

Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program – Methyl Bromide Transitions

FY 2012 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 19, 2012



U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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

INTEGRATED RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM: METHYL BROMIDE TRANSITIONS

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.303, Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **June 19, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight Division; Office of Grants and Financial Management; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: Policy@nifa.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Methyl Bromide Transitions RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program: Methyl Bromide Transitions (MBT) for fiscal year (FY) 2012 to support the discovery and implementation of practical pest management alternatives to methyl bromide uses for which the United States is requesting critical use exemptions. Critical Use Nominations (CUN) for 2013 include the following uses: commodities; cucurbits; eggplant; fruit, nut, and rose nursery; food facilities; dry cured ham; orchard replant; ornamental; peppers; research; strawberry fruit; strawberry nursery; and tomato (see the “2013 Critical Use Exemption Nominations from the Phase-out of Methyl Bromide” on the following EPA website: www.epa.gov/ozone/mbr/2013_nomination.html).

The program is focused on integrated commercial or field scale research that targets short- to medium-term solutions and associated extension activity that will foster the adoption of these solutions, as well as a focused economic analysis of cost of successfully implementing the transition on a commercial scale. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2012 is approximately \$1.9 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for MBT projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a MBT grant. NIFA additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

Table of Contents

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION.....5
A. Legislative Authority and Background5
B. Purpose and Priorities.....5
C. Program Area Description7

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION.....12
A. Available Funding.....12
B. Types of Applications.....12
C. Project Types12

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION13
A. Eligible Applicants.....13

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION15
A. Electronic Application Package.....15
B. Content and Form of Application Submission.....16
C. Submission Dates and Times20
D. Funding Restrictions21
E. Other Submission Requirements21

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS22
A. General22
B. Evaluation Criteria22
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality25
D. Organizational Management Information25

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION26
A. General26
B. Award Notice26
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....27
D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements.....28

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT29

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION.....30
A. Access to Review Information.....30
B. Use of Funds; Changes30
C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards31
D. Regulatory Information31
E. Definitions.....31

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) (7 U.S.C. 7626), as reauthorized by Section 7306 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246), authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a competitive grants program that provides funding for integrated, multifunctional agricultural research, extension, and education activities. Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this program, the Secretary may award grants to colleges and universities (as defined by section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3103)), as amended, on a competitive basis for projects that address priorities in United States agriculture and involve integrated research, education, and extension activities, as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board.

Section 7206 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 amended section 406(b) of AREERA to add the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions as eligible to apply for grants under this authority.

B. Purpose and Priorities

This RFA solicits applications for the Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program, Methyl Bromide Transitions (MBT). Methyl Bromide has been a pest and disease control tactic critical to agricultural, industrial, natural resource or urban pest management systems for decades. The MBT program seeks to solve critical agricultural issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research, education, and extension activities. It is designed to address immediate needs, and the costs of transition that have resulted from the loss of availability of methyl bromide.

The loss of a key management tactic can have devastating impacts on productivity, product quality and profitability. With the pressure to completely phase-out methyl bromide, new economical and effective pest control tactics are required for growers who depended on the fumigant to control soil-borne and post-harvest pathogens, and for processing and shipping industries striving to meet regulatory standards.

The concept of prevention, avoidance, monitoring, and suppression of pest populations should be considered in proposals submitted to this program. Projects funded by the MBT program area will cover a broad range of new methodologies, technologies, systems and strategies for controlling economically important pests for which methyl bromide has been the only effective pest control option.

Promising alternatives to methyl bromide must be evaluated under commercial conditions for multiple years to ensure that positive results are not due, in part, to a low pest pressure soil environment following many years of methyl bromide fumigation. Also, weather conditions have a marked influence on pest pressure. Alternatives that give acceptable efficacy under favorable weather and soil conditions may fail in other years when weather and soil conditions

are less favorable. The potential for emergence of unexpected pests and pathogens, in the absence of methyl bromide, must be determined. Performance must be consistent over several production cycles and be technically and economically feasible when scaled-up from research-scale plots to commercial-scale fields. As alternatives become available, researchers need time to test application methods to gain experience and confidence using an alternative to consistently produce nursery stock that meets certified pest- and pathogen-free requirements. Projects should focus on enhancing grower/industrial user knowledge and adoption of appropriate methyl bromide replacement strategies through extension outreach and demonstrations relevant to “real-world” systems. It is important that project proposals consider: (1) the evolving science and technology; (2) the potential range of pest control practices available to the critical use exemption cases; (3) the risk mitigation and pest management needs of targeted users; (4) the integration of research, education, and extension activities; and (5) an economic analysis of the new or proposed technology that highlights the efficacy and cost of management trade-offs relative to methyl bromide.

