REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS
1890 Institution Teaching, Research, and Extension Capacity Building Grants Program

MODIFICATIONS: 6/20/2024 – This RFA has been modified from the original announcement. Edits are indicated using track changes and red font so the public/potential applicants can identify the changes within the solicitation.
Edits appear on pages: 33

FUNDING YEAR:	Fiscal Year (FY) 2024
APPLICATION DEADLINE:	August 6, 2024
ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING:	$28,000,000
AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD RANGE:	$100,000 - $750,000
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:	USDA-NIFA-CBGP-010814
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER:	10.216

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The 1890 Institution Teaching, Research, and Extension Capacity Building Grants Program is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.216.

Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, August 6, 2024 [*Ref to Part I, C of this RFA*]
Letter of Intent:	Not Applicable
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice (*NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month*)

Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA). The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when programs are grounded in DEIA. NIFA is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of programs and encourages individuals, institutions, and organizations from underserved communities to apply to funding opportunities as lead, co-lead, or subaward recipient(s), and to engage as leaders in the peer panel review process to support the development of strong networks and collaborations. NIFA encourages applications that engage diverse communities and have broad impacts through research, education, extension, and integrated activities to address current and future challenges.

Stakeholder Input. NIFA seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) 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 RFAs, 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. Please use the following subject line: Response to the 1890 Institution Teaching, Research and Extension Capacity Building Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NIFA requests applications for the 1890 Institution Teaching, Research, and Extension Capacity Building Grants (CBG) Program for fiscal year (FY) 2024 to strengthen research, teaching, and extension capacity needed to advance fundamental sciences as well as applied research and development in support of food and agricultural sciences at the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions.

The amount available for grants in FY 2024 is approximately $28,000,000.

Eligible institutions may submit up to twelve Standard/Collaborative and three Professional Development applications per institution in FY 2024.

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

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

This program is authorized in 7 U.S.C. 3152 (b)(4) and pursuant to annual appropriations made available specifically for the 1890 Capacity Building Program. Section 7107 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246) amended the authority for the 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program to allow for extension capacity building, as well as teaching and research.

See Appendix III for definitions of "Capacity Building" and "Food and Agricultural Sciences."

B. Purpose and Priorities

The CBG Program, under Assistance Listing Number 10.216 is designed specifically to build the institutional teaching, research, and extension capacities of the eligible institutions through cooperative programs with Federal and non-Federal entities.

The CBG Program is designed to achieve three major goals:

1. Advance the cultural diversity of the food and agricultural sciences scientific and professional workforce by attracting and educating more students from underrepresented groups;
2. Strengthen linkages among the 1890 Institutions, other colleges and universities, USDA, other Federal agencies, and private industry; and
3. Enhance and strengthen the quality of teaching/education, research, and extension programs at the 1890 Institutions to establish them as full partners in the U.S. food and agricultural sciences higher education system.

The CBG Program is aligned with the following:
USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 goals:

1. Goal 1: Combat Climate Change to Support America's Working Lands, Natural Resources, and Communities
2. Goal 2: Ensure America's Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous
3. Goal 4: Make Safe, Nutritious Food Available to All Americans
4. Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA

USDA Science and Research Strategy, 2023–2026 priorities:

1. Priority 1: Accelerating Innovative Technologies and Practices
2. Priority 2: Driving Climate-Smart Solutions
3. Priority 3: Bolstering Nutrition Security and Health
4. Priority 4: Cultivating Resilient Ecosystems
5. Priority 5: Translating Research into Action

Global Engagement. NIFA supports global engagement that advances U.S. agricultural goals. NIFA recognizes that collaboration with international partners may be necessary to attain the agency's goals for U.S. agriculture, promote global competence of our nation's future agricultural workforce, and promote safe and nutritious food security in a growing world. Therefore, although application to this RFA is limited to eligible U.S. institutions, applicants

may collaborate with international partners, to include subcontracts to international partners or other institutions. Applications must clearly demonstrate benefits to the U.S. (see International Partnerships).

Leadership Skills Development. The development of leadership skills emphasizing team effort, interpersonal skills, knowledge, and qualities are necessary to prepare students for agricultural and related careers in the private sector, government, and academia. CBG teaching applications must demonstrably incorporate a leadership development component to equip students with technical and leadership abilities upon graduation. Specific activities may include:

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

Building Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning Capacity for Education, Research, and Extension at 1890 Institutions. FY 2024 1890 CBG Program is seeking proposals that strengthen artificial intelligence and machine learning capacity in food and agricultural sciences. Examples of relevant activities under this Need Area for Education/Teaching proposals could include (but are not limited to) curricula design and materials development; scientific instrumentation for teaching; student experiential learning; and student recruitment and retention. Research proposals could include application of artificial intelligence and machine learning for (including but not limited to) monitoring, analytics and automation in all food and agricultural disciplines, including precision crop agriculture, precision livestock farming, and advanced food manufacturing. Extension proposals could address how artificial intelligence and machine learning tools can be applied to improve access to information and enhance extension services. USDA NIFA and NSF have recently established a nationwide network of artificial intelligence research institutes (https://nifa.usda.gov/press-release/artificial-intelligence-research).

Special emphasis area. FY 2024 1890 CBG Program is seeking proposals that will lead to better management strategies for both conventional and organic production systems to enhance production efficiency, improve animal health and welfare, and develop high quality animal products for human use.

CBG Priority Areas

1. Human health, nutrition security, obesity as it relates to nutrition, and human sciences
2. Rural communities for the 21st century (expanded opportunities for small businesses and small farms)
3. Bioenergy/biofuel and natural resources
4. Sustainable agriculture
5. Food safety
6. Positive youth development
7. Water quality
8. Family and consumer sciences

9. Global food security and agricultural biosecurity
10. Environmental sciences and climate change
11. Workforce development
12. Climate smart agriculture

Other Areas in General Food & Agricultural Sciences

This priority area is for innovative applications in Teaching/Education, Research, or Extension in areas that address local, regional, or national issues in the food and agricultural sciences not included in the priority areas listed above. Projects in this area may not fit any of the USDA or NIFA Strategic Goals, but address an emerging local, regional, or national issue.

Metrics. Applications must describe and assess the expected products, results, outcomes, and their potential impacts on strengthening food and agriculture teaching/education, research, and extension in the U.S. In addition to the text, quantified metrics are to be summarized in table format.

For a program informational webinar please visit the NIFA calendar for dates, event registration, and link. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in any of the informational webinars listed, please contact the event host listed no later than 10 days prior to the event.

