforce and economic development, public health and well-being, engaging Tribal youths, and preparing the next generation of Tribal agriculture leaders.

The purpose of the TCEP-SE is to give Tribal communities opportunities for enhanced agricultural productivity, community resilience, economic growth, and youth development by extending the reach of innovations in research and technology and enhancing informal, local educational programs through short-term pilot projects and/or workshops designed to support the Tribal Colleges Extension Program-Capacity Applications (TCEP-CA) project.

NIFA encourages projects involving innovative agricultural technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), that equip Tribal communities with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to adapt to and thrive in an increasingly digital society and expose community members to educational and career pathways in AI for food and agricultural sciences.

Projects must address one or more of the following key strategic actions:

- a) Support informal education to increase food and agricultural literacy of youths and adults
- b) Promote science-based agricultural literacy by increasing understanding and use of food and agricultural science data, information, and programs
- c) Build science-based capability in people to engage audiences and enable informed decision making
- d) Develop new applications of instructional tools and curriculum structures that increase technical competency and ensure global competitiveness
- e) Offer nonformal learning programs that increase accessibility to new audiences at the rate at which new ideas and technologies are tested and/or developed at the community-scale
- f) Develop programs that increase public knowledge and citizen engagement leading to actions that protect or enhance the Nation's food supply, agricultural productivity, regenerative agricultural practices, community vitality, and/or public health and well-being

Projects should lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group and should synthesize and incorporate a wide range of the latest relevant research results.

**Leadership Skills Development.** The development of leadership skills, knowledge, and qualities are necessary to prepare students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, government, and academia. Specific activities may include:

1. Developing practical applications to increase understanding of leadership roles, including critical thinking, problem solving, and communication skills; ethics and professionalism; and working in teams.
2. Connecting the Extension classroom experience with daily leadership roles and organizational activities.
3. Providing opportunities for mentoring and shadowing; and
4. Organizing leadership academies, workshops, trainings, etc.

Table 2: Program Key Information

| Title                                              | Description                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Program Code:</b>                               | NK                                                           |
| <b>Program Code Name:</b>                          | Tribal Colleges Extension Program-Special Emphasis (TCEP-SE) |
| <b>ALN:</b>                                        | 10.517                                                       |
| <b>Project Type:</b>                               | Extension Projects                                           |
| <b>Grant Type:</b>                                 | Standard Grants<br>Workshop Grants                           |
| <b>Application Deadline</b>                        | November 2, 2026                                             |
| <b>Grant Duration:</b>                             | Standard Grant: 24-36 months<br>Workshop Grant: 12 Months    |
| <b>Anticipated # of Awards:</b>                    | 10                                                           |
| <b>Minimum Award Amount:</b>                       | \$50,000                                                     |
| <b>Maximum Award Amount:</b>                       | Standard Grant: \$200,000<br>Workshop Grant: \$50,000        |
| <b>Number of Applications Per Lead Institution</b> | Two applications                                             |
| <b>Maximum Funding Per Institution:</b>            | \$250,000                                                    |

## PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

### A. Available Funding

The amount available for TCEP-SE in FY 2026 is approximately \$1.5 million. Of this amount, approximately \$500,000 from FY 2026 and \$1,000,000 from FY 2025 will be available to fund new TCEP-SE projects as competitive awards. USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this NOFO.

### B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this NOFO. Application for FY2026 is limited to the following application types: (Include all that apply)

1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this NOFO and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).
2. *Resubmitted application*: Resubmitted applications must include the response to the previous review panel summary and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Resubmitted applicants must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application in the *Federal Field (Field 4)* on the application form (see [Appendix III](#) for definition).

