

Capacity Building Grants for Non Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) Program

FY 2012 Request for Applications

Application Deadline: July 6, 2012

NLGCA Program:

Telephone: 202-720-1973

Email: NLGCA@nifa.usda.gov

Internet:

<http://www.nifa.usda.gov/fo/nonlandgrantcollegesofagriculture.cfm>

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA)

10.326 - Capacity Building Grants for Non Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture

NIFA Funding Opportunity Number

USDA-NIFA-NLGCA-003809



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

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

**CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS FOR NON LAND GRANT COLLEGES OF
AGRICULTURE PROGRAM (NLGCA)**

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.326, Capacity Building Grants for Non Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on July 6, 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 outreach 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 Capacity Building Grants for Non Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Capacity Building Grants for Non Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture Program (NLGCA) for fiscal year (FY) 2012 to make competitive grants to NLGCA Institutions (non-land-grant colleges of agriculture) to assist the NLGCA Institutions in maintaining and expanding the capacity to conduct education, research, and outreach activities relating to agriculture, renewable resources, and other similar disciplines. NLGCA Institutions may use the funds: (a) to successfully compete for funds from Federal grants and other sources to carry out educational, research, and outreach activities that address priority concerns of national, regional, State, and local interest; (b) to disseminate information relating to priority concerns to interested members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities, the public, and any other interested entity; (c)

to encourage members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities to participate in priority education, research, and outreach activities by providing matching funding to leverage grant funds; and (d) through: (1) the purchase or other acquisition of equipment and other infrastructure (not including alteration, repair, renovation, or construction of buildings); (2) the professional growth and development of the faculty of the NLGCA Institution; and (3) the development of graduate assistantships.

NIFA anticipates the amount available for support of this program in FY 2012 will be approximately \$4.5 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for NLGCA Program projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a NLGCA 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 Background	5
B. Purpose and Priorities.....	7
A. Available Funding.....	21
B. Types of Applications.....	21
C. Project Types	21
D. Application Types	23
PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION	24
A. Eligible Applicants.....	24
B. Cost Sharing or Matching	25
PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	26
A. Electronic Application Package.....	26
B. Content and Form of Application Submission.....	27
C. Submission Dates and Times	35
D. Funding Restrictions	36
E. Other Submission Requirements.....	36
PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS	37
A. General	37
B. Review Criteria	37
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality	38
PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION	40
A. General	40
B. Award Notice	40
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	41
D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements.....	42
PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT	43
PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION.....	44
A. Access To Review Information	44
B. Use of Funds; Changes.....	44
C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards	45
D. Regulatory Information	45
E. Definitions.....	45
Appendix A- List of HSACU Institutions, 2011-2012	49

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 1473F of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA), as added by Section 7138 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, (7 USC 3319i), authorizes the ***Capacity Building¹ Grants for Non Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) Program*** to make competitive grants to *NLGCA Institutions* to assist the NLGCA Institutions in maintaining and expanding the capacity to conduct education, research, and outreach activities relating to *agriculture, renewable resources, and other similar disciplines*. NLGCA Institutions may use the funds: (a) to successfully compete for funds from Federal grants and other sources to carry out educational, research, and outreach activities that address priority concerns of national, regional, State, and local interest; (b) to disseminate information relating to priority concerns to interested members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities, the public, and any other interested entity; (c) to encourage members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities to participate in priority education, research, and outreach activities by providing matching funding to leverage grant funds; and (d) through: (1) the purchase or other acquisition of equipment and other infrastructure (not including alteration, repair, renovation, or construction of buildings); (2) the professional growth and development of the faculty of the NLGCA Institution; and (3) the development of graduate assistantships.

The four activities (a-d) noted above can be undertaken through a variety of mechanisms, approaches, or strategies, any of which should be part of an applicant's response to addressing any two of the three Program Categories (education, research and/or outreach) described below in Part I, C. 1-3. In addressing the legislative intent of this grants program, an applicant may include, but is not limited to, the following activities (listed as discussed above):

a) Successfully compete for funds from other sources:

By using NLGCA funds, grantees can

- Develop pilot projects that may provide preliminary findings to support a full proposal.
- Build partnerships in order to develop collaborative projects that may be competitive for other funding sources.
- Leverage funds to support students and faculty time to work on developing new projects or instructional materials or tools, or
- Pursue other, similar activities to address this activity.

b) Disseminate information to relevant groups:

NLGCA funds can be used to reach the relevant communities to increase awareness and participation in activities of high priority to agriculture and renewable resources through

- Workshops, website development, or on-line discussions/forums, etc., that highlight community practices relevant to promoting partner engagement that advances food and agricultural sciences education, research and outreach opportunities, or

¹ Throughout this RFA document, *italicized* terms are further defined in Part VIII.E.

- Pursue other, similar activities to address this activity.
- c) Encourage relevant groups or communities to participate in education, research and outreach activities:
 NLGCA institutions may use funds that will encourage communication, interaction, and participation in activities that will engage various communities and increase their interest in agriculture education, research and outreach through
- Building partnership with local communities.
 - Building partnership with Land grant institutions.
 - Reaching out to underrepresented and underserved groups, or
 - Pursue other, similar activities to address this activity.
- d) Increase Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture infrastructure capacity:
 Grant funds can be used to support the capacity building of NLGCA institutions through
- Purchase of equipment that may be used for research or instructional materials.
 - Building library collections (including on-line subscription) to keep content knowledge of faculty and build research background of students.
 - Support of professional development for faculty through research sabbaticals, exchange or visiting scientists programs, etc., or
 - Pursue other, similar activities to address this activity.