Capacity Building Grants Program Key Information

1) Program, Project, and Grant Information

1. Program Codes:
    a. Research (EQ)
    b. Teaching (EP)
    c. Extension (EWE)
2. Program Code Name: 1890 Capacity Building Grants Program
3. ALN: 10.216
4. Project Types:
    a. Research Project
    b. Teaching/Education Project
    c. Extension Project
    d. Integrated Project
5. Grant Types:
    a. Professional Development Grant
    b. Standard Grant
    c. Collaborative Grant
6. Application Deadline: August 6, 2024 at 5:00 pm ET
7. Anticipated Number of Awards: 60

2) Applications, Awards, and Project Duration

1. Professional Development
    a. Maximum Number of Applications Per Institution: 3
    b. Maximum Number of Awards: 1 award per faculty member
    c. Project Duration: 12 months (Funds may be used for salary and benefits up to one year)

2. Standard/Collaborative
    a. Maximum Number of Applications Per Institution: 12
    b. Maximum Number of Awards: No limit, but institution cannot receive more than 10% of the available funds
    c. Project Duration: Up to 36 months

3) Maximum Request Allocation (by Project and Grant Types)

1. Teaching/Education
    a. Standard: $150,000
    b. Collaborative: $300,000
    c. Professional Development: $100,000
2. Research
    a. Standard: $300,000
    b. Collaborative: $500,000
    c. Professional Development: $100,000
3. Extension
    a. Standard: $250,000
    b. Collaborative: $350,000
    c. Professional Development: $100,000
4. Integrated
    a. Standard: $600,000
    b. Collaborative: $600,000
    c. Professional Development: N/A

See Part II C of this RFA for additional funding for Artificial Intelligence (AI)

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for the Capacity Building Grants Program in FY 2024 is approximately $28,000,000. 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 RFA.

B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in Part V of this RFA. Applications for FY 2024 are limited to the following application types:

1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in Part V of this RFA 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).
3. *Renewal application*. Renewal applications must contain the same information as required for new applications and must contain a p*rogress report* for the corresponding award. The progress report must include the implementation of the data management plan (DMP) of the previously funded project. Renewal applications are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Applicants submitting a renewal application must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously approved 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.

Project Types. Applicants must propose one of the following project types:

a. Teaching/Education Projects. Single-function Teaching/Education Projects should develop human capital to help meet current and future national food and agricultural sciences workplace needs. Examples of relevant activities under this project type include (but are not limited to) the following: formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience, such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

Need Areas. Teaching/Education Project applications must demonstrate how the chosen Priority Area is addressed when selecting one of the following Teaching/Education Need Areas:

i. *Curricula Design and Materials Development.* This Need Area promotes developing new (or adapting existing) curricula and related materials to meet

changes anticipated within the food and agricultural sciences. Projects must be integrated and multidisciplinary and possess learner-centered instruction that will demonstrate an improvement in teaching and student learning against core course objectives. Applicants are expected to demonstrate how the project will reach large audiences efficiently and outcomes are scalable or measurable; and provide hands-on learning experiences, extend learning beyond the classroom, reinforce recent research on how to motivate students to learn, retain, apply, and transfer knowledge, skills, and competencies, integrate and synthesize knowledge, and work collaboratively in teams.

ii. *Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Education.* This Need Area prepares academic faculty for sustainable change to address emerging student clientele (demographic composition, learning styles, digital applicability), improve teaching competency (subject matter expertise and pedagogy), or develop student recruitment, retention, and advising skills (career opportunities in emerging agricultural sciences fields). Training of targeted faculty recipient(s) must be intentional and relevant to the identified educational needs of the students, who will be the beneficiaries of such faculty development.

iii. *Instructional Delivery Systems.* This Need Area encourages the development and use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. Examples of alternative methods of delivering instruction include (but are not limited to): using state-of the-art digital technology; faculty sharing, cross enrollments, joint degrees, and/or teleconferencing; networking via satellite communications; e-learning and online instruction; utilizing mobile classrooms/laboratories and individualized learning centers; experiential learning; or outdoor and field learning. Multi-institutional, regional, or national collaborations are encouraged. Emphasis should be on improving the art of teaching by faculty.

iv. *Scientific Instrumentation for Teaching.* This Need Area provides students with the necessary experience with suitable, up-to-date equipment to involve them in work central to understanding advances in the food and agricultural sciences and to prepare them for work or further graduate/professional training. Additionally, this Need Area will support the acquisition of instructional laboratory and classroom equipment.

v. *Student Experiential Learning.* This Need Area encourages the development of new student learning opportunities where students are placed in team-oriented, problem-solving, decision-making situations in the context of real-world experiences. Experiential learning in laboratory research or other internships with business and industry, community organizations, Federal agencies, and other domains that provide knowledge and skills for graduate study is desired.

vi. *Student Recruitment and Retention.* This Need Area aims to enhance student recruitment and retention programs to strengthen the Nation's scientific and professional workforce. Recruitment and retention efforts should be summarized quantitatively (i.e., numbers of students recruited as compared to those contacted) and qualitatively (i.e., lessons learned that improve future recruitment strategies).

b. Research Projects. Single-function Research Projects support fundamental or applied research conducted by individual investigators, co-investigators within the same discipline, or multidisciplinary teams. The following must be considered when developing research applications:

1. Fundamental research means research that: (i) increases knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and has the potential for broad application; and (ii) impacts agriculture, food, nutrition, or the environment.
2. Applied research means research that includes expansion of the findings of fundamental research to uncover practical and innovative ways in which new knowledge can be advanced to benefit individuals and society.
3. Multi-disciplinary projects are those in which investigators from two or more disciplines collaborate closely to address a common problem. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences.