### C. Project and Grant Types

The following describes the types of *projects* or *grants* that are eligible for funding:

1. **Project Type. Extension Projects** – Single-function Extension Projects conduct programs and activities that deliver science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions. Delivery may range from community-based to national audiences and use communication methods from face-to-face to electronic or combinations thereof. Extension Projects may also include related matters such as certification programs, in-service training, client recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative instructional methodologies appropriate to informal educational programs. Neither formal education nor research projects are supported under the TCEP-CA.
2. **Grant Type.**
  - a. **Standard Grants.** Standard grants support targeted, original Extension Projects. An eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system may submit a grant application for project activities to be undertaken principally on behalf of its own students or faculty, and to be managed primarily by its own personnel. The applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.
  - b. **Workshop Grants.** Workshop Grants support highly interactive gatherings that bring together scientists, 1994 Institutions, Tribal partners, community members, Federal agencies, and other organizations to identify extension needs, update information, advance an area of science and/or agriculture, address the needs of Tribal Communities, spur scientific inquiry, and advance Extension endeavors.

These activities are recognized as integral parts of scientific efforts. NIFA will not support Workshop Grants with the sole purpose of supporting travel or to be implemented as subawards for travel grants. Costs such as airfare, hotel, workshop venue, speaker fees, and workshop materials can be included in the budget.

**D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects**

In accordance with sections [2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422](#), institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award, that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients must, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research](#) for further information.

## **PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligibility Requirements**

Applicants for the TCEP-SE must meet all the requirements discussed in this NOFO. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or, preclude NIFA from making an award. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [About Grants](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

Applications may only be submitted by colleges and universities designated as 1994 Institutions by legislation.

The following colleges and universities are eligible for this program: Aaniiih Nakoda College, Bay Mills Community College, Blackfeet Community College, Cankdeska Cikana Community College, Chief Dull Knife College, College of the Menominee Nation, College of the Muscogee Nation, Diné College, Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Fort Peck Community College, Haskell Indian Nations University, Iłisaḡvik College, Institute of American Indian Arts, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College, Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa University, Leech Lake Tribal College, Little Big Horn College, Little Priest Tribal College, Navajo Technical University, Nebraska Indian Community College, Northwest Indian College, Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College, Oglala Lakota College, Red Lake Nation College, Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, Salish Kootenai College, Sinte Gleska University, Sisseton Wahpeton College, Sitting Bull College, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Stone Child College, Tohono O'odham Community College, Turtle Mountain Community College, United Tribes Technical College, and White Earth Tribal and Community College.

An eligible institution may submit a maximum of two applications per eligible institution. There is generally a limit of two awards to any one eligible institution in response to this NOFO (Refer to [Part II, C](#) of this NOFO for Project and Grant Types).

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

**Duplicate or Multiple Submissions.** Duplicate or multiple submissions are not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits duplicate or multiple submissions.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

No Match Required - The Tribal Colleges Extension Program-Special Emphasis (TCEP-SE) has no matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion. While not required, cost share is encouraged.

## PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

### A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this NOFO electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this NOFO and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 3** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process. The NIFA Grants Application Guide is contained in the specific funding opportunity package, or a sample of the guide can be found [here](#). When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

**Table 3.** Steps to Obtain Application Materials

| Steps                               | Action                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Step One: Register</b>           | <i>New Users</i> to <a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> must register early with <a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> prior to submitting an application. |
| <b>Step Two: Download Adobe</b>     | Download and Install <a href="#">Adobe Reader</a> (see <a href="#">Adobe Software Compatibility</a> for basic system requirements).                                              |
| <b>Step Three: Find Application</b> | Using this funding opportunity number <b>USDA-NIFA-SLBCD-012281</b> , search for application here: <a href="#">Opportunity Package</a> .                                         |
| <b>Step Four: Assess Readiness</b>  | Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization's readiness to submit an electronic application.                                                       |

**Table 4:** Help and Resources

| Grants.gov Support                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | NIFA Support                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov Online Support</a><br>Telephone support: 800-518-4726<br>Toll-Free or 606-545-5035<br><br>Email support: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a><br>Self-service customer-based support: <a href="#">Grants.gov iPortal</a><br><br>Customer service business Hours 24/7, except <a href="#">Federal holidays</a> . | Email:<br><a href="mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov">grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov</a><br><br>Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except <a href="#">Federal holidays</a> . |

### B. Content and Form of the Application

The NIFA Grants Application Guide is part of the corresponding application package for this NOFO. The NOFO overrides the NIFA Grants Application Guide if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. Applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA's review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all applications that meet the requirements of this NOFO. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 5** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