In addition to technology transfer, it is hoped that the results of this solicitation will provide information that will strengthen the requests for methyl bromide critical use exemptions (CUEs) submitted by the United States. The information that will be of most use to the CUE process includes economic analyses with direct comparison of cost effectiveness of proposed alternatives with methyl bromide. Comprehensive information is required on the impact of such alternatives on efficacy and profit margins compared with methyl bromide fumigation. Integrated projects regarding transition to an alternative type of cropping/storage/processing system that avoids the need for disinfestation with methyl bromide (e.g., transition to a covered system using soil-less culture), will be considered if the alternative has the potential to serve as a viable short- to medium-term solution for operations that are currently dependent on methyl bromide. Specific information that is needed for each methyl bromide alternative studied includes:

1. The cost of a methyl bromide application. The cost calculation should include the amount of fumigant used, the value of the labor used, and any equipment needed for the application (including personal protective equipment, tarps, drip tape, etc). A distinction should be made between one-time costs (e.g., the purchase of a piece of equipment or the construction of a structure) and recurring costs (fumigant, tarps, etc.).
2. An assessment of the differences in the quantity and/or quality of product produced, using metrics such as more fruit, larger fruit, fewer blemishes, greater yield, etc.
3. An assessment of other differences between methyl bromide and alternative treatments. For example, there may be differences in how rainy weather impacts application procedures or product efficacy, in the potential for products to damage equipment, or in the appearance of phytotoxic effects.
4. Identification of possible regulatory constraints that could impact use of alternative treatments.

Project Director Meeting. If a project is funded, at least one member of the project team will be required to attend the annual International Methyl Bromide Alternatives Conference (www.mbao.org) starting with the second year of funding. For the purposes of budget development, applicants are required to request funds to support participation in at least one MBAO conference. The request for these funds should be clearly indicated in the budget and budget narrative sections of the application.

C. Program Area Description

The goal of the MBT program is to support the discovery and implementation of practical pest management alternatives to methyl bromide for uses for which the United States is requesting critical use exemptions. Methyl bromide (MeBr) is an odorless, colorless gas that has been used as an agricultural soil and structural fumigant to control a wide variety of pests. However, because MeBr depletes the stratospheric ozone layer and is classified as a Class I ozone-depleting substance, the amount of MeBr produced and imported in the United States is being incrementally reduced. In accordance with the *Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer* and the Clean Air Act (www.epa.gov/air/caa), the United States agreed to reduce methyl bromide production and net imports incrementally from the 1991 baseline until the complete phase-out in 2005. Since 2005, the only allowable exemptions are the critical use exemptions (CUE) and the quarantine and pre-shipment exemptions (QPS). Critical uses may be approved by the Parties to the Montreal Protocol when: a) the lack of methyl bromide would result in a significant market disruption, b) there are no alternatives currently available that are technically and economically feasible; and c) to support a critical use nomination, there must be an active research program seeking viable alternatives to methyl bromide for that specific use.

Under the Montreal Protocol and the Clean Air Act, the production and import phase-out for methyl bromide in the United States has followed this schedule:

1993 to 1998	Freeze at 1991 baseline levels (U.S. consumption ~25,500 Metric Tons; consumption = production + import - export).
1999 and 2000	25% reduction from baseline levels.
2001 and 2002	50% reduction from baseline levels.
2003 and 2004	70% reduction from baseline levels.
2005	100% phase out. 37% of baseline was authorized by the Montreal Protocol Parties for critical uses.
2006	32% of baseline levels was authorized for critical uses
2007	26% of the 1991 baseline levels was authorized for critical uses
2008	21% of the 1991 baseline levels was authorized for critical uses
2009	16.7% of the 1991 baseline levels was authorized for critical uses
2010	12.7% of the 1991 baseline levels was authorized for critical uses
2011	8.1% of the 1991 baseline levels was authorized for critical uses
2012	4.0% of the 1991 baseline levels was authorized for critical uses
2013	2.2% of the 1991 baseline levels was authorized for critical uses
2014	1.7% of the 1991 baseline levels was nominated by the U.S. for critical uses