Need Areas. Research Project applications must demonstrate how the chosen Priority Area is addressed when selecting one of the following Research Need Areas:

i. *Studies and Experimentation in Food and Agricultural Sciences*. The purpose of this Need Area is to advance the body of knowledge in basic and applied natural and social sciences that comprise the food and agricultural sciences. Projects addressing this Need Area are encouraged to focus on multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research activities addressing critical issues rather than single discipline-specific research studies.

ii. *Centralized Research Support Systems.* The purpose of this Need Area is to establish centralized research support systems that:

- Meet national needs or serve regions or 1890 Institution clientele that cannot otherwise afford or do not have access to such support, or
- Provide research support more economically, thereby freeing up resources for other research uses. Applicants must demonstrate how the chosen Priority Area is addressed when selecting this Need Area.
- Provide suitable equipment to involve in research-related activities.

c. 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. Program delivery may range from community-based to national audiences and use communication methods including

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

Need Areas. Extension Project applications must demonstrate how the chosen Priority Area is addressed when selecting one of the following Extension Need Areas:

i. *Extension Program Development Support Systems.* The purpose of this Need Area is to increase the quality of extension education programs to clientele through training of Extension specialists, educators, paraprofessionals, technicians, and volunteers. The training may focus on professional development, leadership development, collaborative research development, application of the Extension program development model, development of train-the-trainer models, volunteer development, and/or volunteer delivery systems. This Need Area will also include program accountability support systems that will translate into the delivery of more effective programs by enhancing the expertise and instruments available to effectively report impacts and evaluate Extension programs.

ii. *Extension Technology Upgrades.* The purpose of this Need Area is to provide funds to upgrade traditional equipment and instruments, establish mobile delivery systems (e.g., laboratories and food safety kitchens), and offer emerging delivery technologies (e.g., IT applications such as distance education, web conferencing, podcasting, and social media interfaces).

iii. *Extension Delivery/Methodology.* The purpose of this Need Area is to: develop effective methodologies, strategies, or delivery systems to enhance services to the underserved, including developing new or modifying existing curriculums; establish program centers, experiential learning programs, or after-school programs; and utilize research results for effective community-based programs.

iv. *Other Extension Initiatives.* The purpose of this Need Area is to support projects that may not fit the Need Areas above, but are creative initiatives designed to provide enhancement of the institutions' Extension capacity.

d. Integrated Projects. An Integrated Project includes at least two of the three functions of the agricultural knowledge system (i.e., research, teaching/education, extension) within a project. The project must name one of the project types (teaching/education, research, or extension) as the **primary project type**. The primary project type is defined as the area that will receive most of the funding (up to two-thirds of the total funding). There is no program code for the integrated application. **Therefore, it is imperative that applicants clearly identify the primary project type in their project summary and select the appropriate program code for this area**.

The functions addressed in the project must be focused on a problem or issue and be interwoven throughout the life of the project to complement and reinforce one another. The functions must be interdependent and necessary for the success of the project, and no more than two-thirds of the project's budget may be focused on a single component. Integrated Project applications must include individuals on the project team with significant expertise in each component of the project (research, teaching/education, and/or extension). Integrated Project applications may be submitted by a single eligible institution where the expertise for all areas (research, teaching/education, and/or extension) are within the Project Director's (PD) institution or multi-institutions where the expertise for one or two of the areas are from another institution(s).

For additional information on integrated programs, including tips for writing Integrated Project applications and an example of an integrated application, see Integrated Programs Application Information. You are also encouraged to contact the Program Contact to discuss the anticipated project parameters and outcomes to ensure the application content appropriately meets the requirements of an Integrated Project.

Building Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning Capacity for Education, Research, and Extension at 1890 Institutions. The FY 2024 1890 CBG Program is seeking proposals that strengthen artificial intelligence and machine learning capacity in food and agricultural sciences. Applicants are strongly encouraged to foster collaborations with the following USDA-NIFA funded AI institutes:

a. USDA-NIFA AI Institute for Future Agricultural Resilience, Management, and Sustainability.
b. USDA-NIFA AI Institute for Next Generation Food Systems.

Applicants may partner with other institutions with AI/machine learning programs but **must obtain prior approval from NIFA** before submitting the proposal. Prior approval requests should include justification for such a partnership. Applications without NIFA's prior approval to partner with other institutions *will not be* considered.

Budget: In addition to the budget allocation described in Part I B of this RFA, the successful applicant with an AI/machine learning focus may request up to $150,000.

Discipline Codes. Eligible institutions may, within the Teaching/Education, Research, or Extension Project Need Areas identified for support, propose projects in any discipline(s) or subject matter area(s) of the Food and Agricultural Sciences noted in **Discipline Codes** below. Applicants are to identify a ***primary discipline code*** and may identify one additional discipline code that categorizes the project application. At review, each application is evaluated by three peer reviewers. The discipline codes selected by the applicants are used to match reviewers' education and expertise to the applications.

Discipline Codes

1. Teaching/Education Codes
    - T1: Agribusiness Management & Marketing

- T2: Agricultural Engineering
- T3: Animal Sciences
- T4: Aquaculture
- T5: Data Science
- T6: Entomology
- T7: Environmental Science & Natural Resource Conservation
- T8: Food Science/Technology
- T9: General Agricultural Science
- T10: Human Sciences
- T11: Human Nutrition
- T12: International Education
- T13: Plant Sciences
- T14: Related Biological Sciences
- T15: Rural Development/Social Sciences
- T16: Veterinary Science
- T17: Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning
- T18: Other Teaching/Education Areas

2. Research Codes
    - R1: Agribusiness Management & Marketing
    - R2: Agricultural Engineering
    - R3: General Agricultural Sciences
    - R4: Animal Sciences
    - R5: Aquaculture
    - R6: Conservation and Renewable Natural Resources
    - R7: Data Science
    - R8: Entomology
    - R9: Environmental Sciences/Management
    - R10: Food Science/Technology
    - R11: Human Nutrition
    - R12: International Research
    - R13: Plant Sciences
    - R14: Related Biological Sciences
    - R15: Soil Sciences
    - R16: Human Sciences
    - R17: Rural Development/Social Sciences
    - R18: Veterinary Science
    - R19: Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning
    - R20: Other Research Areas
3. Extension Codes
    - E1: 4-H and Positive Youth Development
    - E2: Agriculture
    - E3: Leadership Development
    - E4: Natural Resources
    - E5: Family and Consumer Sciences

- E6: Community Economic Development
- E7: International Extension
- E8: Rural Development/Social Sciences
- E9: Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning
- E10: Other Extension Areas

Grant Types. Applicants must select the appropriate grant type:

a. Standard Grant. A Standard Grant is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period without the announced intention of providing additional support at a future date. Standard Grants support targeted original scientific Teaching/Education, Research, Extension, or Integrated 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 project is to be executed, without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners (subaward budgets are not allowable). Applications for Standard Grants must address local or regional problems or opportunities in one of the listed Priority Areas (**Part I, CBG Priority Areas**). The application must have the potential to encourage regional or national program delivery in one of the selected Priority Areas. A Project Director may receive only one new award as the lead individual in a Need Area that focuses on a single subject or discipline. Funds do not have to be equally divided among project years.

