

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth

MODIFICATIONS: 07/09/2024 – 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: 12

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year 2024

APPLICATION DEADLINE: August 5, 2024

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: \$1,900,000

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD RANGE: \$308,333 - \$358,333

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-EXCA-010874

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.500

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
National Institute of Food and Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth (MARRY) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.500.

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern Time, August 5, 2024 [Ref to Part I, C of this RFA]
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 (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The amount available for FY 2024 is approximately \$1,900,000. Of this amount, approximately \$308,333 will be awarded to five grantees who will implement an evidence-based mentoring project and approximately \$358,333 will be awarded to one grantee who will implement an evidence-based mentoring project and a MARRY Project Director Meeting in the Washington, DC, area. Projects must have a duration of 36 months.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) requests new applications for fiscal year FY 2024 to engage the resources of Land-grant Universities and the Cooperative Extension System, in partnership with other partner organizations, to expand opportunities for 1) rural youth, 2) juvenile justice-involved youth, and 3) youth at risk of juvenile justice involvement to receive mentoring services through 4-H programming.

MARRY was developed in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in support of OJJDP's priority to address the challenges and barriers to success that many juvenile justice-involved youth encounter as well as to increase access to mentoring services for at risk and rural youth.

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

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

In accordance with the Economy Act of 1932, as amended, ([31 U.S.C.1535](#)), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in order to utilize the unique resources of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), has provided NIFA with funds to support Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth (MARRY).

Pursuant to [7 U.S.C. Sec. 3318](#), the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Director of the NIFA, may enter into contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements, for periods not to exceed five years, with State agricultural experiment stations, State cooperative extension services, all colleges and universities, other research or educational institutions; or organizations, Federal and private agencies and organizations, individuals, and any other contractor or recipient, either foreign or domestic, to further research, extension, or teaching programs in the food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences of USDA.

B. Purpose and Priorities

On any given day, approximately 25,014 youth in the U.S. are in residential placement. Most eventually return to their communities and need support to make that transition successfully. OJJDP is the only federal agency focused solely on youth who are involved in or at risk for involvement in the juvenile justice system. When youth become involved with the juvenile justice system, they face immediate consequences, but also typically face barriers to success in the form of reduced opportunities for education and employment, which can lead to recidivism. Likewise, rural youth face barriers to success oftentimes due to lack of access to programming because of the lack of access to transportation and limited available resources.

Mentoring promotes positive behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes for youth and reduces risk factors associated with delinquency and juvenile justice system involvement, such as poor school attendance, school failure, and alcohol and drug abuse. Through the MARRY program administered by NIFA's Division of Youth and 4-H, OJJDP supports the expansion of high-quality mentoring services for targeted youth across the country to help close this gap. 4-H is the youth outreach program of USDA and is housed in the Division of Youth and 4-H at USDA NIFA. 4-H serves as a model program for the practice of positive youth development and is implemented by the Cooperative Extension System (Extension) through the Land-grant Colleges and Universities across the United States and its Territories.

4-H programming strengthens and promotes healthy youth development by giving young people the capacity to act as responsible citizens and agents of community change. By understanding the complex experiences that youth face and promoting high quality youth leadership development, 4-H helps youth meet the challenges of adolescence and transition to adulthood. Through youth-adult partnerships, the 4-H program connects youth and adults to their communities, preparing them for work and life. The 4-H program is designed to engage youth and adults in intentional,

experiential, and inquiry-based learning while providing emerging research to highlight positive youth development. To achieve this, 4-H focuses on three key objectives:

1. Access, Equity and Opportunity
2. Learning
3. Program Quality and Accountability

4-H opportunities and programs can help break down barriers to success for justice-involved youth, youth at-risk of juvenile justice involvement and rural youth, by providing an important pathway for civic engagement, valuable life skills, access to meaningful relationships, mentoring, and employment skills. Many young people who participate in 4-H gain leadership skills and go on to become successful, productive adults. A critical contributor to the positive outcomes is the additional support services and staffing that these programs engage to ensure member success. Additional services range from access to mental health professionals, educational support, career guidance, coaching, and a professional buddy or mentor to assist with transition.

All projects funded under MARRY must support opportunities for targeted youth to have meaningful positive youth development opportunities through established mentoring programs and/or expansion of target audience for existing mentoring programs as part of the 4-H program.