Current exemptions cover 13 crops or uses. The 2013 authorization represents a continued reduction from earlier years, due to the introduction of alternatives into the marketplace and other factors. The MBT program area seeks proposals to ensure that economically viable and environmentally sound alternatives to methyl bromide are in place and available as soon as possible for the current 2013 critical uses. Those submitting applications should consider these specific critical uses: commodities; cucurbits; eggplant; fruit, nut, and rose nursery; food facilities; dry cured ham; orchard replant; ornamental; peppers; research; strawberry fruit; strawberry nursery; and tomato. More information on these critical uses is available in an EPA

document titled “2013 Critical Use Exemption Nominations from the Phaseout of Methyl Bromide” (www.epa.gov/ozone/mbr/2013_nomination.html). The 2013 nominations listed in the document include descriptions of alternative controls or application methods evaluated and the barriers or specific limitations such as soil temperature, terrain, buffer zones, economics, etc., that limit alternatives and make continued use of methyl bromide necessary for each of the 13 nominations. Nominations include: names of alternatives, technical data demonstrating alternatives do not perform as well as methyl bromide, regulatory restrictions limiting the use of alternatives; cost considerations; current research priorities; pests targeted; and characteristics, including the economics, of production systems using methyl bromide and the alternatives. Proposals must include methods/technology to reduce methyl bromide use and/or eliminate emissions that address the specific conditions and factors (seasonal soil temperatures, soil types, cropping systems, industrial fumigation costs, etc.) limiting transition from methyl bromide fumigation to alternative pest management strategies.

The MBT program emphasizes commercial or field scale research targeting short- to medium-term solutions that will develop new alternatives, result in registration and adoption of new alternatives, and/or minimize methyl bromide emissions. Proposals addressing chemical and/or non-chemical methyl bromide alternatives will be evaluated based on their potential to contribute to such solutions. Large-scale trials will be a key component of successful proposals, as they may identify variability, technical problems, and pest relationships to marketable yields that are not evident in small plot trials. Repeat of research for two or more cropping seasons or trials is encouraged. Comprehensive information on the impact of alternatives on efficacy of pest control and profit margins compared to methyl bromide fumigation is a key objective of the MBT program. Although much of the technology and potential alternatives developed for other crops/issues can be transferred to critical uses, adequate evaluation for specific new uses must be completed. Proposals addressing critical uses for which there is not an extensive database are encouraged.

The following components must be included in a MBT application or it will not be considered for funding:

- 1. Economic analysis with direct comparison of cost effectiveness of proposed alternatives as compared with methyl bromide.** Comprehensive information on the impact of such alternatives on efficacy of pest management and profit margins compared with methyl bromide fumigation is required. Profit margins should be calculated with and without the new technology (the status quo case). Additionally an analysis of over-all transition cost to a new technology, from acquisition of materials and knowledge, through to efficacy metrics is required. Analyses of profit margins should include information on the cost calculation; the cost/amount of fumigant or new technology used, the value of the labor used, and any equipment needed for the application (including personal protective equipment, tarps, drip tape, etc). A distinction should be made between one-time costs as part of the transition cost (e.g., the purchase of a piece of equipment or the construction of a structure) and recurring costs (fumigant, tarps, etc.). An assessment of the differences in the quantity and/or quality of product produced, using metrics such as more fruit, larger fruit, fewer blemishes, greater yield, etc. Changes in revenues should also be identified, (e.g., changes in the commodity price or more importantly, changes in quantity of the available commodity for marketing).

Repeat of research for two or more cropping seasons or trials is encouraged. Integrated projects regarding transition to an alternative type of cropping/storage/processing system that avoids the need for disinfestation with methyl bromide (e.g., transition to a covered system using soil-less culture), will be considered if the alternative has the potential to serve as a viable short- to medium-term solution for operations that are currently dependent on methyl bromide.