**Table 5: Key Application Instructions**

| Instruction                                                                                                                                     | References<br>(All references are to the NIFA Grants Application Guide) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.                                                                                 | Part IV                                                                 |
| Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.                                                          | Part IV                                                                 |
| Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.                                                                          | Part IV                                                                 |
| Follow the submission instructions.                                                                                                             | Part IV                                                                 |
| Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.                                                                         | Part V                                                                  |
| Contact the <a href="#">Grants.gov helpdesk</a> for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.                                  | N/A                                                                     |
| Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within <b>90</b> days of the application deadline. | N/A                                                                     |

**SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet.** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances.

**SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s).** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

**R&R Other Project Information Form.** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

1. **Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract.** The PS must show how the project goals align with the program goals of the Tribal Colleges Extension Program-Special Emphasis (TCEP-SE). See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for instructions and suggested templates. The Project Summary must include:
  - a. The title of the project (must be descriptive of the project);
  - b. A concise description of the project (not to exceed 250 words);
  - c. A statement of project objectives and the methods used to achieve those objectives;
  - d. A statement regarding the potential impact of the project within the Tribal community.
2. **Field 8. Project Narrative (PN).** The PN must not exceed 10 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text and up to [2] *1.5 spaced* additional pages for figures and tables. The PN must be formatted using 1-inch margins and 12-point, Times New Roman font. The font size for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman. The page limits outlined here ensure fair competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to organize the PN using the sections below and include the section titles as prompts for each section. The PN must include all the following:

- a. **Introduction.** Provide a brief introduction to the 1994 Institution and Tribal community. Describe the current problem, situation, or opportunity to be addressed and explain why it is important. Discuss the commitment of the applicant's institution and key personnel to execute the project and increase Extension outreach capacity. Explain how the project complements the existing Tribal Colleges Extension Program – Capacity Applications project. Specify the qualifications of the personnel who will be directly engaged with the project, including their expertise in working on reservations with Tribal communities.
- b. **Rationale and significance.** Describe the potential benefit of the proposed project to the participants, community, and Indian Country. Explain how the project addresses stakeholder/community needs and concerns, enhances participants' lives, and empowers participants to teach others. Describe the significance of the Extension project to U.S. agriculture, noting any critical impact on human health and well-being and rural communities.
- c. **Community and audience analysis.** Identify the intended population(s) of the Extension project. Describe the process used to identify, gather, and analyze input and feedback from the Tribe, community organizations, individual stakeholders, advisory groups, etc. to understand and align with the needs and concerns of the community.
- d. **Objectives and anticipated outcomes.** Provide a clear, concise, and logically numbered list of project objectives. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound. Describe the anticipated outcomes associated with each project objective. Outcomes must describe specific changes or results that may occur because of the project and that will constitute "success" for the initiative. Outcomes may include benefits realized through project activities such as changes in participants' skills, behavior, or quality of life, and positive changes in conditions in the community served or reductions in negative conditions.
- e. **Approach.** Clearly and concisely state the activities the project team will implement to accomplish each of the stated objectives. Describe how resources and personnel will be utilized to conduct the project. Describe the strategy to enhance communication, data sharing, and reporting of project outcomes and impacts to stakeholders and partners. Outline the process for review by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) if activities involving human subjects are planned at any time during the proposed project. If the project involves Extension activities using vertebrate animals under the jurisdiction or control of the institution, outline the process for review by an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).
- f. **Collaborative relationships.** Detail any collaborative work or plans for cooperation with a Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP) office, 1862 or 1890 Cooperative Extension office, Tribal outreach office or other entities. Letters of commitment may be included in Field 12.
- g. **Project timeline.** Illustrate the progress and successful implementation of the project over the award period by providing an integrated timeline of project activities, major milestones, assessment, and reporting. Plan for a tentative project start in February