Projects must indicate how their 4-H program opens opportunities for at least one of the following 1) juvenile justice-involved youth, 2) youth at-risk of juvenile justice involvement or 3) rural youth so that they have access to the same programs and opportunities as other 4-H youth. Projects are expected to include specific plans indicating how risk factors will be reduced. Projects are expected to describe how the mentoring program provides mentees with the best chance at a fulfilling and productive future, as well as an opportunity to continue participation beyond this program in Extension and the 4-H Program. See full definitions of critical components on Appendix III:

1. Evidence-based Projects
2. Juvenile Justice-Involved Youth
3. Mentoring Services
4. Rural Youth
5. Youth At-risk of Juvenile Justice Involvement

The Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth/MARRY is aligned with the [USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026](#) Goal 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities.

The Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth/MARRY is aligned with the [USDA Science and Research Strategy, 2023–2026](#) Priority 5: Translating Research Into Action.

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.

Table 2: Program Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	MRY
Program Code Name:	Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth
ALN:	10.500
Project Type:	Extension Projects
Grant Type:	Regular
Application Deadline	August 5, 2024
Grant Duration:	36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	6
Maximum Award Amount:	\$308,333 - \$358,333

C. Program Area Description

The amount available for FY 2024 is approximately \$1,900,000. Of this amount, approximately \$308,333 will be awarded to five grantees who will implement an evidence-based mentoring project and approximately \$358,333 will be awarded to one Grantee who will implement an evidence-based mentoring project and a MARRY Project Director Meeting in the Washington, DC, area, which will include NIFA Project MARRY staff Projects must have a duration of 36 months. Applicants applying for the \$308,333 award must demonstrate how they will implement MARRY program components 1-7 listed below. Applicants applying for the \$358,333 award must demonstrate how they will implement MARRY program components 1-8 listed below.

1. MARRY Project Management.

MARRY projects must be supported by an appropriate team of University, Extension and community partner faculty and staff who will plan, manage, implement and evaluate the project and integrate it into ongoing Extension programs.

MARRY projects are expected to develop, implement and evaluate program outcomes; manage staff, volunteers, mentors and mentees; and create a sustainability plan involving the expertise of the community.

To improve consistency, projects are to identify a standardized plan to recruit, select, train and manage mentors using local policies regarding child safety and youth protection. A standardized curriculum and training plan for mentors must be identified. Additionally, projects are to identify a standardized plan to recruit, select, and manage mentees. Grantees are expected to have a minimum of 60-75 Adult Mentor/Youth Mentee matches over the three-year period.

2. MARRY Evidence-base and Curriculum.

MARRY project mentoring services and curriculum must be evidence-based with strategies that have been informed by evidence/metrics and have a level of success that has been measured and documented. The mentoring services and curriculum must promote positive behaviors, attitudes, and outcomes for youth and reduces risk factors associated with delinquency and juvenile justice system involvement, such as poor school attendance, school failure, and alcohol and drug abuse.

Projects must involve mentees in 4-H activities and events, apart from the mentoring experience. For example, mentees will participate in and complete hands-on 4-H projects in areas such as health, science, agriculture, STEM, leadership, workforce development, mental health, community service, drama, computer literacy, reading literacy, or civic engagement; as well, the mentor and mentee will be involved in time designated positive interaction to

build the mentor/mentee relationship. Mentees are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Projects are encouraged to implement the [4-H Thriving Model](#).

The mentoring projects must take place in a positive environment where mentees receive guidance from adult mentors and volunteers. The selected 4-H curriculum will be important to the Mentor/Mentee relationship. The curriculum should be highlighted in the three-year logic model. The curriculum plan should be specific, highlighting a timeline, training, activities, and events.

3. Transportation Plan.

The transportation plan should consider services for youth who may need transportation to activities and events as some youth may not have the means for reliable transportation. The transportation plan should be accounted for in the budget.

4. OJJDP Mentoring Resources.

MARRY projects are encouraged to integrate [OJJDP Mentoring](#) training, technical assistance and resources to bolster the mentoring model and trainings. OJJDP mentoring resources include a [Reference Guide for Mentor Screening](#) and the [National Mentoring Resource Center \(NMRC\)](#).

