Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA)

FY 2017 Request for Applications (RFA)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: Thursday, June 14, 2017

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 RESIDENT INSTRUCTION GRANTS PROGRAM FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN INSULAR AREAS (RIIA) INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under **10.308**, Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas.

DATES: Applications must be received by **5:00 p.m. Eastern Time** on **, 2017.** Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding (see Part IV, C of this RFA). 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: We at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seek your comments about this RFA. We will consider your 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 your written stakeholder comments by the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this notice via email to Policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This email address is only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and *not* for requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the **Resident Instruction Grants for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA)** and the **Agriculture and Food Sciences Facilities and Equipment (AGFEI) for land-grant colleges and universities in the Insular Areas** for fiscal year (FY) **2017** to strengthen the capacity to carry out resident instruction, curriculum, and teaching programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences as well as to upgrade agriculture and food science facilities and equipment necessary to conduct tropical and subtropical agricultural research. The amount available for grants in FY 2017 is approximately $1,000,000. This RFA is being released prior to the passage of an appropriations act for FY 2017. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or an appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

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

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

This program is administered under the provisions of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Section 7501 of Public Law 107-171) as reauthorized in Section 7143 of Public Law 110-246, which amended the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) by continuing the Resident Instruction Grants for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) (7 U.S.C. 3363) conducting educational programs in food and agricultural sciences and related sciences. Furthermore, in accordance with the 7 U.S.C 3222b-2 authority, this request for applications also covers the Agriculture and Food Sciences Facilities and Equipment (AGFEI) Program to Support Tropical and Subtropical Agricultural Research in the Insular Area. Under this authority, funds will be awarded to assist the land-grant colleges and universities in the insular areas in efforts to acquire, alter or repair facilities or relevant equipment necessary for conducting agricultural research; and support tropical and subtropical agriculture research, including pest and disease research.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The RIIA and the AGFEI Programs directly aligns with USDA Strategic Goal 1, Strategic Goal 2, Strategic Goal 3, and Strategic Goal 4 of the USDA Strategic Plan (2014 – 2018) (http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda-strategic-plan-fy-2014-2018.pdf). The program also aligns with the USDA Research, Education, and Economics Action Plan (http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/ree-action-plan), and specifically addresses Goal 6. The RIIA and AGFEI Programs are also aligned with the NIFA Strategic Plan (2014-2018) (http://nifa.usda.gov/resource/nifa-strategic-plan-fy2014-fy2018), specifically addressing Strategic Goal No 1, (Science); Subgoal 1.7.

Accordingly, RIIA-funded project activities shall support the creation, adaptation, and adoption of learning materials and teaching strategies to operationalize what we know about how students learn. Many of these concepts are identified in the National Research Council's publication: *How People Learn*. RIIA-funded projects shall also focus on imparting both technical knowledge as well as 'soft' skills such as communication, team work, and problem solving, as these are abilities expected by employers. These concepts may be found in the publication: *Comparative Analysis of Soft Skills: What is Important for New Graduates?*

AGFEI-funded projects will support activities to acquire, alter, or repair facilities or relevant equipment necessary for conducting agricultural research and support tropical and subtropical agricultural research, including pest and disease research.

Furthermore, academic institutions should broaden the undergraduate student experience by integrating opportunities to participate in research, education, and extension. At the same time, four-year colleges and universities should enhance connections with community colleges, Hispanic serving institutions, Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions, 1890 and 1994 land-grant institutions, and non-land grant colleges and universities of agriculture.

In addition, legislatively, the purpose of this program is to promote and strengthen the ability of eligible institutions in the Insular Areas (see definition in Part VIII, E.) to carry out education

within the broadly defined food, agricultural, natural resources, human sciences and related disciplines.

C. Program Area Description

NIFA is soliciting applications for RIIA that seek to do the following:

(1) Improve formal, postsecondary agricultural sciences education/instruction to ensure a competent and qualified workforce to serve the food and agricultural sciences system and meet current and future national food and agricultural science needs.

(2) Improve the economic health and viability of rural communities through the development of degree programs emphasizing new and emerging employment opportunities in agriscience and agribusiness; and

(3) Increase the number and diversity of students who will pursue and complete a 2-4-year post-secondary education in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences, or other agriculture-related science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines (i.e., having an agricultural sciences workforce representative of the Nation's population).

NIFA is soliciting applications for the AGFEI program under the following characteristics and conditions:

(1) Acquire, alter, or repair facilities or relevant equipment necessary for conducting agricultural research and support tropical and subtropical agricultural research, including pest and disease research.