b. Collaborative Grant. Collaborative Grants support projects with at least one additional partner or a multi-partner approach to enhance Teaching/Education, Research, and Extension programs. Collaborative Grants should build linkages to generate a critical mass of expertise, skill, and technology to address programs related to the food and agricultural sciences (applicants should address one of the listed Priority Areas (**Part I, CBG Priority Areas**). Projects should be multidisciplinary and/or interdisciplinary and address issues at the local, state, regional, and/or national level(s). Grants can reduce duplication of efforts and/or build capacity and should be organized and led by a strong Project Director with documented project management knowledge and skills to organize and carry out the initiative. Collaborative Grants are expected to be larger than Standard Grants (refer to **Part II, Maximum Request Allocation** for the maximum fund amounts). The partners must share grant funds (the applicant institution will transfer no more than 50% of the awarded funds to the other institutions participating in the project). A separate subaward budget and budget justification must be included in the application for each of the identified project partners. The award of grant funds through subawards is limited to the eligible applicant institutions and collaborating institutions.

c. Professional Development Grant. Professional Development Grants are intended to provide an opportunity for individual faculty members (i.e., each award is to support one faculty member at the applicant university) to enhance the quality of their Teaching/Education, Research, and/or Extension work. Examples of projects addressing this area include, but are not limited to:

i. Gaining experience with recent developments or innovative technology relevant to their professional responsibilities;
ii. Working under the guidance and direction of experts who have substantial expertise in an area related to project/career goals;
iii. Working with professionals or peers in government, industry, or colleges or universities to learn new applications and enhance networks within a field; and/or
iv. Expanding competence with new methods of information delivery related to Teaching/Education and Extension.

Professional Development applications that support Teaching/Education, Research, and/or Extension faculty, may include approaches such as:

i. Sabbaticals;
ii. Mini sabbaticals for short-term training;
iii. Faculty exchanges; and/or
iv. Continuing education.

The training must address critical U.S. food and agricultural sciences issues at the local, state, regional, and national level(s). The application should align with the university's strategic plan for food and agricultural sciences. Applications should also address one or more of the CBG priority areas identified in **Part I, CBG Priority Areas**.

Funds may be used for salary and benefits (up to one year), travel, supplies and training/course fees. **Funds will not be awarded** to support activities in fulfillment of degree requirements or travel to make presentations at conferences or meetings.

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 CBG Program must meet all requirements discussed in this RFA. 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 Grants Overview provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

Applications may only be submitted by eligible 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, including Tuskegee University, West Virginia State University, and Central State University (per Section 7129 of (Public Law 113-79) (7 U.S.C. 3152(d)(2). **The eligible institutions are:**

1. Alabama A&M University
2. Alcorn State University
3. Central State University
4. Delaware State University
5. Florida A&M University
6. Fort Valley State University
7. Kentucky State University
8. Langston University
9. Lincoln University (MO)
10. North Carolina A&T State University
11. Prairie View A&M University
12. South Carolina State University
13. Southern University and A&M College
14. Tennessee State University
15. Tuskegee University
16. University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff
17. University of Maryland-Eastern Shore
18. Virginia State University
19. West Virginia State University

Faculty and students receiving support for developmental activities or educational costs from the grant award must be an eligible participant (citizen or national of the United States as defined in Appendix III, Definitions). Students must be enrolled at institutions that are eligible to receive CBG awards (see above paragraphs). Where student or faculty eligibility is claimed under 8 U.S.C. 1101(a) (22), documentary evidence from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) as to such eligibility must be made available to NIFA upon request.

United States citizenship is not required for faculty who serve as PD, co-PD, or key personnel on a Standard or Collaborative project; however, United States citizenship is required for faculty who serve as PD on a Professional Development project.

Faculty may not serve as PD on more than two active CBG projects. If an applicant has two active projects, at least one project must be scheduled to expire by the end of the current fiscal year. Faculty may submit multiple Standard and/or Collaborative Grant applications as the lead PD to the CBG Program in FY 2024. Additionally, there is no limit on the number of

applications for which faculty may be listed as co-PD or key personnel. **NOTE:** All key personnel must submit a current and pending support form. Key personnel may not commit more than 100% effort on concurrent projects.

All collaborative teaching, research, and extension projects and integrated projects may subcontract, as deemed appropriate, to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary to conduct a successful project. The subcontract must advance capacity building at the 1890 institution in the area of the submitted application.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No Match Required – The CBG Program has no matching requirement. NIFA does not require matching support for this program, and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on Grants.gov and Grants 101. **The Steps to Obtain Application Materials** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide contains detailed information regarding the Grants.gov registration process. 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.

Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Step One: Register

New Users to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).

Step Two: Download Adobe

Download and Install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements)

Step Three: Find Application

Using this **Funding Opportunity Number, USDA-NIFA-CBGP-010814**, search for application here: Opportunity Package.

Step Four: Assess Readiness

Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization's readiness to submit an electronic application.

Help and Resources

1. Grants.gov Support
    a. Grants.gov Online Support
    b. Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035
    c. Email support: support@grants.gov
    d. Self-service customer-based support: Grants.gov iPortal
    e. Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays.
2. NIFA Support
    a. Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
    b. Key Information: Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7a.m.-5p.m. ET, except federal holidays

B. Content and Form of the Application

The NIFA Grants Application Guide is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA 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 RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Key Application Instructions** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Key Application Instructions

1. Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) form (Part IV)
2. Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format (Part IV)
3. Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission (Part IV)
4. Follow the submission instructions (Part IV)
5. Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R (Part V)
6. Contact the Grants.gov helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence (N/A)
7. Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding application within 30 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.

Field 7. Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the CBG Program. The applicant should use the NIFA template and adhere to the maximum limit of 250 words. See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide for instructions and templates.

Field 8. Project Narrative (PN).
Formatting Requirements and Page Limitations:
For Standard and Collaborative Grant applications, the PN must not exceed 25 pages (*1.5 spaced, 1-inch margins*), including figures and tables. The font size for the PN and tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman.

For Professional Development Grant applications, the PN must not exceed 8 pages *(1.5 spaced, 1-inch margins)*, including figures and tables. The font size for the PN and tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman.

The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly related to the proposed project such as reference list. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. After converting the narrative to PDF format and making the necessary adjustments, applicants should verify that the PN does not exceed the applicable page limit.

Proposals with project narratives that exceed the page limit requirement will be returned without review.

Applicants must address all components of the Evaluation Criteria in their Project Narrative (see Part V, B).

Project Narrative. All applicants should arrange their narrative in the following order:

Cover Page: The cover page is required, does not count toward the page limit of the Project Narrative, and should include the following:

i. Type of Application (see Part II, Application Restrictions.)
ii. Project Type (see Part II, Project and Grant Types.)
iii. Grant Type (see Part II, Project and Grant Types)
iv. Need Area addressed (see Part II, Project and Grant Types.)
v. Program Code (see **Part I, Capacity Building Grants Program Key Information**). For integrated project applications, only list the program code for the **primary component**. For example, if the primary component of an integrated project is Research, then the applicant must indicate "EQ" as the program code.
vi. Primary CBG Priority Areas (see **Part I, CBG Priority Areas**)
vii. Discipline Code (see **Part II, Discipline Codes**)

Table of Contents: A table of contents is encouraged in the Project Narrative and will not count toward the page limit.