5. Evaluation Plan.

The project evaluation plan must clearly explain the methodologies to be used in assessing the project's measurable outcomes and impacts. The grantee is highly encouraged to use the [National Mentoring Resource Center](#) (NMRC) as a program evaluation resource.

6. Quarterly Calls.

Each Project Director (PD) is expected to participate in scheduled Quarterly PD calls with NIFA staff.

7. MARRY Project Director Meeting Attendance.

MARRY project staff, inclusive of the Project Director (PD)/Co-PD and at least five mentors from the project are required to attend the MARRY Project Director Meeting in the Washington, D.C. area in the third year of the project. Additional staff, volunteers and partners of the Grantee's choosing may also attend for a maximum of 10 participants per grant project. Project Directors will utilize funds from the budget for up to 10 participants to attend the MARRY Project Director meeting in the third year. The funding amount must be included in the budget.

8. MARRY Project Director Meeting Implementation.

One \$358,333 award will be awarded to one Grantee who will implement an evidence-based mentoring project and the MARRY Project Director Meeting in the Washington, DC area which will be a two-day minimum meeting. The award includes a maximum of \$50,000 that can be used to plan the MARRY Project Director Meeting for up to 75 participants in the third year of the project, offering an opportunity for Grantees to share project outcomes and impacts with NIFA and OJJDP staff.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for FY 2024 is approximately \$1,900,000. Of this amount, approximately \$308,333 will be awarded to five grantees who will implement an evidence-based mentoring project and approximately \$358,333 will be awarded to one Grantee who will implement an evidence-based mentoring project and a MARRY Project Director Meeting in the Washington, DC, area. Projects must have a duration of 36 months. 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. Application for FY 2024 is 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).

C. Project and Grant Types

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

1. Project Types. Applicants must propose an extension project. Extension Projects conduct programs and activities that deliver science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions. 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.
2. Grant Types. Applicants must submit a Standard Grant. Standard Grants support targeted original scientific Research, Education/Teaching, 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 applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

There are two types of funding opportunities offered 1) Evidence-based Mentoring Project Implementation and 2) Evidence-based Mentoring Project Implementation & MARRY Project Director Meeting Implementation. See Key Information 1 for more details and maximum award amounts.

Funding preference will be given to applicants that propose engagement with 1890, 1994, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and EPSCoR States as subawardees. Higher funding preference will be given to 1890, 1994 and Hispanic Serving Institution who apply as lead applicants.

Key Information 1. Maximum Award Amounts

Funding Amount	Implementation
\$308,333	Evidence-based Mentoring Project Implementation.
\$358,333	Evidence-based Mentoring Project Implementation and MARRY Project Director Meeting Implementation. No more than \$50,000 used for the MARRY Project Director Meeting planning and implementation

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

Applications will only be accepted if submitted by Cooperative Extension at Land-grant College or University, including 1862, 1890, and 1994 Institutions. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply, provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

Applicants for the Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth (MARRY) must meet all the 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.

To balance geographical diversity, multiple awards will not be made to the same organization, institution, or Project Director in the same fiscal year. Institutions may submit more than one application; however, Project Directors and Co-Project Directors may only submit one application. NIFA will disqualify individual applicants who submit more than one application.

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

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

No Match Required - The Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth/MARRY has **NO** matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

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](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 3** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process. [The NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is contained in the specific funding opportunity package or a sample of the guide can be found [here](#). When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

Table 3. Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> 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-EXCA-010874 , 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.

Table 4: Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
Grants.gov Online Support Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: support@grants.gov Self-service customer-based support: Grants.gov iPortal Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays .	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru 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. **Table 5** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 5: Key Application Instructions

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

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

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

R&R Other Project Information Form. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. **Field 7.** Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of MARRY. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
2. **Field 8.** Project Narrative (PN). The PN will be 12pt font, Times New Roman with one-inch margins. The PN must not exceed 12 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text and up to 15 additional pages for figures and tables (the font size for tables should be no smaller than 11 points, Times New Roman). Applicants applying for the additional \$50,000 to implement a MARRY Project Director Meeting may include an additional 3 *1.5 spaced* pages of written text. The page limits outlined here ensure fair and equitable competition. Appendices to the PN are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The logic model document should be a part of the Appendix and does not count toward the PN page limit. Do not add appendices to circumvent the page limit. The PN must include all the following sections:

Section 1: Project Management

- a. Project Title
- b. Project Director(s) and other key personnel name, title, address, and e-mail.
- c. Mentor Identification, Recruitment, Selection and Management Plan
 1. Project Partners or Collaborators name, title, role and responsibilities, and email.
 2. Mentor Training Plan (include training title, rational and proposed outcomes)
- d. Mentee Identification, Recruitment, Selection and Management Plan

Section 2: Approach and Design

Describe the approach and design of the proposed mentoring project. Describe the following:

- a. Target audience (juvenile justice-involved youth, youth at-risk of juvenile justice involvement or rural youth) and participant age range (up to age 18).
- b. Anticipated number of Mentees and Mentors, grantees are expected to have **a minimum of 60-75** Adult Mentor/ Youth Mentee matches over the three-year period.
- c. Desired short and long-term results including how risk factors will be reduced and how the project will change the life trajectory of participants.
- d. Mentoring model including the evidence-base, frequency and duration of Mentor and Mentee contact, and process used for determining the appropriate mentoring model.
- e. Uniform program and 4-H curriculum content (e.g., leadership, workforce development, mental health, science technology, community service, drama, computer literacy, reading literacy, parent/child/ caregiver interaction) and how [the 4-H Thriving Model](#) will be used.
- f. Transportation plan for participants who may have challenges with transportation to activities and events.
- g. How the [OJJDP Mentoring](#) Resources will bolster the Mentoring Model/Training.
- h. Three-year work plan detailing how the selected program model will be implemented over three years. The work plan must address staffing, recruiting participants, recruiting volunteers, establishing key partnerships, program implementation, marketing and promotion, materials development, training staff and volunteers in a three-year timeline.
- i. Include a statement regarding the state's 4-H Youth Development child safety plan.
- j. Sustainability plan including how participants will have an opportunity to continue participation in Extension and the 4-H Program beyond this project period.

Section 3: Logic Model

Describe a three-year Logic Model for the MARRY project. The logic model document should be a part of the Appendix and does not count toward the PN page limit.

Prospective applicants are required to develop a logic model and use the CYFAR.org website to create a user account and develop their project's logic model. With the use of the newly developed logic model, prospective applicants also need to identify at least one short-term outcome from their logic model that will result from their project and can be evaluated. The Logic Model Builder can be found at [CYFAR | Children, Youth, and Families at Risk](#) under Tools. The MARRY-specific logic model consists of five elements including:

- a. Identified needs and assets
- b. Desired results (short-term and long-term)
- c. Indicators (short-term and long-term)
- d. Activities
- e. Resources

Section 4: MARRY Project Director Meeting Implementation (\$358,333 applicants only)

Describe the MARRY Project Director Meeting planning and implementation. Include evidence that your Institution has the capability to implement the MARRY Project Director Meeting. Include a letter from your Extension Director and one past participant citing your success/capability to implement the MARRY Project Director Meeting.

3. **Field 12, Add Other Attachments.** See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).
 - a. Letters of Support. Land-grant staff employed outside of the Extension Program should attach a letter of support from the university Cooperative Extension Director and State 4-H Program Leader/Youth Development Leader (as appropriate).
 - b. Letters of Commitment. Attach Letters of Commitment. Use letterhead as appropriate. The letters should include documentation regarding commitment and capacity regarding the specific role and responsibilities. Include, as appropriate, letters of support from each of the Land-grant types eligible for funding as sub-awardees: 1862, 1890, and 1994.

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](#).

Applications must contain annual budgets, cumulative budget and budget justification (i.e., Budget Narrative) covering the entire project period. The Budget Justification must include an itemized breakdown of all support requested.

Budgets must account for the following:

- a. If an outside organization provides some of the project's operation, it is considered a sub-award. Identify the operator. Include required sub-award information.
- b. Applicants are reminded to include the Base Annual Salaries for all Key Personnel.
- c. In the third year of the project, MARRY project staff, inclusive of the Project Director (PD)/Co-PD and at least five mentors from the project are required to attend the MARRY Grantee Project Director Meeting in the Washington, D.C. area. Additional staff, volunteers and partners of the Grantee's choosing may also attend for a maximum of 10 participants per grant project. Travel expenses for this event should be included in the budget request.
- d. If applying for the MARRY Project Director Meeting funding, show the total amount allocated for the event within Field F, line 8 of the cumulative budget form and include the event budget as a R&R Subaward Budget Attachment Form. It is recognized that the MARRY Project Director Meeting may be operated through the university system, and therefore not considered a sub-award. However, because of the requirements of Grants.gov, the MARRY Project Director Meeting budget should be added as a sub-award form.