2. Integration of two or more of the three functions (research, extension and education).

At least two of the three science functions (research, extension and education) must be incorporated into proposed projects and generally no more than two thirds of the project's budget should be devoted to any one function. Formal extension and/or education programs to expedite adoption of proposed alternatives must be clearly delineated in the proposal and funding for these activities should be clearly outlined in the budget narrative. Research should address the critical use nominations or alternatives to methyl bromide for new critical pest management issues. The expectation is that research will not only result in adoption of techniques and methods to significantly reduce methyl bromide use, but will also lead to new product registration, if required. The research will result in direct efficacy and economic comparisons of proposed alternatives with methyl bromide fumigation. Extension programs, such as field demonstrations, grower trials, workshops, and distributed information, should result in commercial awareness, understanding and adoption of new technology and methods to reduce methyl bromide emissions and/or adoption of alternatives to methyl bromide fumigation. Applicants are encouraged to submit a logic model that details the activities, outputs, and outcomes (learning, action and condition) of the proposed project. This information may be provided as a narrative or formatted into a logic model chart. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at: www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/integrated/integrated_logic_model.html and www.ipm.gov/LogicModels/index.cfm.

3. Timelines for completion of each major objective in the application.

Timelines for completion of the major objectives in the application must be explicitly described ranging from two to five years from the start date. Experiments are expected to be replicated in two separate trials and results are to be extended to the relevant user community as part of the program within the program timeline.

4. Clear statement of specific 2013 CUN and specific limitations being addressed. MBT applicants must explain how their work is applicable to the 2013 Critical Use Nomination. Even though the CUN for use of methyl bromide are on specific agricultural crops, from specific geographical areas, in specific crop production systems (e.g., open field) or for use in specific post-harvest applications or structural applications for which there are currently no acceptable alternatives, grant applications whose purpose is to alleviate one or more of the limitations for use of alternatives may come from any U.S. state or region. Proposals do not have to address all the pests for the 2013 CUN. Proposed projects may provide alternatives for management of one or more pests or limiting situations that may be potentially included in an integrated pest management system.

The following are the 13 Critical Use Nominations for 2013:

- 1. Post-Harvest Use for Commodities.** Includes walnut, dried fruit (prunes, raisins, figs), and dates, all of which are subject to infestation by several insect pests.
- 2. Pre-plant Soil Use for Cucurbits Grown in Open Fields.** Covers cucurbits of several types (squash, melons, and/or cucumber) grown in the southeastern United States (except Florida), Maryland, and Delaware. These crops generally are grown in open fields on plastic tarps, often followed by various other crops. Harvest is destined for the fresh market.
- 3. Pre-plant Soil Use for Eggplant Grown in Open Fields.** Covers eggplant grown for fresh market in the states of Florida and Georgia. The crop is generally grown in open fields and followed by various other crops. Harvest is mainly for fresh market.
- 4. Pre-plant Soil Use for Fruit, Nut and Rose Nurseries.** Nursery producers provide pest-free stock plants that are used for the establishment of orchards and gardens. Nurseries in this sector provide plants to commercial growers of rose bush stock plants, and such diverse fruit crops as apricots, peaches, prunes, nectarines, cherries, plums, apples, pears, Asian pears, and ornamental pears. Nut trees produced by these nurseries include almonds, walnuts, pistachios, pecans, and chestnuts. Approximately 95 percent of the trees are fruit and nut varieties sold to commercial producers; the other five percent are ornamental types used for landscaping. Deciduous trees are primarily produced in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys of California.
- 5. Post-Harvest Use in Structures - Food Processing Plants.** Includes rice mills, flour mills, and pet food manufacturing facilities. This nomination is for facilities, or portions of facilities, that are unsuitable for the alternatives of methyl bromide, and where the alternatives are not economically feasible.
- 6. Post-Harvest Use on Dry Cured Pork Products.** Covers the production of cured meat products, such as country hams. These are produced primarily in the southern United States.
- 7. Pre-plant Soil Use for Orchard Replant.** Includes stone fruit, table and raisin grapes, wine grapes, almonds, and walnuts.
- 8. Pre-plant Soil Use for Ornamentals Grown in Open Fields.** Covers cut flowers, cut greens, and bulbs in California and floriculture in Florida.
- 9. Pre-plant Soil Use for Peppers.** Covers peppers grown in the southeastern United States, Georgia, and Florida. These crops generally are grown in open fields on plastic tarps, often following various other crops. Harvest is destined for the fresh market.
- 10. Research Use.** Allows researchers to include a methyl bromide standard in their test plots for statistical comparison the alternative fumigants.
- 11. Pre-plant Soil Use for Strawberries Grown for Fruit in Open Fields.** Covers the production of strawberries in California.

12. Pre-plant Soil Use for Strawberry Nurseries in Open Fields or in Protected Environments. Covers the nursery production of strawberries in California.