Applicants to the RIIA and AGFEI Programs are reminded of a closely related competitive grants program administered by NIFA for eligible Insular Area Institutions, which is the Distance Education Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (DEG). As separate programs, under their respective authorization, appropriation and RFA, applicants are advised to coordinate RIIA, AGFEI and DEG project applications to ensure overall coordinated project objectives and to efficiently integrate proposed teaching and evaluation assessment practices for both projects. For more information about the DEG Program, please click here.

Applications recommended for funding must highlight and emphasize all of the following provisions: enhance educational equity for under-represented students; strengthen institutional educational capacities; prepare students for careers related to the food, agriculture, renewable and natural resources, and human sciences systems of the United States; and, maximize the development and use of resources to improve food and agricultural teaching programs.

Leadership Skills Development

All RIIA 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. Projects must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to ensure that students are equipped with both technical and leadership abilities.

Expected Products and Results

The RIIA and AGFEI Programs require all project directors to provide appropriate metrics and describe the expected products and results, outcomes, and their potential impact on strengthening food, agricultural, natural resources and human sciences education, research and extension in the United States. Metrics to assess products, outputs and outcomes are to be clearly delineated in the proposal.

Incorporation of Social Sciences and Enhancing Impacts

The RIIA Program supports social and behavioral science disciplines. RIIA projects that integrate social and biological sciences to provide experiential learning opportunities for students in applied research, and related community development programs are encouraged. Incorporation of social and behavioral sciences is important for addressing many of the challenges facing agriculture and rural communities, such as increasing global demand for food production in the face of limited natural resources; improving health and reducing obesity by engaging in heathy life styles and consuming heathy diets; and alleviating poverty by fostering economic opportunity.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The anticipated amount available for RIIA and AGFEI grants in FY 2017 is approximately $1,000,000. The funds will be awarded competitively through a peer panel review process. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

The Automated Standard Applications for Payment System (ASAP), operated by the Department of Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA. For more information see https://www.fiscal.treasury.gov/fsservices/gov/pmt/asap/asap_home.htm.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2017, you may submit an application to the RIIA and AGFEI Programs as one of the following types of requests:

New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the RIIA or AGFEI Programs. We will review all new applications competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

Resubmitted application. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the RIIA or AGFEI Programs, respectively, only 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

In FY 2017, the RIIA and AGFEI Programs will accept applications for the following project type:

Education/Teaching Projects

An education activity or teaching activity is formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

RIIA Education/Teaching projects should focus on one or more of the Need Areas listed below. Please note that at least one of these Need Areas must be indicated on the Project Summary (See Part IV, B. 3).

Need Areas for FY 2017 are defined as follows:

a) Curricula Design, Materials Development, and Library Resources

The purpose of this initiative is to promote the development of courses of study and degree programs, new and improved curricula, and instructional materials and technology; promote the acquisition of library resources including books and journals relating to the food and agricultural sciences; and stimulate the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects, new research on teaching and learning theory, and new applications of knowledge. The overall objective is to increase the quality of, and continuously renew, the academic programs of Alaska Native-Serving and Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions in the food and agricultural sciences.

b) Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching

The purpose of this initiative is to advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications in a field; expanding competence in innovative technologies and new methods of instruction delivery; developing new skills in a field of science or education including student advising skills; or pursuing graduate-level study in a field related to the food and agricultural sciences.

Each faculty recipient of support for developmental activities must be an "eligible participant" please refer to: 7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Financial Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions, for applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

c) Instructional Delivery Systems

The purpose of this initiative is to encourage the use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: 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; and consideration and implementation of innovative instructional techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems in response to advances in knowledge and technology.

d) Scientific Instrumentation for Teaching and Research

The purpose of this initiative is to provide students and faculty in science-oriented courses with suitable, up-to-date equipment in order to involve them in work central 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 obsolete equipment.

e) Student Experiential Learning

The purpose of this initiative is to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs that provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. Applications may emphasize,

but are not limited to: preparing future graduates to advance knowledge and technology, enhancing quality of life, conserve resources, and addressing community and economic development issues. Projects should focus on advancing student decision-making and communication skills, and improving real-life technological expertise. Activities may include, but are not limited to: internships, practicum experiences, study abroad opportunities, and participation with faculty on applied research and related community development projects.

f) Student Recruitment, Retention, and Educational Equity (including the provision of student financial assistance)

The purpose of this initiative is to enhance educational equity for under-represented students, and strengthen student recruitment and retention programs in order to promote the future strength of the Nation's scientific, professional, and technical work force in the food and agricultural sciences. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: initiating new projects or supplementing current efforts to attract increased numbers of students from under-represented groups to attend college in order to prepare them for careers as food and agricultural scientists, professionals, and technicians; promoting opportunities for students from under-represented groups, their families, and communities 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 programs at the high school level to attract students to college and careers in the food and agricultural sciences; mentoring programs and other initiatives for student retention; and the provision of student financial support to attend college.