- 2027 and develop the project timeline accordingly. If key or other personnel must be hired to advance the project, address the timeline for hiring and how the project will progress in the event of delayed hiring. Address the timeline for IRB and/or IACUC review, if applicable. The use of a table or logic model is acceptable for this section.
- h. **Project evaluation.** Explain how project activities and outcomes will be measured to determine the extent to which the stated objectives have been achieved and Extension outreach capacity has been increased. Describe how quantitative metrics, feedback from project stakeholders, and participant success stories will be utilized to demonstrate the project's impact on the target audience, convey value to stakeholders and the institution, inform project planning, and indicate the potential for project persistence beyond the period of USDA support. Indicate who on the project team will provide the project assessment oversight.
  - i. **Response to previous review.** For resubmitted applications, the response to previous review must address the concerns raised by the previous panel review. The response to previous review section must: (1) be titled "Response to Previous Review"; (2) include the previous proposal number; and (3) detail the modifications made to the original application to address concerns from the previous review panel summary. The response to previous review must not exceed [2] *1.5 spaced* pages. This does not count towards the page limit for the PN.
3. **Field 12. Add Other Attachments.** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.
- a. **Data management plan (DMP).** A DMP is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP must clearly describe the expected data type and format, plans for storing and preserving the data during and after the project, and the procedures for data access, sharing, and protection. The DMP must not exceed 2 pages (1.5-spaced). Save the DMP as "DMP" in PDF format. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V, B](#) of this NOFO, [NIFA's Data Management Plan](#)).
  - b. **Letters of commitment (LOC).** Letters from collaborators or community partners whose participation is important to the success of the project, committing those collaborators and partners to specific roles, are encouraged. Do not include general letters of support (i.e., from those who are not committing to a specific role in the project). Save the letter(s) as "LOC\_Organization Name" in PDF format.

**R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded).** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.

**R&R Personal Data.** This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide).

**R&R Budget.** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

1. Indirect Costs (IDC) –Not Permitted.
2. Prepare a budget for each year of the project plus a cumulative budget.
3. **Budget Justification.** A detailed budget narrative should be provided for each project year. There should be a direct correlation between the items in the budget, the activities described in the PN, and the budget justification. Each item in the budget must be justified in the proposal. Costs (e.g., salary and wages, materials, equipment, travel, etc.)

must be broken down and itemized rather than shown as lump sums. While budgets should account for necessary travel, virtual or hybrid meetings may be considered.

4. All subawards must include a budget and budget narrative for each year they are part of the grant.
5. **Project Directors' Meeting.**—Reasonable travel expenses for the Project Director to attend one PD meeting during the performance period must be included as part of the project's budget.

**Supplemental Information Form.** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

1. **Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying.** Enter the program name “Tribal Colleges Extension Program-Special Emphasis (TCEP-SE)” and the program code “NK”. Accurate entry is critical.
2. **Field 8. Conflict of Interest List.** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide.

**C. Funding Restrictions**

1. **No Indirect Costs (IDC).** IDC is not authorized for this NOFO.
2. The use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility, or to acquire land, is not allowed under this program. With prior approval, in accordance with the cost principles set forth in OMB Circular No. A-21, grant funds may be used to purchase equipment, or for improvements, alterations, renovations, or repairs to land, buildings, or equipment, deemed necessary to retrofit existing spaces and resources in order to carry out a funded project under this grant. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must be aligned with the goals and objectives of the project. Any equipment purchased with Federal funds is the property of the recipient, as appropriate.
3. In addition, the following costs, although not all-inclusive, are not permitted:
  - a) Entertainment including tickets to shows or sporting events;
  - b) Meals (except when provided to maintain the continuity of a meeting);
  - c) Alcoholic beverages;
  - d) Costs associated with banquets and award ceremonies;
  - e) Expenses not directly related to the program – (e.g., childcare services, kitchen help, etc.);
  - f) Incentives.
4. NIFA awards may not be used to support the procurement of unmanned aircraft systems to process, store, or transmit Federal information (as defined in [OMB Circular A-130](#)) unless the grant is specifically available for procurement of such equipment and grantees describe in their application how they will comply with the information security requirements outlined in Appendix B of [M-26-02 Ensuring Government Use of Secure Unmanned Aircraft Systems and Supporting United States Producers](#) and develop a risk-based approach to applying those requirements to procurement solicitations to potential vendors under the resulting Federal award. This information, if provided, will be evaluated by NIFA as part of its evaluation process. If such procurement is approved, specific information security requirements may be included in the terms and conditions of the grant to ensure that the grantees will incorporate those requirements in procurement solicitations of unmanned aircraft systems under the Federal award. Additionally, projects must ensure that they are in adherence to [Secretary's Memorandum \(SM\) 1078-014](#) and are not using unallowable 3-D printers which can be found at [National Security and Unallowable Costs](#).

## PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

### A. NIFA's Evaluation Process

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this NOFO. All administrative requirements must be met in order for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

#### Scientific Peer Review Process:

NIFA selects reviewers for the review panel based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities.
2. The need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.
3. The need to include other experts (e.g., agricultural producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, educators, evaluators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to the reviewer's area of expertise, geographic area, and entity type, as appropriate.
6. The need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of NIFA will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

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

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel comments to the PD.

**Conflicts of interest.** NIFA takes extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may influence the review or evaluation (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

### B. Evaluation Criteria

The criteria below are not equal in merit but are listed in descending order of importance. NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate applications to this program:

1. **Potential for advancing the quality of Tribal Extension initiatives.**—This criterion assesses the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food, agriculture, natural resources, workforce development, and youth development by strengthening institutional capacity to meet clearly delineated needs in Tribal communities. The extent to which the proposed project enhances participants' lives and benefits Tribal stakeholders, rural communities, Indian Country, and U.S agriculture is included. Stakeholder involvement in project development, implementation, and evaluation is demonstrated and clearly aligns with stakeholder/community needs and concerns.
2. **Proposed approach and project management.**—This criterion evaluates the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, timetable, expected outcomes, and identification and dissemination of project impacts. Project objectives, activities, and outcomes are clearly described, appropriate, and aligned. Anticipated outcomes and impacts are relevant to the participants, Tribal community, and Indian Country. A clear plan is articulated for project management, including time allocated for attainment of objectives and delivery of products, project evaluation, and strategies to communicate outcomes and impacts to stakeholders and the public. A plan for IRB and/or IACUC approval is included, if applicable.
3. **Budget and cost-effectiveness.**—This criterion gauges the extent to which the budget clearly allocates sufficient resources to carry out Extension activities that will lead to desired outcomes. Budget line items are sufficiently justified to determine the necessity and reasonableness of the costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives. The extent to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources and optimizes educational value for the dollar is included. Budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating organization(s) are appropriate for the amount of time committed to the project by the subawardees(s), if applicable.
4. **Project evaluation.**—This criterion assesses the proposed project evaluation and performance monitoring plans. The project evaluation methods used to identify, gather, and analyze feedback from project stakeholders and participants are reasonable and appropriate for Extension activities. The process to measure project objectives and assess impact is consistent with the project timeline. The extent to which assessment results and feedback from participants are communicated to the institution and stakeholders and is utilized to inform project planning is included. The project identifies the key person(s) who will monitor and report project performance.
5. **Key personnel, institutional support, and capacity building.**—This criterion assesses the adequacy of personnel and institutional support required to advance and sustain Extension outreach capacity. Key personnel have sufficient expertise and time to implement project objectives, establish and maintain partnerships, and assess and disseminate project outcomes and impacts. The number of other personnel involved in the project is adequate to support the project. The extent to which the proposed project complements the existing Tribal Colleges Extension Program – Capacity Applications project. If a partner organization or community collaborators will be included in the project, their involvement, including roles and responsibilities, is clear and defined. Letters of commitment from collaborators or community partners are provided, if applicable.

- 6. Data management plan.**—This criterion evaluates the soundness of the institution’s DMP. The DMP is appropriate, clearly described, and feasible. The extent to which the DMP describes the expected data type and format, plans for storing and preserving the data during and after the project, and the procedures for data access, sharing, and protection is included.

**C. Organizational Management Information**

Applicants must submit specific management information prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only need to provide an update if there was a change in previously provided information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

**D. Application Disposition**

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

## **PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of funds authorized, the NIFA awarding official will make grants to responsible and eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this NOFO. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant must be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period.