Response to previous review (if applicable): The response to previous review must not exceed 2 *(1.5 spaced, 1-inch margins)* pages. The font size should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman. The response to previous review does not count toward the page limit of the Project Narrative and is only required for resubmitted applications.

Standard and Collaborative Grant Applications. To facilitate application review and evaluation, the applicant must include the following headings in the Project Narrative (A. through D.).

A. Potential for Building and Strengthening Capacity and Advancing the Quality of Teaching/Education, Research, or Extension

1. **Significance of the Problem and Opportunity**. Clearly state the specific education/teaching, research, or extension problem or opportunity to be addressed and the connection(s) with the institutional goals, strategic plan, or Plan of Work.

   Project Justification. Summarize the body of knowledge justifying the need for the proposed project using graphical and tabulated format when possible. Discuss how the project will be of value at the state, regional, national, or international level(s). Describe any ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project for which previous funding was received under this program or other funding programs (including projects supported under the NIFA 1890 Facilities Grants Program, 1890 Formula Programs, and Cultivating the Next Generation of Diverse Food and Agriculture Professionals Program (NEXTGEN)).

2. **Impact on Building and Strengthening Capacity**. Describe the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will enhance its teaching/education, research, or extension capacity. Include a description of baseline information/preliminary data. Additionally, include the project's potential for adoption by other institutions.

3. **Continuation Plans**. Describe the likelihood of, or specific plans for, continuation or expansion of the project beyond the period of USDA support. Applicants must indicate if eventual self-support is built into the project and if plans are being made to institutionalize the program if it is successful.

4. **Innovation**. Describe the creative approach to 1) improving the quality of food and agricultural sciences; 2) solving a scientific problem or advancing a field of science that addresses objective(s) of high importance at the 1890 institution; and 3) strengthening institutional capacity building.

5. **Multidisciplinary and/or Problem-based Focus**. Indicate how the teaching/education project is relevant to multiple disciplines in the food and agricultural sciences, or with other academic curricula, and how the research or extension project is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, and/or involves integrated (teaching/education, research, and extension) activities. Identify the field of science and the objective(s) that are of high importance and will be addressed at the applicant's institution. If partners are included, provide a concise plan on how they will be managed and coordinated. Identify potential results in 1890 institutional capacity building.

6. **Products and Results**. Explain, including metrics, the expected products, results, and outputs, and their potential impacts on strengthening food and agricultural sciences education, research, and extension in the United States. Metrics to assess products and outputs are to be clearly delineated in the proposal. Describe the economic, environmental, and/or social gains resulting from the project outcomes (**see Definitions-Appendix III, 'Outcomes'**). If the application has a collaborator(s), include a clear identification of the role of the collaborator(s), and the expected outcomes for the 1890 institution. Please use the **Key Information: Expected Outcome Format** to submit expected outcomes and attach it as the last page of the application.

7. **Institutional Commitment**. Explain the institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) that are available to carry out the project.

B. Overall Approach, Cooperative Linkages, and Quality of the Proposal

1. **Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages**. Cite and discuss the specific project objectives to be accomplished. For Collaborative Grant and Integrated Project proposals, identify the individual(s) responsible to accomplish each objective.

2. **Plan of Operation and Methodology**. Describe procedures for accomplishing the objectives of the project. Describe plans for management of the project to ensure its proper and efficient administration. Clearly identify and describe the metrics for evaluating successful project management. Discuss the extent to which students from the 1890 institutions will be involved in the teaching/education, research, extension, or integrated project. Describe experimental designs and relevant statistical analyses, if applicable.

3. **Timetable**. Provide a timetable for conducting the project. Identify all important project milestones and dates as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination, and closeout. Identify limitations that may impact the timetable and provide strategies to avoid or compensate for the limitations. For Collaborative Grant applications, include the responsibilities of all partners in the project timetable.

4. **Evaluation Plan**. Program evaluation is a systematic method for collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer basic questions about proposed initiatives to build or strengthen capacity of the institution in a specific area in the food and agricultural sciences. Provide a methodology and implementation plan for evaluating the accomplishment of stated objectives, results, and measurable outcomes during the project. Clearly identify the performance measure(s) by which the project's success will be assessed. In the evaluation plan, indicate the criteria and corresponding weight of each to be used in the evaluation process. Describe any data to be collected and analyzed and explain the methodology that will be used to determine the extent to which the needs underlying the project are met. Indicate how the evaluation will determine whether and to what degree the project had an impact on teaching/education, research, and extension capacity. Identify those personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering the project evaluation and reporting process and include a description of their expertise or credentials. The evaluation plan is a crucial component of the application. The following outline may be used as a guide when developing an evaluation plan to monitor institutional capacity building/strengthening:
    i. Section I: A description of the evaluation framework that specifies what you want to evaluate, what questions are to be addressed in the evaluation, and the timeframe for conducting the evaluation.
    ii. Section II: A description of the program implementation objectives.
    iii. Section III: A description of the program outcome objectives, performance measures, and impact.
    iv. Section IV: Procedures for managing and monitoring the evaluation and reporting.

5. **Dissemination Plan**. Document how project accomplishments (products, results, and impacts) will be disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic or scientific community and to policy makers and the public. Discuss the

institution's commitment to disseminate project results and products. Identify target audiences and explain methods of communication.

6. **Partnership and Collaborative Efforts**. Explain how the project will maximize partnership and collaborative efforts to strengthen food and agricultural sciences across teaching/education, research, and extension (e.g., involvement of faculty in related disciplines at the same institution, Collaborative Grant applications with other educational institutions, or expand cooperative activities with business or industry at the 1890 institution). As appropriate, clearly describe the collaborative management plan to ensure successful outcomes toward project goals.

7. **Potential Pitfalls, Limitations, and Alternatives.** Identify and explain any potential challenges that might impede progress during the duration of the project. Additionally, describe any potential strategies or alternatives that might be implemented to address such challenges.

C. Roles and Project Responsibilities of Key Personnel

1. **Number and Qualifications of Project Personnel**. The application must clearly explain the adequacy of the number and qualifications of key persons who will develop and carry out the project.