Note that routine use of graduate and postdoctoral students as personnel on research projects is not considered education for the purposes of this program. Only students actively engaged in the scholarship of the research/extension projects are considered as education. Actively engaged students could contribute to presentations, articles, posters, and other expressions of scholarship that reflect their own work on the PD's project.

The activities for Education Projects must show direct alignment with increasing technical competency in priority area(s) to ensure that the U.S. remains globally competitive in the knowledge age.

The AGFEI program will only accept one project type, Facilities and Equipment projects.

The Facilities and Equipment Projects will focus on construction, acquisition, and remodeling of buildings, laboratories, and other capital facilities (including fixtures and equipment) necessary to conduct activities in tropical and subtropical agricultural research, including pest and disease research.

D. Grant Types

1. Regular Grant

There is only one grant type for the RIIA and AGFEI Grants Programs: a regular grant. In FY 2017, each eligible institution may submit a maximum of three RIIA or AGFEI, respectively, Regular Applications. All applicants must meet the eligibility criteria as described in Part III of the RFA.

An eligible institution may submit a regular project application for project activities undertaken principally on behalf of its own students or faculty, and managed primarily by its own personnel. In a Regular Project, the applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners. Regular Grant applications must not exceed $150,000.

a. Grant Duration

The project period may range from 24 to 36 months. The project start date should not occur prior to August 2017.

b. Number of Awards

The number of grants awarded in FY 2017 will depend on the number of applications recommended for funding in response to this notice.

Note that actual amounts awarded by NIFA under the RIIA and AGFEI grants programs may differ from the amounts requested in the application submitted to the programs, and that revised budgets and revised plans of work may be required by NIFA before an award is made.

c. Proposal Submission Limitations

An eligible university system may receive up to three grant awards per competition. Institutions receiving a grant under this program in any one competition are eligible to receive RIIA or AGFEI grants in subsequent years. Receiving a grant under any other authority does not affect eligibility for this RIIA and AGFEI grants programs.

d. Grant Limitations Per Institution

For the FY 2017 program, each eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, and branch institution of a State system may receive, or be a party to, a maximum of three Regular grant awards. USDA may fund an institution simultaneously under both applications. Institutions that received a grant under this program in a prior year are still eligible to receive a grant this year.

e. Funding Limitations Per Institution

For FY 2017, the limit of funds that may be awarded to any one institution as a lead is $450,000. However, applicants should take note of the proposal submission limitations (see D.1.c.).

E. Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

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 shall, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See http://nifa.usda.gov/responsible-and-ethical-conduct-research for more information.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by eligible institutions. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

1. Individual Institutions

Applications may only be submitted by eligible institutions. For the purposes of the RIIA Program, an eligible institution means an institution of higher education, as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1995 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)), that is located in an Insular Area and that has a demonstrable capacity to carry out teaching and extension programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences. All public or non-profit 2yr and 4yr accredited institutions of higher education that offer certificate/degree programs in food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences are eligible. Only individual Land Grant colleges and universities, and other institutions that have secured Land Grant status through Federal legislation, and which are located in Insular Areas are eligible for awards under the AGFEI grants program as direct individual applicants. These Land Grant colleges and universities are automatically eligible to apply for a RIIA grant.

The eight insular areas are: American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

2. Branch Institutions of a State System

For the purposes of the RIIA Program, the individual branches of a State university system or public system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree-granting institutions are treated as separate, individual institutions eligible to apply for and receive awards, provided they otherwise satisfy the definition of "eligible institution" as specified above.

3. Independent Branch Campuses

Independent branch campuses of individual institutions may apply for and receive grant awards under this program, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of "eligible institution" as specified above. An "independent branch campus" means a unit of a 2-year or 4-year institution of higher education that is geographically apart from the main campus, is permanent in nature, offers courses for credit and programs leading to an associate or bachelor's degree, and is autonomous to the extent that it has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization and its own budgetary and hiring authority.