Background

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) encourages, and relies upon, the Nation's *colleges* and *universities* to educate and graduate professionals for careers in the *food and agricultural sciences*, to conduct research and outreach activities, and to disseminate information relating to priority concerns in these areas to members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities, and to the public.

In July 2008, the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, and Department of Energy asked the National Research Council's Board on Life Sciences to convene a committee to "... examine the current state of biological research in the United States and recommend how best to capitalize on recent technological and scientific advances that have allowed biologists to integrate biological research findings, collect and interpret vastly increased amounts of data, and predict the behavior of complex biological systems." The committee produced a report entitled "New Biology for the 21st Century: Ensuring the United States Leads the Coming Revolution," and a set of recommendations that recognize the most effective leveraging of investments would come from a coordinated, interagency effort to encourage the emergence of a New Biology to address broad and challenging societal problems.

That committee outlined four broad societal challenges in food, environment, energy, and health that could be addressed by the New Biology. The four challenges are: (1) Generate food plants to adapt and grow sustainably in changing environments; (2) Understand and sustain ecosystem function and biodiversity in the face of rapid change; (3) Expand sustainable alternatives to fossil fuels; and (4) Understand individual health.

USDA – National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) Response: Building upon the four “New Biology for the 21st Century” challenges, above, USDA-NIFA refocused its mission to direct agricultural sciences research, education, and outreach-funded programs to address the following five NIFA Priority Areas:

1. **Global Food Security and Hunger**
2. **Climate Change**
3. **Sustainable Energy**
4. **Childhood Obesity**
5. **Food Safety**

B. Purpose and Priorities

The **Capacity Building Grants for Non Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA Program)** awards grants to address critical issues and challenges of national, regional, State, local and multi-institutional scope that establish or strengthen research, teaching and outreach capacity needed by NLGCA Institutions to assist USDA in its mission to ensure a competent, professional work force in the *food and agricultural sciences* of sufficient size and demographic composition to be representative of the U.S. population. [*Food and agricultural sciences* is defined in 7 CFR 3403.2 as “...basic, applied, and developmental research, extension , and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable energy and natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, including activities relating to the following: (a) Animal health, production, and well-being, (b) Plant health and production, (c) Animal and plant germ plasm collection and preservation, (d) Aquaculture, (e) Food safety, (f) Soil, water, and related resource conservation and improvement, (g) Forestry, horticulture, and range management, (h) Nutritional sciences and promotion, (i) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability, (j) Home economics (Family and Consumer Sciences), (k) Rural human ecology, (l) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4-H clubs, (m) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis, (n) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture, (o) Biotechnology related to agriculture, and (p) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products.”]

The **NLGCA Program** is a NIFA-administered competitive grants program focused on improving formal, postsecondary-level agricultural sciences education, research, and outreach activities related to *agriculture, renewable resources, and other similar disciplines*. Guided by critical societal issues laid out in the “New Biology for the 21st Century” report, as well as the five, compelling NIFA Priority Areas, NLGCA-funded projects should also ensure a competent, qualified and diverse workforce to serve the food and agricultural sciences. At the same time, NLGCA-funded projects should improve the economic health and viability of rural communities through the development of degree programs emphasizing new and emerging employment opportunities, as well as through conducting research and outreach activities that serve members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities, and the public. Finally, NLGCA-funded projects should focus on the national challenge to increase the number and diversity (i.e., having an agricultural sciences workforce representative of the Nation’s population) of students entering other food and agriculture-related science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

Therefore, all applications submitted to this grants program must state how NLGCA Institutions will address the following **NLGCA Program Goals**:

1. Strengthen the capacity of NLGCA institutions to develop infrastructure support to carry out teaching, research and outreach activities in food, agriculture and natural resources.
2. Enhance the ability of faculty members at NLGCA institutions to engage in professional development opportunities to update content knowledge and/or pedagogical skills to better carry out teaching, research and outreach activities.
3. Increase the number, quality, and diversity of graduates entering the workforce with skills and competencies expected by employers and relevant to emerging food, agriculture and natural resources careers.

The intent of a NLGCA-funded project is to make a significant impact on the challenge or opportunity being addressed, with the expectation that major portions of the impact will be sustained after NIFA funding ends.

Applications must address the following four items within specified sections of the ‘R&R Other Project Information’ Form (Part IV, B.3.):

1. **Focus upon one of the five NIFA Priority Areas (Part I, A.); and**
2. **Address at least 2 of the 3 Program Categories (Part I, C.1-3.), and within each of the two, selected Program Categories, further identify and describe at least one Need Area; and**
3. **Within the project’s Evaluation Plan (Part I, C.7.), discuss how project activities will advance the three NLGCA Program Goals (above); and**
4. **Document how project accomplishments (products, results and impacts, etc.) will be published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic community (Part I, C.8., Dissemination & Continuation Plans).**

Note: Your project’s NIFA Priority Area, Program Categories, and Need Areas must appear on the required Project Summary/Abstract (see format suggested in Part IV, B.3. Field 7, for this Project Summary/Abstract).