   Capacity of Personnel to Carry Out the Project. Qualified and sufficient personnel are critical for meeting the capacity building objective of a project. Proposals must clearly identify the role of all key personnel, responsibilities, and outcomes for each member, and describe the management plan to assure successful project outcomes.

D. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness

1. **Budget**. **In summary form**, explain how the total budget adequately supports the project. **A detailed budget justification (as it pertains to the Evaluation Criteria in Part V, B.) is required as a separate document and should be uploaded in the R&R Budget form (see Part V of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide).**

2. **Cost Effectiveness**. **In summary form**, explain: (1) the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; (2) the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); (3) the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and (4) the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources. Details about the cost- effectiveness of the budget (as it pertains to the Evaluation Criteria in Part V., B.) should be included in the detailed budget justification that should be attached to the R&R Budget (see Part V, 7 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide).

E. Logic Model The logic model is required for all project applications, except for professional development projects. The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used to develop your project before writing your proposal. It should detail the activities, outputs, and outcomes of the proposed project. Two additional pages may be used solely for the logic model. *The logic model does not count toward the page limit of the project narrative*, and it should be placed directly after the 25-page Project Narrative. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at Logic Model Planning Process**.**

Professional Development Applications. To facilitate application review and evaluation, the applicant must include the following headings in the Project Narrative (A. through D.), followed by the applicant's response for each item below.

A. Merit of the Proposed Activities as a Means of Enhancing the Capabilities and Competitiveness of the Applicant. Describe the merit and appropriateness of the proposed activities and how they will improve professional development for the applicant. Explain the relevant methods that will be involved with the professional development activities. Describe the collaborators that will be involved and their respective role with the project and ensure they are directly linked to the proposed objectives and activities. Identify all products, outputs, outcomes, and overall impacts of the project, and ensure they are appropriately linked to the project's objectives and activities. Include a realistic timetable that will ensure successful completion of the project.

Potential Pitfalls, Limitations, and Alternatives. Identify and explain any potential challenges that might impede progress during the duration of the project. Additionally, describe any potential strategies or alternatives that might be implemented to address such challenges.

B. Merit of Applicant's Experience. Describe the applicant's previous experience and background, including (but not limited to) the following:

i. Relevant professional development experience that provided appropriate knowledge and expertise in a food and agricultural science discipline; and
ii. Relevant experience in teaching/education, research, and/or extension.

C. Relevance to 1890 Institution and U.S. Agriculture. Describe the relevance of the project/training to the food and agricultural sciences strategic plan at the institution. Additionally, explain the relevance of the project/training to long-range improvements in the sustainability of U.S. agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and rural communities.

D. Appropriateness and Cost-effectiveness of the Proposed Budget. **In summary form**, explain how the total budget adequately supports the project, and the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve

project objectives. **A detailed budget justification (as it pertains to the Evaluation Criteria in Part V, B) is required as a separate document and should be uploaded in the R&R Budget form (see Part V, 7 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide).**

Field 12. *Other Attachments*. See Part V of the Application Guide.

1. ***Data Management Plan (DMP)***. A DMP is **required** for all applications. 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 will be considered during the merit review process (see Part V B of this RFA, NIFA's Data Management Plan).

2. **Accomplishment report of previously funded projects (if applicable) –** Project Directors with an active or previously received 1890 capacity building grant award must submit a one-page accomplishment report (one report per project up to two awards). The report must include impacts and outcomes of the funded project and briefly describe how the new proposal is related to the outcomes from the previous award. A copy of the REEport report must be included as an Appendix.

3. **Progress Report (if applicable)**. This requirement only applies to Renewal applications (see Part II, B.). These applications must include a progress report within the applicable page limitation of the Project Narrative.

4. **Collaborative Arrangement Letter(s).** If it is necessary to establish formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified in the project narrative (Partnership and Collaborative Efforts, Part IV, B.). If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of the application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, letters of support should be provided that describe the services to be performed. Additional information regarding consultants and collaborators is required in the detailed budget justification, including the rate of pay, letters of commitment, and vitae. Provide evidence (via letters from the parties involved in the partnership or collaborative arrangement) that indicates the roles, responsibilities, and anticipated outcomes from each member of the partnership. Partnership and Collaborative Letters must be signed by the Authorized Representatives (ARs). Letters should be submitted in PDF format, and there is no page limit. If the application has a USDA collaborator(s), documentation of USDA – 1890 Institution collaboration must be provided in the application. The collaboration should advance capacity building at the 1890 institution in the subject area of the submitted application. Provide a letter (PDF format) from the USDA cooperating office that is **signed by the USDA Unit Director (supervisor of the USDA collaborating staff person) and the USDA collaborator (i.e., staff person who will work on the project)** that clearly identifies the role and expected outputs and outcomes of their participation. Identify the person(s) at each agency or office who will serve as liaison or technical (scientists, educator)

contact for the project and provide their phone number and email address. **Due to potential conflicts of interest, NIFA collaborators are NOT permitted.**

5. **Institution/School/Department Goals and Objectives.** Include an institutional letter indicating that the application is within the strategic plan of the institution in food and agricultural sciences. The letter must describe which school or department at the applicant institution would potentially benefit from funds to build or strengthen capacity. **The letter must be developed on official university letterhead and signed by the Dean of the Agricultural College/School, Agricultural Research Director, or Extension Administrator (limit to one page). The institutional letter is required for ALL grant applications. Applications that do not include the institutional letter will be returned without review.**

6. **Expected Outcomes.** Please use the format in **Key Information 11) Expected Outcome Format** below to submit expected outcomes and attach it as the last page of the application. A fillable version of this document can be found at: https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/recommended-format-submitting-expected-impacts.

Expected Outcomes Format

Primary Project Function: (Choose one) Education, Extension, or Research	
DATA FOR MSI PROGRAMS: 1890s, HSI, 1994s, ANNH, Insular	
Expected outcomes during entire grant period	Number Expected
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* 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 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.	

*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).

Notes:

i. Provide your best estimate based on past experiences, graduation rates, and retention rates.
ii. 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).
iii. Response to question #9 should be the sum of 9-A through 9-E.
iv. Response to question #10 should be the sum of 10-A and 10-B.