4. Certification of Eligibility

At the time of application, each primary applicant will be required to demonstrate or certify that it is an eligible institution as defined by this RFA. A non-Land Grant institution must submit a letter signed by the institution's Authorized Representative (AR) certifying that it meets the requirements of an "eligible institution" as defined in Part III A paragraphs 1 and 2 above. The

AR must also certify the institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus:

a) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;

b) Is legally authorized by the State in which it is located to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;

c) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; and is a public or other nonprofit institution; and is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

All eligible institutions must demonstrate that they have a significant commitment to higher education programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences and to each specific subject area for which grant funds are to be used.

Eligibility documentation must be submitted as part of the applicant's Project Narrative. See Part IV, B.3, Field 8.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

NIFA does not require matching support for this program, and matching resources will not be a factor 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 information about the pre-award phase of the grant lifecycle see http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grants-101/pre-award-phase.html.

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, we recommend that the Project Director/Principal Investigator (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 two 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.** Part II,1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the registration process. Refer to item 2, below, to locate the "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide."

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/applicants/adobe-software-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/download-application-package.html and enter the funding opportunity number

   Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-NIFA-RIGP-006357

   From the search result, click "Select Package" to access the application package. A Grant Application Package is tied to a particular funding opportunity. You may submit an application ONLY to the particular funding opportunity to which the Grant Application Package is associated.

   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-tools-and-tips.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 a.m. - 9 p.m. EST). 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** you need 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 whether 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. EST, 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. See Part V, Section 2.18 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for the required certifications and assurances (e.g., Prohibition Against Entities Requiring Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements).

2. SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 3 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 4 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract.

The summary should also include the relevance of the project to one of the RIIA or AGFEI need areas (Part II, C.). See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages of written text regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced and up to five (5) additional pages for figures and tables. We have established this maximum of 25 pages to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

1). Introduction: Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed activities. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities that relate to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. In addition, this section should include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

a) Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders and to ongoing state-federal food and agricultural research, education and extension programs.

b) The role of stakeholders in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation as appropriate.

c) Reasons for performing the work at the proposing institution.

2). Objectives: All applications must include a statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort in clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged terms.

3). Methods: Explicitly state the procedures or methodology you will apply to the proposed effort. This section should include, but not necessarily be limited to, descriptions of the following:

a) Stakeholder involvement in problem identification, planning and implementation;
b) Proposed project activities, listed sequentially;
c) Techniques to be employed in this project, including their feasibility and rationale;
d) Expected results;
e) Plan of how extension and education activities will be evaluated;
f) Plan of how data will be analyzed or interpreted;
g) Plans to communicate results to stakeholders and the public;
h) Pitfalls that might be encountered; and
i) Limitations to proposed procedures.

4). Project Timetable: The proposal should outline all important phases as a function of time, year to year, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant funding period.

c. Field 12. Add Other Attachments
See Part V. Section 4.12 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide (Field 12 on the form) for instructions regarding mandatory Felony Convictions or Tax Delinquent Status.

The following instructions are in addition to those noted in Part V 4.12 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

- **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 on **no more than one page**, titled, "RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW". If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section.

- **Expected Outcomes – PDF Attachment**
  Title the attachment "Expected Outcomes" in the document header and save file as "ExpectedOutcomes." Please use a format, similar to what is provided below, to submit expected impacts and attach it as the last page of the application. This data will be requested when a grant is recommended for an award.

Recommended Format for Submitting Expected Outputs' Measures

Outcomes Metrics for DOCE Programs by Education Portfolio Goals

Primary Project Function: (Choose one)		
EDUCATION: ☐	**EXTENSION :** ☐	**RESEARCH:** ☐
DATA FOR MSI PROGRAMS: 1890s, HSI, 1994s, ANNH, Insular		

Total expected impact during entire grant period	**Expected Number**
1. Number of farmers/community members to be served, for example, provided with training and/or new information regarding markets, technology, production practices, etc.	
2. Number of products to be developed for the education and training of students through grant funds during the project period	
2-A. curricula, academic programs	
2-B. recruitment/retention programs	
2-C. teaching or educational materials, distance education capability, experiential learning opportunities	
3. Number of faculty supported by this grant for professional development during the grant period: participation in sabbaticals, workshops, conferences, etc.	