C. Program Category Description

A NLGCA-funded project must address at least two (2) of the following three (3) **Program Categories (C. 1, 2, or 3)** of Education, Research or Outreach:

1. Education Program Category:

Applications with an education-focus must address at least one (1) of the following, three **Education Need Areas** (C. 1. a-c) listed directly below, and applications must demonstrate how this chosen Need Area will support each of the three NLGCA Program Goals from Part I. A.

Proposed education-focused activities should support for-credit coursework (academic curriculum) leading to a degree within the broadly defined *food and agricultural sciences* disciplines (Part VIII, E. - Definitions). Projects should address a documented issue/problem/challenge in education of national, regional, State, or local interest; be innovative; have potential for adoption by other academic institutions; exhibit broad-based applicability

beyond a single course or an individual instructor; have a strong potential for institutionalization; and must be supported by evidence-based studies, publications or practices.

Note: Your application must include an Evaluation Plan (Part I. C. 6.) for each Education Need Area (below) you select. This Evaluation Plan indicates how you will measure success in completing your objectives within your chosen Need Area. Therefore, choose only those Education Need Areas for which you can commit to develop a rigorous Evaluation Plan.

Education Need Areas (a-c):

a) Expanding Student Career and Learning Opportunities through Curriculum Development, and Instructional Delivery Systems:

This Need Area promotes developing new (or adapting existing) curricula and related materials to meet changes anticipated within the food and agricultural sciences system. Projects should encourage integration and be multidisciplinary. Learner-centered instructional techniques, or other improvements in teaching and student learning, are encouraged, and are expected to demonstrate how the project will reach large audiences efficiently and effectively, provide hands-on learning experiences, extend learning beyond the classroom, reinforce recent research on how to motivate students to learn, retain, apply, and transfer knowledge, skills, and competencies, and integrate and synthesize knowledge.

The purpose of this Need Area is to enhance the NLGCA Institution's capacity to promote new and improved curricula, instructional materials, and other learning resources to increase the quality of, and continuously renew, curricula in order to attract, recruit, and retain students in the food and agricultural sciences fields. The overall objective is to stimulate the development and use of exemplary education models and materials incorporating the most recent advances in subject matter, and research on teaching and learning theory. Projects may emphasize, but are not limited to: the development of courses of study, degree programs, and instructional materials; incorporating alternative instructional methodologies that respond to differences in student learning styles; inter-institutional collaborations that deliver instruction in ways that maximize program quality and reduce unnecessary duplication; the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects; the introduction of new subjects, or new applications of knowledge pertaining to agriscience and agribusiness content. The end goal is to have these activities fully institutionalized so they can be sustained and not just a one-time activity, in order to show impacts on the institutions' educational capacity.

The choice for which strategy to employ should be based on most current research or studies and references should be included. Examples of eligible projects in this Education Need Area may include, but are not limited to, the following strategies:

- Designing course content around overarching and unifying concepts, skills and competencies -including innovative ways to integrate scientific research experiences- within the postsecondary curricula;

- Creating model curricula, laboratory, or student research experiences, especially activities that expand students' career interests in the food and agricultural sciences through mentoring or professional shadowing activities, internships or practicums including international learning experiences, visiting lecturers, or other similar experiential learning activities such as hands-on, remote, and virtual laboratories;
- Fostering student experiential learning opportunities where students are placed in team-oriented, problem-solving, decision-making situations in the context of real-world situations. Experiential learning in laboratory research or field-based internships is encouraged, but any activity should expose students to experiences directly supporting topics within the food and agricultural sciences. Such experiences must: (1) demonstrate how the experience will help meet students' career goals or produce 'society-ready' graduates, and (2) contain an evaluation process—involving the faculty and/or employer or mentor—to assure that students meet project objectives;
- Forming partnerships involving a broad range of diverse institutions to better understand how students learn, how to sustain their interests, and how to acquire those skills and occupational competencies expected by employers;
- Establishing and promoting instructional methodologies to improve students' retention of subject content, develop students' analytical, interpersonal, leadership, communications, problem-solving, computational, and decision-making skills and abilities. These may take the form of undergraduate research opportunities, service learning, case studies, or other experiential learning activities;
- Creating career placement or higher education academic counseling activities, with the expected outcome of encouraging postsecondary graduates to pursue higher degrees, especially those that support the food and agricultural sciences;
- Developing Internet-based approaches and systems for multi-institutional delivery and sharing of curriculum content to improve effectiveness and efficiencies; or
- Other approaches to achieve NLGCA Program Goals.

b) Professional Development for Faculty Members:

This Need Area promotes postsecondary-focused activities that improve faculty members' teaching competencies and subject matter expertise in order to address emerging student demographic composition and learning styles. Developmental activities may include both formal training and informal continuing education.

The purpose of this Need Area is to enhance the NLGCA Institution's capacity to advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills, in order to better advise and provide students the experience or knowledge that will encourage them to pursue advanced postsecondary degrees in the food and agricultural sciences, or prepare them for the food and

agricultural sciences workforce. Training of targeted faculty recipients should be intentional and relevant to the identified educational needs of the students, who will be the beneficiaries of such faculty development. Proposals may emphasize, but are not limited to: obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications in a discipline supporting the food and agricultural sciences, expanding competence using innovative technologies and new methods of instructional delivery, or in improving student advising skills.