13. Pre-plant Soil Use for Tomato Grown in Open Fields. Covers the production of tomatoes in Florida, Georgia, the Mid-Atlantic (Maryland and Virginia), and the Southeast.

The following resources may be useful in developing Methyl Bromide Transitions applications:

In addition to the information contained in the 2013 CUNs, a matrix of alternatives identified by the United Nations technical committees for methyl bromide is available at www.epa.gov/ozone/strathome.html. While not all of the alternatives listed by the United Nations are currently available to the agricultural and structural industries in the United States, some do have potential to control pests currently controlled by methyl bromide. Integration of specific controls into current production systems will depend on availability, efficacy, logistics, economics, and grower acceptance. In all these cases, combinations of chemical and non-chemical materials and methods will likely be the most efficacious. It is unlikely that there will be one alternative for all of the uses of methyl bromide, but there may be several specific pest control tools that can manage specific pests currently controlled with methyl bromide when used as part of an overall integrated pest management program. EPA has published 30 case studies which describe potential alternatives to the use of methyl bromide.

Background information and an overview of the search for alternatives to methyl bromide are available in *Alternatives to Methyl Bromide: A Florida Perspective* (E. N. Roskopf, et al.), which is available at www.apsnet.org/publications/apsnetfeatures/Pages/MethylAlternatives.aspx.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Approximately **\$1.9 million** is available to fund applications in FY **2012**.

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

B. Types of Applications

In FY **2012**, applications may be submitted to the **Methyl Bromide Transitions** program as one of the following two types of requests:

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

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

C. Project Types

One grant type is being solicited in this RFA:

1) Integrated grants. These grants, including at least two of three functions (research, education, extension) are solicited. All grants must include specifics about how economic analyses will be conducted and how the project will be relevant to the Critical Use Nominations. For FY 2012, maximum project budget and acceptable project periods for research-based integrated grants in **MBT** are \$500,000 for projects up to three years duration.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Colleges and universities (as defined in section 1404 of NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3103) are eligible to submit applications for the Methyl Bromide Transitions (MBT) Competitive Grants Program. Section 1404 of NARETPA was amended by section 7101 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) to define Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs) (see Part III, B. and Part VIII, E. for more information), and to include research foundations maintained by eligible colleges or universities.

For the purposes of this program, the terms “college” and “university” mean an educational institution in any state which (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate; (2) is legally authorized within such state to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; (3) provides an educational program for which a bachelor’s degree or any other higher degree is awarded; (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Applications also may be submitted by 1994 Land-Grant Institutions (see Part VIII, E.), HSACUs, and research foundations maintained by eligible colleges or universities.

An applicant’s failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

B. Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities

Section 7101 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 amended section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) to add a new group of cooperating institutions, Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs). HSACUs are colleges and universities that qualify as Hispanic-serving Institutions (HSIs) and offer associate, bachelors, or other accredited degree programs in agriculture-related fields. HSACUs do not include 1862 land-grant institutions.

Eligibility under the MBT Competitive Grants Program

Pursuant to section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA), 7 U.S.C. 7626, Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grant Program, all four year HSIs are eligible to apply for a grant under the MBT Competitive Grants Program. Two year HSIs, however, may be eligible to apply only upon a determination by NIFA that the institution offers an associate or other accredited degree programs in agriculture-related fields. To seek an eligibility determination for grants under this RFA, two year HSIs may submit a one-page request to NIFA certifying that they are a Hispanic-serving

institution, as defined in section 502 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1101a), and providing a justification that they do offer associate or other accredited degree programs in agriculture-related fields. Eligibility determinations are valid for FY 2012 only and must be renewed every fiscal year.

HSIs that seek a determination of eligibility may submit a request before the application due date to HSACU@nifa.usda.gov directly or as a PDF attachment to the SF-424-R&R application package submitted through Grants.gov.

Additional questions on HSACU eligibility can be addressed to Office of the Director, Center for International Programs, at HSACU@nifa.usda.gov, (202) 720-1254, or via fax (202) 720-2030.

C. Cost Sharing or Matching

If a grant provides a particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, the grant recipient is required to match the USDA funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and/or in-kind contributions. (See Part IV, B., 6. for details.)

NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a grant if NIFA determines that:

(1) the results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or (2) the project involves a minor commodity, the project deals with scientifically important research, and the grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to NIFA in response to this RFA. **Applicants are advised to submit early to the Grants.gov system.**

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR) (also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If the organization is not prepared (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed PRIOR to submitting an application. It can take as much as two weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations the AR should go to **“Get Registered” on the Grants.gov left navigation bar (or go to www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov. A quick reference guide listing the steps is available as a 4-page PDF document at the following website: www.grants.gov/assets/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf.** Item 2. below mentions the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains additional explanatory language regarding the registration process.

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to www.grants.gov, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on **“Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions,”** enter the funding opportunity number **USDA-NIFA-ICGP-003790** in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

If assistance is needed to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating Adobe forms), **or submitting the application** then refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (www.grants.gov). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

Grants.gov customer support
1-800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035
Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Closed on [Federal Holidays](#).
Email: support@grants.gov

Grants.gov iPortal: Top 10 requested help topics (FAQs), Searchable knowledge base, self service ticketing and ticket status, and live web chat (available 7:00 A.M. - 9:00 P.M. ET). Get help now!

Please have the following information available when contacting Grants.gov, to help expedite your inquiry:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of Agency You Are Applying To
- Specific Area of Concern

See http://grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp or www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Parts V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS THAT ARE NON-COMPLIANT WITH THE REQUIREMENTS (i.e., content format, PDF file format, file name restrictions, and no password protected files) WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. With documented prior approval, subsequent submissions of an application will be accepted until close of business on the closing date in the RFA.

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “Convert Documents to PDF” on http://grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs.

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

- Email: electronic@nifa.usda.gov
- Phone: 202-401-5048
- Business hours: Monday through Friday, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm Eastern Time, excluding Federal holidays.

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

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

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of MBT priorities, the Critical Use Exemption process, and the potential for adoption in the short run.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages of single-spaced written text and up to five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (25 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

Project Narrative Requirements for Integrated Grants.

(1) Introduction: Include information on the following in the order identified:

- (a) A concise statement of the long-term goal(s) of the proposed project;
- (b) Summarize the body of knowledge or past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project including information about or reference to the specific Critical Use pest management strategy or similar document with identifiable stakeholder input;
- (c) Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities or publications related to the proposed activity including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project;

(d) Provide estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders and ongoing state-federal food and agricultural research, education, and extension programs. Applicants must identify and review the efficacy and economics of the tactics currently being used in the targeted cropping/industrial use system, then define opportunities for new approaches and costs of transition from methyl bromide;

(e) Describe the stakeholders who have identified the problem, sought the critical use exemption and how they will be involved in the implementation of project results;

(f) Response to Previous Review. This is only required for applications previously submitted to the MBT program but not funded. Project directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page. Please include previous proposal number, if possible.

(2) Objectives:

(a) Provide a brief review of the goal(s) stated in the Introduction; and

(b) Present a clear, concise set of project objectives including cost/benefit analysis of new approaches.

(3) Methods: Explicitly describe the procedures by objective for the proposed effort, include:

(a) Techniques and methods to be employed, including their efficacy and economic feasibility and rationale for their use in this project;

(b) Timeline for proposed project. Applicants must provide milestones and verifiable indicators to measure progress;

(c) Means by which any proposed extension and/or education activities will be evaluated. Applicants must describe plans to evaluate the outreach component, including means by which data will be analyzed and interpreted, and details of plans to communicate results to stakeholders and the public;

(d) Description of stakeholder involvement in identification of project priorities, their implementation and adoption; and

(e) Description of anticipated results or expected outcomes. Applicants must provide milestones and verifiable indicators to measure impact across a broad range of criteria (e.g., a timeline for grower adoption of techniques that lead to production, economic, and environmental benefits).

(4) Cooperation and institutional involved: Cooperative, multi-institutional and multidisciplinary applications are encouraged. Where applicable, identify each institutional unit contributing to the project and designate the lead institution or institutional unit. Clearly define the programmatic roles, responsibilities and budget for each institutional partner.

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

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide includes information about the individuals for which a Senior/Key Person Profile must be completed, and details about the Biographical Sketch and the Current and Pending Support including a link to a suggested template for the Current and Pending Support.

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

6. R&R Budget

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Matching Funds

If an applicant concludes that matching funds are not required as specified under Part III, C. Cost-sharing or matching, a justification should be included in the budget narrative. NIFA will consider this justification when ascertaining final matching requirements or in determining if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements.