4. Number of students who will indirectly benefit from the products produced from the grant during the grant period (i.e., using the curriculum/instrumentation, enrolled in the program, recruited or retained but not paid by the grant using scholarships, fellowships and assistantships).	
5. Number of male students to be directly supported by this grant (i.e., scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, internships included as a cost in your project budget) for undergraduate or post-graduate education	
6. Number of underrepresented[1] male students to be supported during the grant period (Provide the best estimate based on past experience)	
7. Number of female students to be directly supported by this grant (i.e., scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, internships included as a cost in your project budget) for undergraduate or post-graduate education	
8. Number of underrepresented[1] female students to be supported during the grant period (Provide the best estimate based on past experience)	
9. Number of students supported by this grant (i.e., scholarships, fellowships, assistantships) who are pursuing their degree	
9-A. Two year or other certificates	
9-B. Undergraduate or other 4 year degrees	
9-C. Master's degree	
9-D. Ph.D. degree	
9-E. Postdoctoral training	
10. Number of students who will be supported by this grant on an internship or other experiential learning opportunity	
10-A. Domestic experiences, with a government or non-governmental organization that is not affiliated with your university	
10-B. International experiences, including study abroad, educational travel longer than a month, etc.	

[1]underrepresented = those whose representation among food and agricultural professionals is disproportionately less than their proportion in the general population as indicated in standard statistical references, or as documented on a case-by-case basis by national survey data (e.g. the U.S. Department of Education's Digest of Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Agricultural Education Information Systems, etc.).

Note

1. Please provide your best estimate based on past experiences, graduation rates, retention rates, etc.
2. Number of underrepresented students to be supported during the grant period (questions #6 and #8) should be less than or equal to total number of students supported by the grant (questions #5 and #7).
3. Response to question #9 should be the sum of 9-A through 9-E.
4. Response to question #10 should be the sum of 10-A and 10-B.

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 5 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. This section of the guide includes instructions about senior/key person profile requirements, and details about the biographical sketch and the current and pending support, including a link to a suggested template for the current and pending support.

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. Part V.6 also notes the importance and use of the information.

6. R&R Budget
Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part V, 7 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Budgets for each project year do NOT have to be the same from year to year. However, detailed budget information (budget and narrative) must be submitted for each year of the proposed project.

7. Supplemental Information Form
Detailed information related to the questions on this form is available in Part VI, 1 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. **Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name (i.e., "Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas), and the program code (i.e., "RIIA"). The AGFEI program will share the RIIA program code for this fiscal year. Note that accurate entry of the program code is very important for proper and timely processing of an application.

b. **Field 8. Conflict of Interest List**. See Part VI, 1.8 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

C. Submission Dates and Times

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

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 14, 2017**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

If you have trouble submitting an application to Grants.gov, you should 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.

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

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, contact the Agency Contact identified in Part VII of the 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, you should cite this number on all future correspondence.

D. Funding Restrictions

Section 713 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016 (Pub. L. 114-113) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided (or 42.857 percent of total direct costs) under each award. Therefore, 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.

If your institution does not have, or cannot obtain, a negotiated rate, you must calculate an indirect cost rate in order to request indirect costs. You should calculate an indirect cost rate based on actual costs for the entire organization for the most recently completed accounting year. If no prior cost history exists, you should use budgeted costs for the entire organization. You should follow the example(s) found at: http://nifa.usda.gov/business/indirect_cost_process.html for information regarding this process. You will be required to obtain a federally-negotiated indirect cost rate from your cognizant agency. If your organization has never had an indirect cost rate, you may also opt for a 10% de Minimis rate (2 CFR 200.414(f)). You may also elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phase "None requested" should be written in this space.
You may not use grant funds awarded under this authority to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such a space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

The use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility is not allowed under this the RIIA program. With prior approval, and in accordance with the cost principles set forth in 2 CFR part 220, some RIIA grant funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching or research spaces in order to carry out a funded project. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must demonstrate that the work is essential to achieving the major purpose of the project. Grant funds may not be used for endowment funding.

Statutory language or agency policy limits the maximum potential funding period (including any awards transferred from another institution or organization) to five years in duration. The funding period will commence on the effective date cited in the award notification. Any such limitation also applies to subcontracts made under awards subject to a funding period limitation.

E. Other Submission Requirements

You should follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV, Section 1.9 in the document entitled "NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide."

Project Directors Meeting

During the tenure of a grant, Project Directors (PD)s must attend at least one National PD meeting, if offered in Washington, DC, 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 of the projects. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in the application's budget under travel expenses.

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

F. Evaluation Plan

All projects must have an Evaluation Plan 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.