Any faculty recipient of support must be an "eligible participant" as defined in the definitions section of this RFA (Part VIII, E.). The choice for which strategy to employ should be based on most current research or studies and references should be included. Examples of eligible projects in this Education Need Area may include, but are not limited to, the following strategies:

- Developing a self-sustaining model for faculty professional development that better prepares new faculty for teaching careers, or provides retraining for experienced faculty;
- Promoting teaching and advising strategies to increase faculty understanding of how to recruit and retain students, especially within populations and cultures traditionally underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences workforce;
- Developing faculty awareness of the importance of increasing the number, quality and diversity of postsecondary-level students enrolled in agricultural education degree programs, and engaging these students (and/or existing faculty in agricultural education) to more effectively interact with K-14 programs, especially to increase food and agriculture sciences STEM education and career awareness among secondary and two-year postsecondary students and teachers;
- Creating assessments that document student learning outcomes, or that identify conceptual areas or skills particularly challenging to students, followed by appropriate changes in instructional approaches to effectively address these issues;
- Establishing systems that improve student learning across a curriculum, and identifying ways to redesign curricula to meet goals for achieving improved student learning and competencies;
- Integrating current science and pedagogy into the teacher preparation curriculum or professional development program (this may involve actual hands-on research experiences for teachers, and as applicable, may be gained from partner institutions with strong research infrastructure and carried out as a summer sabbatical);
- Exploring Internet-based approaches for faculty professional development; or
- Other approaches to achieve NLGCA Program Goals.

c) Collaborative Interaction with Other Academic Institutions:

This Need Area promotes postsecondary-focused activities and linkages between secondary, 2-year postsecondary, and/or baccalaureate degree-granting institutions to maximize the development and use of resources supporting instruction within the food and agricultural sciences.

The purpose of this Need Area is to enhance the NLGCA Institution's capacity to promote partnerships with secondary, 2-year postsecondary, or other postsecondary academic institutions to support postsecondary instruction (i.e., providing coursework targeted at undergraduate students, but that may also be available for advanced placement credit for secondary students; for transfer credit from associate-degree programs into baccalaureate-level programs; or for postsecondary faculty development that includes research sabbaticals). The intent of these activities is to encourage and facilitate transfer and matriculation into postsecondary programs within the food and agricultural sciences. Emphasis between secondary and higher education institutions may focus on, but is not limited to, the development and use of articulation agreements, 2+2 or 2+2+2 arrangements, advanced placement credit transfer, or the sharing of faculty and facilities. Partnerships, collaborative arrangements and shared resources between institutions (including course credit sharing arrangements) are encouraged.

Projects should contribute to the academic community's understanding about how new strategies are transferred to diverse settings and about how they impact student learning. Evaluation plans should explore opportunities for adapting new strategies in diverse educational settings. Projects that specifically address challenges to achieving widespread adoption of proven practice are especially encouraged.

The choice for which strategy to employ should be based on most current research or studies and references should be included. Examples of eligible projects in this Education Need Area may include, but are not limited to, the following strategies:

- A project that focuses on developing and implementing comprehensive, multi-institutional practices proven to recruit and retain K-14 level graduates, with a focus on cultivating those students to pursue a postsecondary degree (**Note: NLGCA grant funding may not be used to provide student scholarships or other tuition-remission activity**);
- A collaborative project between faculty from K-12, two-year postsecondary, and baccalaureate-level schools that develops a functional plan facilitating seamless transfer of course credit between institutions;
- An activity promoting faculty exchanges to help update course content or to encourage increased, hands-on student research experiences;
- A pilot project that explores the practical aspects of using remote laboratories; moving research into the classroom; or instruction among several institutions;
- A program to reduce duplication of similar educational resources across institutions and to increase instructional efficiencies. Examples may include multi-institutional or interstate approaches to curriculum development, faculty sharing, cross enrollments, joint

degrees, regionalization of academic programs, regional and national workshops and symposia, and similar methodologies;

- A project to establish and implement programs or procedures (faculty sharing, articulation agreements, electronic exchange of coursework, ... etc.) to disseminate curricula, instructional methods, or training practices to faculty across the state or region; or
- Other approaches to achieve NLGCA Program Goals.

Finally, an application focused on any of the three, Education Need Areas identified above is strongly encouraged to reference recommendations from the National Academy of Science 2009 report entitled, *Transforming Agricultural Education for a Changing World*. This report recommends that academic institutions with undergraduate programs in agriculture implement the following nine steps to better meet the needs of students, employers, and the broader society. For information on the full report, please refer to http://dels.nas.edu/ag_education/report.shtml and click on recommendations. The list of recommendations (http://dels.nas.edu/ag_education/recommendations.shtml#plan) follows:

- [Implement Strategic Planning](#)
- [Broaden Treatment of Agriculture in the Overall Curriculum](#)
- [Broaden the Student Experience](#)
- [Prepare Faculty to Teach Effectively](#)
- [Reward Exemplary Teaching](#)
- [Build Stronger Connections among Institutions](#)
- [Start Early—K-12 Outreach](#)
- [Build Strategic Partnerships](#)
- [Focus Reviews of Undergraduate Programs in Agriculture](#)

Applicants are also strongly encouraged to refer to a 2009 white paper on Human Capacity Development prepared by the Academic Programs Section of the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities. Copies of the white paper entitled “*Human Capacity Development: The Road to Global Competitiveness and Leadership in Food, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (FANRRS)*” can be found at: <http://www.aplu.org/NetCommunity/Document.Doc?id=1639>.