For those grants requiring matching funds as specified under Part III, C., the budget narrative should include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Written verification means:

(a) For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization (and the applicant organization ONLY if provided after submission of the application), which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation (the budget narrative must describe how the cash donation will be used on the project); (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period; and (6) whether the applicant can designate cash as the applicant deems necessary or the cash contribution has been designated to a particular budget item; and

(b) For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization (and the applicant organization ONLY if provided after submission of the application), which must include: (1) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in kind contribution and a description of how the fair market value was determined; and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

The sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the proposal as part of the Budget Narrative. All pledge agreements must be placed in the proposal immediately following the summary of matching support.

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circular A-21 (2 CFR Part 220), Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs. **All contributions, including cash and third party in-kind, must meet the criteria included in section 23 of 7 CFR 3019, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations.”**

7. Supplemental Information Form

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

a. Field 2. Program to which you are applying. Enter the program code name “**Methyl Bromide Transitions**” and the program code “**112.C**”.

b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See Part VI, 1.6 of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

C. Submission Dates and Times

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on **June 19, 2012** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Applicants who have problems with the submission of an application to Grants.gov are encouraged to FIRST contact the Grants.gov Help Desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence. See Part IV. A. for Grants.gov contact information.

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

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 15 days of the established deadline, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

Section 720 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 (Division A of Pub. L. 112-55) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. NIFA will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be written in this space.

The maximum allowed indirect cost of 30 percent may be claimed under the Federal portion of the award, or the maximum allowed indirect cost of 30 percent may be claimed as matching contributions (if no indirect costs are requested). However, the maximum allowed indirect cost of 30 percent may not be claimed on both the Federal portion of the award and as matching contributions. (Note: An awardee may, as an example, request 15 percent of indirect costs on both the Federal portion of the award and as matching contributions. Or, an awardee may request any other, similar percentage combination that, when combined, does not exceed the 30 percent maximum indirect cost allowed.) **Nevertheless, the total combined percent of requested and contributed matching indirect costs cannot exceed 30 percent.**

E. Other Submission Requirements

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

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

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The (100 point) evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing integrated grant applications with research components submitted in response to this RFA:

Proposals addressing chemical and/or non-chemical methyl bromide alternatives will be evaluated based on their description of the new alternatives, with respect to the economics of the transition, the impact of the new technology on the efficacy of pest control (relative to methyl bromide) and potential economic or physical impediments to adoption. The potential in fulfilling this larger goal will be evaluated based on: 1) Proposal merit and quality; 2) Qualifications of proposed project personnel, adequacy of facilities and budget; and 3) Proposal relevance and effectiveness with respect to analyzing adoptability and economic consequences of the transition.

1. Proposal Merit and Quality (37 points):

(a) Proposed project goal, approach, or hypothesis is conceptually adequate and addresses a stated program priority. Application includes documentation substantiating that the proposed project is directed to methyl bromide critical use nominations. (6 points)

(b) Need for the proposed project is demonstrated and target audience(s) identified. (5 points)

(c) Objectives are clearly described, adequate, and appropriate for research, education, and extension. Two or more project functions (i.e., research, education, extension) are reflected in the project objectives. (5 points)

(d) Proposed techniques, procedures, or methodologies are clearly described, suitable, and feasible for proposed project, including how the economic analysis of the transition will be evaluated. (4 points)

(e) Time allotted for attainment of objectives is reasonable. (4 points)

(f) Expected results or outcomes are clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within the time frame of the project. State the potential commercial application and describe the costs (both fixed and recurring) of transition to the proposed alternative methods while comparing costs and efficacy of the commercially-used quantity of methyl bromide that might be replaced by the alternative methods. The proposal must include the potential timeline for replacement of the current critical use by the alternative methods proposed. (5 points)

(g) Articulation of a clear plan for managing the project, including how communication among members of the project team will be handled. (4 points)

(h) The project's implementation plan is clearly defined with appropriate educational activities for encouraging implementation of research results. This includes an appropriate mix of educational experiences ranging from awareness building to in-depth educational programs. Formal extension and/or education programs to expedite adoption of proposed alternatives must be delineated in the form of a measurable, outcome oriented plan in the proposal. Such programs must take place within the life of the project. (4 points)

2. Qualifications of Proposed Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities and Budget (27 points):

(a) Roles of project personnel are clearly defined. (5 points)

(b) Evidence that project personnel have sufficient expertise to complete the proposed project is provided. Necessary expertise includes individuals with experience in economic analysis and technology transfer. (4 points)