All funds granted by NIFA under this NOFO may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the program-specific laws and regulations, NIFA General Awards Administrative Provisions ([7 CFR part 3430, subparts A through E](#)), USDA Regulations for Grants and Agreements ([2 CFR Chapter IV](#)), Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance ([2 CFR part 200](#)), [NIFA-specific terms and conditions](#), [USDA General Terms and Conditions for Federal Awards](#), and approved budget and project plans.

The Notice of Award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#)

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this NOFO (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

### **C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

Output and reporting requirements are included in the [award terms and conditions](#). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, they will be identified in the Award Notice.

## PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION

### A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget

***Delegation of fiscal responsibility.*** Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

***Changes in Budget or Project Plans.*** In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision required);
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the Federal award;
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project;
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [2 CFR Part 300 Appendix IX](#), (Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals), or [48 CFR](#), unless waived by the Federal awarding agency, [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
5. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
6. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a Federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR 200.333, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved Federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services;
7. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-Federal entity;
8. The need for additional Federal funds to complete the project;
9. Salary rates of pay exceeding an Executive Level IV salary range (see “Rates of Pay for the Executive Schedule” under the “Executive & Senior Level Employee Pay Tables” header at <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>) require prior NIFA approval. This rate does not include any fringe benefits, general and administrative (G&A), overhead, or other expenses. Requests for approval must include the salary rate of pay and a justification for the rate and be sent to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) to [awards@usda.gov](mailto:awards@usda.gov);
10. No more than 50 percent of the total dollars of this award may be subcontracted to another party(ies) without prior written approval of the ADO, except subcontracts to Federal agencies;
11. Transferring funds between the construction and non-construction work under a Federal award; and
12. A no-cost extension (meaning, an extension of time that does not require the obligation of additional Federal funds) of the period of performance, other than any one-time extension authorized by the Federal agency in accordance with paragraph 2 CFR 200.308(g)(2). All requests for no-cost extensions should be submitted at least 10 calendar days before the conclusion of the period of performance. The Federal agency may approve multiple no-cost extensions under a Federal award if not prohibited by Federal statute or regulation.

**B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw at any time prior to the final action thereon.

**C. Regulatory Information**

This program is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. Chapter 35](#)), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under [OMB Document No. 0524-0039](#).

**D. Language Access Services**

NIFA offers language access services, such as interpretation and translation of vital information, free of charge. If you need interpretation or translation services, please visit [NIFA Language Access Services](#).

## APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

For Programmatic questions please email: [NIFAtribalprograms@usda.gov](mailto:NIFAtribalprograms@usda.gov)

For administrative questions related to;

1. Grants.gov, see [Part IV](#) of this NOFO
2. Other NOFO or application questions, please email [grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov](mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov)
3. Awards under this NOFO, please email [awards@usda.gov](mailto:awards@usda.gov)

### **U.S. Postal Mailing Address:**

National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000  
Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

### **Courier/Package Delivery Address:**

National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000  
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

## **APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

### **Glossary of Terms**

Artificial Intelligence – AI

Assistance Listing Number – ALN

Authorized Departmental Officer – ADO

Authorized Representative – AR

Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 – AREERA

Data Management Plan – DMP

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

Notice of Funding Opportunity – NOFO

Project Director – PD

Project Narrative – PN

Project Summary – PS

Research, Education, and Economics – REE

Tribal Colleges Extension Program-Capacity Applications – TCEP-CA

Tribal Colleges Extension Program-Special Emphasis – TCEP-SE

United States Department of Agriculture – USDA

### **APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS**

Refer to [7 CFR 3430 Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions](#) for additional definitions.

#### **Definitions**

##### **Continuation Award:**

An award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the Federal government and the public.

##### **Matching:**

The process through which a grant recipient match awarded USDA funds with cash and in-kind contributions on a dollar-for-dollar basis. The matching funds must derive from non-Federal sources.

##### **New Application:**

An application not previously submitted to a program.

##### **Resubmitted Application:**

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