2. Research Program Category:

Applications with a research focus must address at least one (1) of the following two (2) **Research Need Areas** (C. 2. a-b) listed directly below, and applications must demonstrate how this chosen Need Area will support each of the three NLGCA Program Goals from Part I. A. Projects should address a demonstrated, documented issue/problem/challenge in research of national, regional, State, or local interest within the broadly defined *food and agricultural sciences* (Part VIII, E. - Definitions).

Either **Research Need Area** (C. 2. a or b, below) may encourage graduate assistantships. Such student learning opportunities should emphasize team-oriented, problem-solving, decision-making situations in the context of addressing real-world research experiences. Experiential learning in laboratory research or other internships with business and industry, community organizations, federal agencies and other domains that provide knowledge and skills for graduate study should be given priority. Projects addressing graduate assistantships must: (1) demonstrate how the experience will produce qualified and well trained graduates, (2) contain an evaluation

process involving both the faculty or mentor to assure that students meet project objectives, and (3) document that the field of science under consideration is experiencing a shortage of scientific and professional personnel, and how the project plans to address this deficiency. Individual students may be supported under this experiential learning opportunity for up to three (3) years (including summers, semesters, or semester breaks). Requested grant funds may be used as stipends for students while they are working in research/field settings. **(However, a NLGCA grant may not fund student scholarships or other tuition-remission activity)**. Students should be required to prepare written and oral summaries of the experiential learning gained through this opportunity. To attract high-caliber students, stipends should be competitive with alternative employment options. A modest amount of funds may be requested for materials/supplies to facilitate a student's broad exposure to research/field techniques and methodologies. Grant recipients are encouraged to take advantage of any related paid internship opportunities provided by state, county, federal, business and industry sources. **Note: Your application must include an Evaluation Plan (Part I. C. 6.) for each Research Need Area you select. This Plan indicates how you will measure success in completing your objectives within your chosen Need Area. Therefore, choose only those Research Need Areas for which you can commit to develop a rigorous Evaluation Plan.**

Research Need Areas (a-b):

a) Studies and Experimentation in Food and Agricultural Sciences

The purpose of this Need Area is to advance the body of knowledge within the *food and agricultural sciences*. Projects addressing this Need Area are encouraged to focus on multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research activities addressing critical issues rather than single, discipline-specific research studies.

Examples of studies and experiments that address this Research Need Area include, but are not limited to:

- Conceiving, designing, and evaluating new bio-processing techniques for eliminating undesirable constituents from, or adding desirable ones to, food products;
- Development of bio-energy/fuel alternatives;
- Conducting plant or animal breeding programs to develop higher yielding and improved quality products and improved diseases resistance;
- Proposing and evaluating methods to enhance utilization of the capabilities and resources of food and agricultural institutions to promote rural development (e.g., exploitation of new technologies by small rural businesses);
- Identifying control factors that influence consumer demand for agricultural products;
- Analyzing social, economic, and physiological aspects of nutrition and health, food choices, and life-style choices, and community strategies for meeting the changing needs of different population groups;
- Advancing the body of knowledge in highly important scientific, food and agriculture program areas such as human nutrition, food safety, *sustainable agriculture*, global climate change, natural resources management and the environment, biotechnology and

genomics, newly developed research areas such as proteomics, metabolomics, nanotechnology, pharmaceutical qualities of medicinal plants, agribusiness management and marketing, integrated pest management, and the human sciences.

- Other research areas relevant to the five NIFA priority areas and foundational areas supported by NIFA.

b) Centralized Research Support Systems

The purpose of this Need Area is to establish centralized research support systems that: (1) meet national needs or serve regions of NLGCA institutions; or (2) provide research support more economically, thereby freeing up resources for other research uses. Examples of projects that address this Research Need Area include, but are not limited to:

- Storage, maintenance, characterization, evaluation and enhancement of germ plasm for use by animal and plant breeders, including those using the techniques of biotechnology;
- Establishment of computerized data banks of important scientific information (e.g., human nutrition, epidemiological, demographic, weather, economic, crop yields);
- Establishment of expert service centers for sophisticated and highly specialized methodologies (e.g., evaluation of organoleptic and nutritional quality of foods, toxicology, taxonomic identifications, consumer preferences demographics, and efficacy of medicinal plants...etc.);
- Enhancing technology and instrumentation for research and instruction; and
- Other approaches to achieve NLGCA Program Goals.

Research-focused applications are strongly encouraged to reference recommendations from the National Academy of Science 2010 report entitled, *New Biology for the 21st Century: Ensuring the United States Leads the Coming Revolution,*"

(http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=12764&page=1). The report contains a set of recommendations that recognize that the most effective leveraging of investments come from a coordinated, interagency effort to encourage the emergence of a New Biology that would enunciate and address broad and challenging societal problems.

3. Outreach Program Category:

Applications with an outreach focus must address at least one (1) of the following six (6)

Outreach Need Areas (C. 3. a-f) listed directly below, and applications must demonstrate how this chosen Need Area will support each of the three NLGCA Program Goals from Part I. A. Outreach-focused projects generally result in a primary, target beneficiary consisting of individuals and communities outside of a formal, academic program setting. Projects should address a demonstrated, documented issue/problem/challenge in outreach of national, regional, State, or local interest within the broadly defined *food and agricultural sciences* (Part VIII, E. - Definitions). **Note: Your application must include an Evaluation Plan (Part I. C. 6.) for each Outreach Need Area you select. This Evaluation Plan indicates how you will measure success in completing your objectives within your chosen Need Area. Therefore, choose**

only those Outreach Need Areas for which you can commit to develop a rigorous Evaluation Plan.