(c) Evidence of quality partnerships with other disciplines and institutions is provided, where appropriate. (5 points)

(d) Evidence is provided of institutional experience and competence in the proposed area of work. (4 points)

(e) Support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation are adequate. (4 points)

(f) Proposed budget is appropriate for the scope of the proposed project and allocates reasonable resources to at least two of the three functional areas (research, education, extension). Generally, in integrated projects, no more than two thirds of the project's budget should be devoted to any one function. If a project is funded, beginning in the second year of funding, at least one member of the project team will be required to attend an annual International Methyl Bromide

Alternatives Conference (www.mbao.org). Reasonable travel expenses may be claimed as part of the project budget. (5 points)

3. Proposal Relevance and Effectiveness (36 points)

(a) Degree to which project functions (research, education, extension) are integrated and necessary to address the stated problem or issue and achieve measurable outcomes. (5 points)

Integrated MBT projects should include research, education, and extension/outreach objectives (at least two of three). These include: a) hypothesis-driven research to fill knowledge gaps that are critical to the development of practices and programs to address the problem area; b) educational deliverables (e.g., interdisciplinary curricula and/or experiential learning for graduate and undergraduate students) that will train the next generation of scientists and educators who will work in the problem area; and/or c) an effective extension/outreach program that will lead to measurable behavior change in an identified audience or stakeholder group. The MBT program encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension, if applicable. This content is for “end users” as opposed to staff development and must align with the eXtension Guiding Principles, Implementation Plan and other requirements as presented at the site www.extension.org. Funds may be used to contribute to an existing Community of Practice with a methyl bromide alternatives component or to form a new Community of Practice with a focus on methyl bromide alternatives education and outreach activities. Applicants establishing new Communities of Practice (COPs), or enhancing existing ones, must first follow the corresponding steps outlined by eXtension.org (<http://create.extension.org/node/2057>).

(b) Extent to which the proposed work addresses identified stakeholder and Critical Use Exemption needs. Focus on commercial or field scale research targeting short- to medium-term solutions that will evaluate new alternatives, result in registration and application of new alternatives, and contain comprehensive information on the impact of alternatives on crop yields, sanitation efficacy, and profit margins over time. Repeat of research for two or more cropping seasons or trials is encouraged. (5 points)

(c) Extent to which stakeholders and/or end users were/will be involved in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation. Project should include a management plan (developed with input from stakeholder advisory groups) that leads to measurable improvements in the problem area. Documentation of interaction is expected in the proposal. (5 points)

(d) Suitability and feasibility of plan and methods for evaluating success of project activities (i.e., measurable outcomes) and documenting potential impact. (5 points)

(e) Probability that project results will reach beyond the project scale and duration, producing sustained education/extension initiatives. (4 points)

(f) For research, likelihood that it will provide relevant information to adequately inform the critical use exemption nominations concerning the availability, cost considerations and pest control efficacy of practices and technologies to address the stated problem or issue. (4 points)

(g) For extension, assessment of the degree to which the project will lead to measurable behavior change in an identified audience or stakeholder group in the problem area. (4 points)

(h) For education, likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs and train the next generation of scientists and educators who will work in the problem or issue area. (4 points)

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

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

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

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another NIFA program. NIFA will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of NIFA shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of NIFA as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that 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 shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

B. Award Notice

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

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to which the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PD's chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html to view NIFA award terms and conditions);
- (10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

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

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

2 CFR Part 220 – Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (OMB Circular A-21).

2 CFR Part 225 – Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87).

2 CFR Part 230 – Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122).

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

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

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

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

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21, A-87, and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225 and 230), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224)), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3016 – USDA Implementation of Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations (2 CFR Part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—USDA Implementation of Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Nonprofit Organizations.

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

7 CFR 3430—Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions.

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

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

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to NIFA's electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects. The details of these reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions. Details of annual and final technical reporting requirements also are included in the award terms and conditions.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Kitty Cardwell; National Program Leader; Division of Plant Systems - Protection; Institute of Food Production and Sustainability; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; telephone: (202) 401-1790; fax: (202) 401-1782; e-mail: kcardwell@nifa.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

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

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

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

2. Changes in Project Plans

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

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by NIFA without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed any applicable statutory limit or expiring appropriation limitation. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the

ADO prior to instituting such changes, if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

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

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

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