The complexity of the evaluation will depend on the scope of the project. Grantees are encouraged to obtain an independent evaluation to secure appropriate documentation of the projects outcomes and impacts. Such efforts should be led by knowledgeable and experienced individuals. As a guide, up to 10% of the grant funds may be used to support this purpose.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

We evaluate each application in a two-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:

- 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;
- the need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields;
- the need to include 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;
- 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;
- the need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and
- 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 RIIA and AGFEI will recommend that your project be approved for support from currently available funds or be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

RIIA and AGFEI reserve 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.

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Potential for Advancing Quality of Education/Significance of the Problem (30 points). This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food, agriculture, natural resources and human sciences 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 educational equity, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, and potential for adoption by other institutions.

2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages (25 points).
This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. Emphasis is placed on the quality of educational or research support provided to the applicant institution through its inter-collegial engagement and partnership and necessary outside collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project.

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 or research 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.

4. Key Personnel (15 points).
This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications 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 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 inter-institutional sources and necessary outside collaborators; 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 educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority educational or research need areas.

In addition, AGFEI applications should discuss the following topics:

a. Within the Potential for Advancing Quality of Education/Significance of the Problem section, what advantage that will be gained from the proposed construction, renovation, or acquisition of laboratory equipment. How the objectives are realistic and not over-extending the institution capabilities as well as how the facility proposal is linked to a realistic university planning effort for programs in the food and agricultural sciences.

b. Within the Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages section, provide a step-by-step description of the proposed design construction, renovation, and/or acquisition activity. The detailed descriptions of the procedures that will be used in accomplishing project goals in the sequence in which you plan to carry them out and the proposed timeline for project milestones.

c. Within the Budget and Cost-Effectiveness section, it must be shown that the anticipated costs are allowable, reasonable and necessary as well as that the budget is linked to an overall strategic planning process.

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. See http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/competitive_peer_review.html for further information about conflicts of interest and confidentiality as related to the peer review process.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted one-time, with updates on an as-needed basis. This requirement is part of the responsibility determined 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).

E. Application Disposition

An application may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made regarding the application. Each application that is not selected for funding, including those that are withdrawn, will be retained by RIIA and AGFEI for a period of three years.

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 information described in 2 CFR 200.210.

See http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html to view current NIFA award terms and conditions.

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 may include, but are not limited to, the ones listed on the NIFA web page – http://nifa.usda.gov/federal-regulations.

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—is available at http://nifa.usda.gov/policy-guide.

Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research

Refer to Part II, D for more information.

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.

Grantees are to use REEport, NIFA's electronic, web-based inventory system to submit an initial project initiation which documents expected products and outcomes of the project. Additionally, annual progress report documenting realized project outcomes must be submitted to the electronic system. The web-based system facilitates an electronic workflow between access to information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements, including

those specific to the annual and final technical reports, are included in the award terms and conditions.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Programmatic Contact –

Irma Lawrence, Ed.D.
Title: National Program Leader
Unit: Division of Community and Education, Institute of Youth, Family and Community
Location: 4444 Waterfront Centre, 800 9th St., SW, Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 720-2082
Fax: (202) 202-4924
Email: ilawrence@nifa.usda.gov

Administrative/Business Contact –

Bruce Mertz
Title: Team Leader, Team I
Unit: Office of Grants and Financial Management
Location: 2174 Waterfront Centre, 800 9th St., SW, Washington, DC 20024Phone: (202) 401-5062
Fax: (202) 401-6271
Email: bmertz@nifa.usda.gov

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. 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 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:

(i) Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring prior written approval).
(ii) Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
(iii) The disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project, by the approved project director or principal investigator.
(iv) The inclusion, unless waived by the federal awarding agency, of costs that require prior approval in accordance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E—Cost Principles of this part or 45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, "Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals," or 48 CFR Part 31, "Contract Cost Principles and Procedures," as applicable.
(v) The transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs as defined in §200.75 Participant support costs to other categories of expense.
(vi) Unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards, the subawarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount subawards as described in §200.332 Fixed amount subawards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
(vii) Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity.
(viii) The need arises for additional federal funds to complete the project.

The awardee will be subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award. See http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html for information about NIFA award terms.

B. 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 of Agriculture 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. We will retain for three years a copy of an application that does not result in an award. 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.

C. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 2 CFR Part 415, Subpart C, 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.

D. Definitions

Please refer to 7 CFR 3430, Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Financial Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions, for applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.

E. Materials Available on the Internet

RIIA and AGFEI Program information will be made available on the NIFA website at: https://nifa.usda.gov/program/resident-instruction-grants-riia-and-distance-education-grants-deg-institutions-higher