Outreach Need Areas (a-f):

a) 4-H Youth Development

The purpose of this Need Area is to cultivate important life skills in youth that build character and assist them in making appropriate life and career choices. At-risk youth targeted in such projects should be encouraged to participate in academic retention and enrichment programs;

b) Food and Agricultural Sciences

The purpose of this Need Area is to increase research and educational programs that help individuals learn new ways to produce income through alternative enterprises, to improve marketing strategies and management skills, and to assist farmers, ranchers, and foresters to improve productivity through sound resource management strategies, including controlling crop pests, soil testing, livestock production practices, and marketing;

c) Leadership Development

The purpose of this Need Area is to train outreach professionals and volunteers to deliver programs in agriculture, gardening, health and safety, family and consumer issues, and to support Agriculture in the Classroom or 4-H youth development programs, that encourage greater involvement and leadership roles within the community;

d) Natural Resources

The purpose of this Need Area is to inform landowners and homeowners how to use natural resources wisely and to protect the environment with educational programs in water quality, timber management, composting, lawn waste management, and recycling;

e) Family and Consumer Sciences

The purpose of this Need Area is to help families become resilient and healthy by teaching nutrition, food preparation skills, positive child care, parenting, family communication, financial management, and health care strategies; and/or

f) Community and Economic Development

The purpose of this Need Area is to assist local governments, community and non-profit organizations to investigate and create viable options for economic and community development, such as improved job creation and retention, small- and medium-sized business development, effective and coordinated emergency response, solid waste disposal, tourism development, workforce education, and land-use planning, as well as to help with the development of small family owned businesses.

For all previously described Program Categories (C. 1, 2, or 3) of Education, Research or Outreach, the following guidelines (C. 4-8) will apply:

4. Unallowable Costs: NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority to address any Need Area may not be used for student tuition remission, on-campus room and board, academic fees or other financial assistance (no scholarships or fellowships). Also, funds may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment (e.g., equipment that is unmovable or unusable if detached) in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities (i.e., no greenhouses, laboratories, barns, or other structures). Promotional items (e.g., T-shirts and other give-a-ways) and food functions (e.g., cookouts or other social meal gatherings) are considered 'entertainment' expenses, and are, therefore, also *not allowed* under this grants program.

5. Note: A teacher or student recipient (eligible participant) receiving Federal funds via any *Need Area* above must be a citizen or national of the United States, as defined in this RFA (see Part VIII, E.). Where eligibility is claimed under 8 U.S.C. 1101(a) (22), documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to NIFA upon request.

6. Stipends to support undergraduate and graduate students' experiential, academic learning activities outside of the traditional classroom are permitted (as long as such activities are clearly related to a student's degree program and not extracurricular). Stipends are salary to individuals, based on hourly wages, and commensurate to salary amounts provided to students with similar training/academic background per institutional practice and policies. These should be given as part of work being done integral to the funded project (research technician, research assistant, education assistant, workshop/symposium leaders or mentors, tutors for undergraduate or other graduate students, curricular development assistant), and not as a stand-alone graduate assistantship with no relevance to the funded project. The hiring of graduate students must be planned in order for the students to gain additional skills and obtain training that will be helpful for future career and employment opportunities. Outcomes associated with student stipends must be tracked to determine benefits of the program. Stipends may be requested for materials or supplies to facilitate a student's broad exposure to research/field techniques and methodologies, as well as for reasonable travel expenses and per diem related to student educational experiences (e.g., field trips, data collection, and scientific meetings) directly supporting this funded project. In order for the students to be provided a stipend, they must be currently matriculated in the institution(s) where the projects are being implemented. **Stipends, or other Federal support from this grants program, may not be used for tuition remission or for scholarships.**

7. Evaluation Plan:

All projects, regardless of the scope or program component they address, must have an evaluation plan that includes both a strategy for monitoring the project as it evolves (to provide feedback to guide these efforts), as well as a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the project in achieving its goals and for identifying positive and negative findings when the project is completed.

An Evaluation Plan must contain a separate component to assess each of the Program Categories (C. 1, 2, or 3) of Education, Research or Outreach, as selected by the applicant.

Evaluation information that must accompany a grant application:

- a) The evaluation section of your application should briefly describe major project goals that directly support the three NLGCA Program Goals (Part I. B.). Application reviewers and staff will be looking for an evaluation plan -and accompanying assessment measures- that focus on gains or changes in knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or attitudes of the target audience(s). The evaluation may also include assessment of other *outcomes*, particularly if the project aims to change organizational structures, create cost-efficiencies, or achieve other ends not specifically represented by learning. Explain the anticipated data gathering procedures to monitor and assess progress toward intended project goals. When describing the measurement instruments you plan to use (surveys, interviews, focus groups, assessments of e-portfolios or capstone projects, measures of class performance, scores on standardized tests, cost-benefit analyses, etc.), be sure to mention why they are appropriate to gauging success.
- b) The evaluation plan section should make a convincing case to reviewers that -at the conclusion of the grant- the grantee could report the extent to which learning *outcomes*, professional development goals, and/or organizational *outcomes* have been achieved. Reviewers will be looking for evidence that the applicant thought about how to measure what worked, what did not work as planned, and what adjustments could be made to enhance program *outcomes* in the future. Collection of this evidence is critical to achieving NLGCA's goal of making data about educational improvements and innovation available to the education community. An evaluation plan that only indicates a desire to develop assessment measures once the project is underway, and an eventual description of resulting project activities and *outcomes*, would be considered a poorly prepared and inadequate evaluation plan.
- c) The project budget should contain funding to either hire an outside project evaluator, or to present convincing evidence that an appropriate evaluator is already on staff and available to provide assistance with assessment and evaluation throughout the life of the project. As a guide, up to 10 percent of grant funds may be used to support this purpose. The following activities are examples of items that may be included in the Evaluation Plan: project objectives that lend themselves most readily to measurement and evaluation, baseline assessment data and a planned collection process from a possible comparison or control group, possible measurement instruments (surveys, student journals, standardized tests, interviews, focus groups, analysis of e-portfolios or capstone projects, cost-benefit analyses, etc.), a strategy for what assessment measures will be a part of the annual and final Project Performance Reports (Part VI. D.), and how this information will eventually be disseminated to interested parties and to the public.
- d) Finally, the Evaluation Plan itself should contain a projected number of students or faculty impacted by your project as a result of the proposed activities as one assessment