7. **Mentoring Plan** - PDF Attachment: If the proposal anticipates requesting funding for any student support, it must include a one- to two-page Mentoring Plan (MP) for all recipients. Title the attachment as 'Mentoring Plan' in the document header and save the file as a pdf named 'Mentoring Plan High School Students', 'Mentoring Plan Undergraduate Students', 'Mentoring Plan Graduate Students', or 'Mentoring Plan Postdoctoral Associate' as applicable. If various tiers of students are represented in the proposal, please provide detailed mentoring plans for each educational or professional level targeted (e.g., high school students, undergraduate students, graduate students, postdoctoral associates etc.). The Mentoring Plan should incorporate:
    i. The roles and responsibilities of the Project Director and Co-Project Directors in managing the mentoring process;
    ii. Training for and/or credentials of individuals who will serve as mentors (i.e., mentor training). Mentors may be experienced mentors from academia, industry, or government, or student peers at various levels who are expected to provide guidance, cultural support, and sense of community with the activities and facilitate the amplification of program-specific perspectives and accomplishments of the mentees;
    iii. A description of mentoring activities that may include, but are not limited to, peer mentoring or layered mentoring, whereby a set of mentees are progressively mentored by others at a higher level in their careers; please incorporate these activities into the overall project timeline;
    iv. A description of processes to ensure reasonable accommodations for program participants with disabilities or challenges with accessing program activities.

8. **For Professional Development Applications** (e.g., sabbaticals and faculty exchanges): In addition to *other attachments* 1-6, provide documentation that arrangements have been made with a relevant expert(s) to serve as host, including:
    i. A letter from the home institution detailing the arrangements at the home institution with respect to salary, date, and duration of the professional development experience;
    ii. A letter from the host or training institution indicating willingness to serve in this capacity and a description of the host's contribution to the proposed

activities, both scientifically and regarding the use of facilities and equipment; and

iii. A statement signed by the Department Head or equivalent official at the host institution indicating a commitment to provide Teaching/Education, Research, and/or Extension related space and facilities for the period of the applicant's presence.

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.

i. Indirect Costs (IDC) – See Part IV, C of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding IDC and **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide. for additional information.

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 "CBG" and the program code: "EQ" for Research, "EP" for Teaching, "EWE" for Extension. Accurate entry is **critical.**
2. **Field 8**. **Conflict of Interest List.** See **Part V** of the NIFA Grants Application Guide. A Conflict-of-Interest List is required for the Project Director (PD), co-PD(s) and other key personnel.

C. Funding Restrictions

Indirect Cost (IDC) is not to exceed 30 percent of the recipient's Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA). 7 U.S.C. 3310 limits the recovery of IDC for the overall award to 30 percent of the TFFA under a research, education, or extension grant. The maximum allowable IDC amount recoverable under the award, including the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, is the lesser of the following and is determined by calculating the amount of IDC using:

a. the sum of an institution's negotiated indirect cost rate and the indirect cost rate charged by sub-awardees, if any; or
b. 30 percent of TFFA.

If the result of number one is the lesser of the two amounts, the grant recipient is allowed to charge the negotiated IDC rate on the prime award and the sub-award(s), if any. Any sub-awards would be subject to the sub-awardee's negotiated IDC rate. The sub-awardee may charge its negotiated IDC rate on its portion of the award, provided the sum of the IDC amount charged under the award by the prime awardee and the sub-awardee(s) does not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

If the result of number two is the lesser of the two amounts, then the maximum IDC allowed for the overall award, including any sub-award(s), is limited to 30 percent of the TFFA. That is, the IDC of the prime awardee plus the sum of the IDC charged by the sub-awardee(s), if any, may not exceed 30 percent of the TFFA.

In the event of an award, the prime awardee is responsible for ensuring the maximum indirect cost allowed for the award is not exceeded when combining IDC for the Federal portion (i.e., prime and sub-awardee(s)) and any applicable cost-sharing. Amounts exceeding the maximum allowable IDC are considered unallowable. See sections 408 and 410 of 2 CFR 200.

If the applicant does not have a negotiated rate and NIFA is the cognizant agency, the applicant may request an IDC rate. Applicants are not required to complete the IDC package during the application process and need only to calculate a rate to serve as a basis for requesting IDC. If awarded, the applicant will be required to submit a complete IDC proposal package to obtain a negotiated rate.

Organizations that do not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate, may elect the de minimis rate (2 CFR 200.414(f)). Currently the Uniform Guidance offers the option of electing to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total indirect costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. OMB has updated the 2 CFR allowing an indirect cost de minimis rate increase from 10 to 15 percent effective October 1, 2024. Budgets for indirect costs will be increased accordingly if the recipient selects the de minimis indirect cost recovery option. As described above and in 2 CFR 200.403, costs must be charged consistently as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If elected, this methodology must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which it may do at any time.

See NIFA Indirect Costs for information including additional resources and NIFA Indirect Cost Guidance Chart.

7 CFR 3406.10 – Use of funds for facilities. Under the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program, the use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility is not allowed. With prior approval, in accordance with the cost principles set forth in **2 CFR part 200**, some 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 alterations, renovations, or repairs are incidental to the major purpose for which a grant is made.

Successful applicants must only use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA for the specific purposes outlined.

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 RFA. 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., producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, public health practitioners, educators, consumers, and commercial reviews) 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 race, ethnicity, gender representation, and an equitable age distribution.
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

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate applications submitted under this RFA:

Standard and Collaborative Grant Applications. Each application will be evaluated by three peer reviewers. The evaluation criteria below (which are listed in priority order of importance) will be used to review **Standard** and **Collaborative** applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. **Potential for Building and Strengthening Capacity and Advancing the Quality of Teaching/Education, Research, or Extension.** This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact on and advance the quality of the food and agricultural sciences by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs of the 1890 institutional objectives, strategic plan, or Plan of Work. Elements considered include: institutional goals in the food and agricultural sciences, NIFA/USDA's Strategic Goals and/or Objectives; identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed as one of the Priority Areas; justification for the project; innovation; advancing educational equity; multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus; the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its Teaching/Education, Research, or Extension capacity; and potential for adoption by other institutions. 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, data management plan, potential for academic, research, or extension enhancement, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support.

2. **Overall Approach, Cooperative Linkages, and Quality of the Proposal**. This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach, with an emphasis on the following: objectives that show a clear connection to the institutional goals or strategic plan or Plan of Work; methodology; plan of operation; and timetable that describes limitations and strategies to avoid or compensate for identified limitations.

   For Collaborative Grant applications: a timetable that includes the responsibilities of all partners in the project timetable; expected products and results; an evaluation plan that includes performance measures to assess project success; and dissemination plans.

   For Teaching/Education, Research, Extension, and Integrated Project applications: emphasis is placed on the identified core competencies that students and/or clients will attain through new knowledge; the quality of educational, research, and/or extension support provided to the applicant institution through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives; and the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project that clearly identifies the key personnel responsibilities for products, outputs, outcomes, and potential impacts. Metrics to assess products, outputs, and outcomes are to be clearly delineated in the proposal to include clear identification of the role of the partners and the outcomes for the 1890 institution. Participation of a USDA agency cooperator(s) is optional; however, if the application includes a USDA cooperator(s), their role must be clearly identified.