Data Management Plan. A DMP is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V, B](#) of this RFA, [NIFA's Data Management Plan](#)).

Grantees will complete the appropriate annual NIFA REEport documents as well as an End of Project Three Year Report. The MARRY End of Project Three Year Report will include a project overview, outcomes, evaluation components, major impacts and sustainability plan. Include in the MARRY End of Project Three Year Report outcomes that have been measured to indicate change in program participants. Also include resources utilized from the [National Mentoring Resource Center](#). The MARRY End of Project Three Year Report will be due within 60 days of project completion and will be submitted to the National Program Leader responsible for the MARRY Program.

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 (Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth/MARRY) and the program code (MRY). Accurate entry is critical.
2. **Field 8.** Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

C. Funding Restrictions

1. 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](#).

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 project 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 this RFA:

1. **Project Management:** This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and fulfill associated reporting requirements. Elements include the adequacy of the number, qualifications and expertise of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts. Key personnel demonstrate appropriate project leadership and experience working with the target stakeholders in the past.
2. **Approach and Design:** This criterion relates to the likelihood that the project will successfully reduce risk factors and change the life trajectory of juvenile justice-involved youth, youth at-risk of juvenile justice involvement and/or rural youth by implementing project components 1-7 (listed in Part I, C). Applicants applying for the additional \$50,000 to implement a MARRY Project Director Meeting will be evaluated on the likelihood that the project will successfully implement project components 1-8 (listed in Part I, C).
3. **Data Collection and Reporting:** This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. The project evaluation plan clearly explains the methodologies to be used in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable impacts from the project. The data management plan is suitable and feasible.

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 statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees will complete the appropriate NIFA REEport documents annually as well as an End of Project Three-Year Report. The End of Project Three-Year Report will include a project overview, outcomes, major impacts and sustainability plan. The End of Project Three-Year Report should be submitted to the NIFA National Program Leader. The report is due 60 days after the project ends.

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 CONTACT

Program Contacts

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Andrea Wikiera

Andrea.Wikiera@usda.gov

816-400-8959

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

Department of Justice – DOJ

Data Management Plan – DMP

Mentoring at Risk and Rural Youth - MARRY

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

Request for Application – RFA

Research, Education, and Economics – REE

United States Department of Agriculture – USDA

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention – OJJDP

Office of Justice Programs – OJP

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

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

Definitions

Evidence-based Projects:

Are high quality projects with strategies that have been informed by evidence/metrics and have a level of success that has been measured and documented. For example, success could be student performance or skill development outcomes (for mentors and mentees).

Juvenile Justice-Involved Youth:

Are individuals under the age of 18 years old who are under the supervision of a juvenile justice agency. Juvenile justice-involved youth are youth who have been arrested or referred for intake to a public agency (state, tribal, city or county) legally responsible for handling juvenile crime, delinquency, and youth in need of guidance, treatment, or rehabilitation due to problematic behavior (i.e., truancy, running away, ungovernable, etc.).

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.

Mentoring Services:

Can be one-on-one, group, peer, or a combination of these types. Mentoring is a consistent prosocial relationship between an adult or older peer and one or more youth and has been shown to improve self-esteem, academic achievement, and peer relationships. Mentors can provide support, guidance, and opportunities to help youth succeed in life. Essential components of mentoring include creating caring, empathetic, and consistent relationships, often with some combination of role modeling, teaching, and advising.

New Application:

An application not previously submitted to a program.

Rural Youth:

Are individuals under the age of 18 years old who reside in rural areas. Rural is as indicated by the [Federal Office of Rural Health Policy, Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#). The following tool is available to determine rural status, [Am I Rural?](#).

Youth At-risk of Juvenile Justice Involvement:

Are individuals under the age of 18 years old who are at risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system. Youth at risk for juvenile justice involvement possess certain risk factors in key life domain areas (i.e., individual, family, school, community); have had involvement in the juvenile justice system; and/or reside in environments that have high rates of parental incarceration, community violence, drug markets, gang concentration, and failing schools.