measure, specific metrics summarizing who benefited the most (and the least) from your project, an explanation of what revisions, improvements, or enhancements you would make, funding permitting, to increase the value of this project in the future, and ideas about how to make projects like yours more cost-effective. These, and other funded project assessments determined by the project director and evaluation team should be reported both annually and in the final performance report (Part VI. D.).

The following, suggested evaluation examples are derived from the Department of Education's Report of the Academic Competitiveness Council, May 2007, *Federal STEM Goals and Metrics, Education Undergraduate National Goals and Metrics*. (See <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/competitiveness/acc-mathscience/report.pdf>.)

To demonstrate progress toward increasing the number of graduates, the following metric is suggested: first **provide baseline data** for the year preceding the grant award showing the number and/or percentage of students who declare and/or complete a major program of study within *food and agricultural sciences* within your unit; and second, provide similar data for the final year of the grant and include an assessment of the impact of your project on changes from the baseline data. List the expected number of students benefiting from this project and their level of education; a table is recommended.

To demonstrate progress toward increasing the quality of instruction, the following metric is suggested: first **provide baseline data** for the year preceding the grant award showing the current number and/or percentage of graduates who either graduate and pursue a vocation in *food and agricultural sciences*, or who pursue advanced degrees within the food and agricultural sciences; and second, provide similar data for the final year of the grant and include an assessment of the impact of your project on changes from the baseline data.

Suggested resources to obtain quantitative, baseline, student enrollment, degrees granted and employment data for comparison purposes; postsecondary institutions may find appropriate information in the Food and Agricultural Education Information System (FAEIS) at: <http://faeis.ahnrit.vt.edu/>, and from the publication: *Employment Opportunities for College Graduates in Food, Renewable Energy, and the Environment United States, 2010-2015* at: <http://www.ag.purdue.edu/usda/employment/pages/default.aspx>. Other, similar source(s) may also be consulted.

Applications should include elements of a logic model (see final page of this RFA) detailing the activities, outputs, and *outcomes* of the proposed project. This information may be provided as a narrative or formatted into a logic model chart. The logic model planning process is a tool that should be used to develop your project **before** writing your proposal. Two additional pages are allowed for this information. See Part IV.B.3 (Field 12) for details on where to attach this information to your application. More information and resources related to the logic model planning process are provided at: http://www.nifa.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html.

Additional Resources for Project Evaluation:

- NSF 02-057: The 2002 User-Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation, a basic guide to quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods for educational projects
<http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2002/nsf02057/start.htm>
- Field-Tested Learning Assessment Guide (FLAG): This website is designed for Science, Math, Engineering, and Technology Instructors who are interested in new approaches to evaluating student learning, attitudes, and performance. It has a primer on assessment and evaluation, classroom assessment techniques, discipline-specific tools, and resources - all in a searchable, downloadable data base, <http://www.flaguide.org/>
- American Evaluation Association. Online Resources
(<http://www.eval.org/resources.asp>)

8. Dissemination & Continuation Plans

Include in the project's Dissemination Plan (see Part IV, B.3. Field 8.2.e.), a description of how the applicant plans to communicate project accomplishments (products, results and impacts, etc.) to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. This may include educational journals or other professional discipline publications, and presentations at regional or national conferences and workshops, including the NLGCA Project Directors Conference (see Part VI, D.1.).

Continuation Plan: Applicants are also expected to include a statement describing how project outcomes are expected to continue after NIFA funding ends. This Plan should include expected outputs and how these will become institutionalized. Also, describe any strategies for adapting or expanding these outputs for a larger audience. Provide details of these changes, what are the expected outcomes, and the targeted audience who benefits from this project.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

NIFA anticipates approximately \$4.5 million will be available to fund applications in FY 2012, and has no commitment to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

B. Types of Applications

For FY 2012, applications may only be submitted as a **New application**. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the NLGCA Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

C. Project Types

Applicants may submit one of the following four types of projects:

1. Conference/Planning Proposal

Applicants in this Project Type may request up to \$30,000 (total conference, not per year) to facilitate strategic planning session(s) required of faculty, industry, professional association, community leaders, or other necessary participants for the specific purpose of developing a formal plan leading to a subsequent submission of either a *Joint*, or a *Large-scale (state or region) comprehensive initiatives (LCI)*, Project Proposal, as described directly below in C.3. or C.4. **A Conference/Planning grant application may not be submitted in the same year for which a Joint or LCI application for the same project is also submitted.**