Overall quality of the proposal relates to the degree to which the proposal complies with the application guidelines. The proposal is enhanced by its adherence to instructions (cover page, table of contents, organization, pagination, margin, font size, the specified page limitation, appendices); accuracy of forms; clarity of budget justification; well-prepared vitae for all key personnel associated with the project; and presentation. Also assessed are how effectively ideas are presented, clearly articulated, and thoroughly explained, as well as the inclusion of all required forms.

3. **Personnel Resources**. This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications of key personnel who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will manage the: 1) successful attainment of the proposed outcomes; 2) assessment of project results and impacts; and 3) dissemination of these findings. Proposals must clearly identify the role of all key personnel, responsibilities, and outcomes for each member, and describe the management plan to assure successful project outcomes. Qualified and sufficient personnel are critical for meeting the capacity building objective of a project.

4. **Budget and Cost-Effectiveness**. This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost-effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority Teaching/Education, Research, or Extension Need Areas based on the 1890 institutional objectives, strategic plan, or Plan of Work.

Professional Development Applications. The evaluation criteria below will be used to review (which are listed in priority order of importance) Professional Development applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. **Merit of the Proposed Activities as a Means of Enhancing the Capabilities and Competitiveness of the Applicant.**
   a. Relevant methods and appropriate activities;
   b. Appropriate collaborators;
   c. Clear objectives and targeted outcomes; and
   d. Realistic timetable for completion.

2. **Merit of Applicant's Experience.**
   a. Applicant's professional development experience; and
   b. Applicant's experience in teaching/education, research, and/or extension.

3. **Relevance to 1890 Institution and U.S. Agriculture.**
    a. Relevance of the project/training to the Food and Agricultural Sciences strategic plan at the applicant's institution; and
    b. Relevance of the project/training to long-range improvements in the sustainability of U.S. agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and rural communities.

4. **Appropriateness and Cost-effectiveness of the Proposed Budget.**
    a. Budget, including justification; and
    b. Cost-effectiveness

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 RFA. 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 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, 7 CFR Part 3430, subparts A through E.

Award Notice. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in 2 CFR 200.211 (see NIFA's Terms and Conditions).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: Federal Regulations). Unless specifically noted by statue 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 requiring).
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 45 CFR Part 75 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; and
8. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

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. Limited English Proficiency

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 or contact Lois Tuttle, Equal Opportunity Specialist, at Lois.Tuttle@usda.gov or (443) 386-9488.

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACTS

Program Contacts

Dr. Rizana Mahroof
National Program Leader
Rizana.Mahroof1@usda.gov
803-465-3980

David Wagner
Program Specialist
David.Wagner2@usda.gov
925-597-4869

For administrative questions related to;

1. Grants.gov, see Part IV of this RFA
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
3. Awards under this RFA, please email 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

Assistance Listing Number – ALN
Authorized Representative – AR
Capacity Building Grants – CBG
Data Management Plan – DMP
National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA
Request for Application – RFA
Research, Education, and Economics – REE
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

Capacity Building:

Enhancing and strengthening the quality and depth of an institution's research, academic and/or extension programs as evidenced by its: faculty expertise, scientific and technical resources, research environment, curriculum, student experiential learning opportunities, scientific instrumentation, library resources, academic standing and racial, ethnic, or gender diversity of its faculty and student body, faculty and student recruitment and retention programs, extension delivery systems, organizational structures and reward systems for attracting and retaining first-rate research faculty or students at the graduate and post-doctorate levels.

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.

Eligible Participant:

For purposes of the Program Need Areas "Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching" and "Student Recruitment and Retention", an individual who is a citizen or national of the United States as defined in this section.

Extension Application:

An application that addresses one or more of the Extension Need Areas or specific subject matter/emphasis areas identified in the annual Request for Applications.

Extension Capacity:

The quality and depth of an institution's Extension infrastructure as evidenced by its: curriculum, instructional delivery systems, Extension faculty, volunteer, and other program support systems, use of technology in program delivery, library resources and service to underserved populations.

Food and Agricultural Sciences:

Basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching/education activities in the food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities relating to the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, utilization, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, and inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, family and consumer sciences (previously known as home economics), rural human ecology, rural economic, community, or business development, and closely allied disciplines.

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.

Outcomes:

Specific, measurable project results and benefits that indicate the project's plan of operation has been achieved. Measurable outcomes include:

a. Results are intended or unintended consequences of the project, e.g., "...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours";
b. Products may be actual items or services acquired with funds, e.g., "…mechanisms and content to transition existing course(s) or elements of course(s) for Web-based access" or "created new and innovative prevention and intervention initiatives"; and
c. Impacts are a measure of the results by comparing what might have happened in the absence of the funded project.

Plan of Operation:

A detailed, step-by-step description of how the applicant intends to accomplish the project's outcomes. At a minimum, the plan should include a timetable indicating how outcomes are achieved, a description of resources to be used or acquired, and the responsibilities expected of all project personnel.

Renewal Application:

A project application that seeks additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award.

Research Application:

An application that addresses one or more of the Research Need Areas or specific subject matter/emphasis areas identified in the annual Request for Applications.

Research Capacity:

The quality and depth of an institution's research infrastructure as evidenced by its: faculty expertise in the natural or social sciences, scientific and technical resources, research environment, library resources, and organizational structures and reward systems for attracting and retaining first-rate research faculty or students at the graduate and post-doctorate levels.

Resubmitted Application:

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

Resubmitted Renewal Application:

A project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. This is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to but not funded.

Teaching:

Formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters related thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and

equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by colleges and universities offering baccalaureate or higher degrees.

Teaching/Education Application:

An application that addresses one or more of the Teaching/Education Need Areas or specific subject matter/emphasis areas identified in the annual Request for Applications and addressed by the applicant's proposal. (Also see Teaching/Education Need Area)

Teaching Capacity:

The quality and depth of an institution's academic programs infrastructure.

Teaching/Education Need Area:

The specific area(s) of educational focus identified in the annual Request for Applications and addressed by the applicant's proposal. (Also see Teaching/Education application)

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.).

USDA Agency Cooperator:

Any agency or office of the Department which has reviewed and endorsed an applicant's request for support and indicates a willingness to make available non-monetary resources or technical assistance throughout the life of a project to ensure the accomplishment of the objectives of a grant awarded under this program.