2. Regular Project Proposal (Single Institution/Organization)

Applicants may request up to \$150,000 (total, not per year) for a Regular Project Proposal. In a Regular Project Proposal, the applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

3. Joint Project Proposal (Applicant + One or more Partners)

Applicants may request up to \$300,000 (total, not per year) for a *Joint Project Proposal*. In a *Joint Project Proposal*, the applicant executes the project with assistance from at least one additional partner. The partner(s) must share grant funds (see explanation of required funds distribution percentage among partners in the definition of a *Joint Project Proposal* in Part VIII, E.). [Note: This ‘*Joint Project Proposal*’ Project Type may be dropped entirely in future NLGCA grant competitions and replaced by the *Large-scale (state or region) comprehensive initiatives (LCI)* described directly below in item C.4.]

Note: Joint Projects must include both the R&R Budget and the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment Forms. The forms should clearly identify the total grant funding anticipated for the applicant and each partner to demonstrate the required sharing percentage. All expenditures for the applicant and all partners should be further itemized in the Budget Justification. Joint Project

Proposal funds **do not** have to be divided equally among project years, nor do they need to be divided equally among project partners.

4. Large-scale (state or region) comprehensive initiatives (LCI) (Applicant + Two or more Partners)

Applicants may request up to \$750,000 (total, not per year) for a large-scale (state or region) comprehensive initiatives (LCI) Project Proposal. In a LCI Project Proposal, the applicant executes the project with assistance from at least two additional partners. The additional partners must share grant funds (see explanation of required funds distribution percentage among partners in the definition of a LCI Project Proposal in Part VIII, E.). An LCI project differs from a *Joint Project Proposal* in project scope and impact. LCI Project Proposals must support a multi-partner approach to solving a major state or regional challenge in agricultural sciences *education* at the postsecondary level. LCI Project Proposals are characterized by multiple partners (each providing a specific expertise) organized and led by a strong applicant with documented project management ability to organize and carry out the initiative. To be funded, in addition to meeting this grant program's Evaluation Criteria, a LCI project application must specifically encourage study in areas that contribute to any of the five NIFA Priority Areas listed in Part I, A.

Note: LCI Projects must include both the R&R Budget and the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment Forms. The forms should clearly identify the total grant funding anticipated for the applicant and each partner to demonstrate the required sharing percentage. All expenditures for the applicant and all partners should be further itemized in the Budget Justification. LCI Project Proposal funds **do not** have to be divided equally among project years, nor do they need to be divided equally among project partners.

Impacts for all LCI Projects: In addition to addressing the Evaluation Plan section of this program (Part I. C.6.) expected impacts from a LCI Project must include, but are not limited to:

- An assessment of significant progress toward addressing the national challenge of increasing the number and diversity of food and agriculture sciences STEM graduates, while addressing the specific state or regional opportunity defined in the grant application;
- Documented expansion of the number of students who enroll in postsecondary courses in the food or agricultural sciences disciplines;
- Documented enhanced retention rates of students exposed to LCI Project activities;
- A comprehensive project evaluation, using the indicators and methods defined in this grants program, that informs the undergraduate food and agriculture sciences STEM community and others about the effectiveness of this LCI Project;
- A description of completed or ongoing activities supported by this LCI Project, and a description of those same activities that will be sustained once grant funds end; and
- A description of any related activities expected to occur as an outgrowth of this funded project.

D. Application Types

Integrated Project Applications

For FY 2012, applications submitted to the NLGCA Program must be **Integrated Project Applications**, meaning that, as described in Part I.C., projects must include at least two (2) of the three (3) components of research, education, or outreach. The resulting Integrated Project Application activities should be interwoven throughout the life of the project, and should complement and reinforce each another. Because authorizing language for this grants program encourages "...members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities to participate in priority education, research, and outreach activities..." Integrated Project Applications are expected in order to strengthen the capacity of NLGCA Institutions through close collaboration among one or more of these entities.

E. Project Duration

Project periods may range from twenty-four (24) to thirty-six (36) months. Projects should conclude no sooner than twenty-four (24) months after the award start date to allow the applicant sufficient time to evaluate the results and report the impacts. For project budget and timeline purposes, the project start date should not occur prior to September 2012.

The statutory limitation for this program is five (5) years.

F. Number and Size of Grant Awards

The total number of grants awarded by this grant program will depend on the number and type of meritorious applications submitted in response to this notice. Based on the project scope and budget of all applications selected for awards, the actual, individual grant amounts awarded by NIFA under this grants program may differ from the funds requested by the applicant. In such cases, revised budgets and revised plans of work may be required by NIFA before an award is made.

G. Application Submission & Award Limitations

For FY 2012, a NLGCA Institution may submit (as the lead applicant) any number of applications to this grants program. However, a NLGCA Institution applicant will only be awarded a maximum of two (2) grants, as the lead (applicant) institution, in any one, annual NLGCA Program competition. NLGCA Institutions may participate in any number of NLGCA-funded projects as a partner institution in any one year.

H. Funding Limitations per Institution

There is no limit on the total NLGCA Program funds that may be awarded to any one institution in successive years of this competition. Successful award recipients may apply for additional awards in subsequent years either as a lead applicant, or as a partner on another project.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by a non-land-grant *college* of agriculture (NLGCA), as defined in this RFA. A NLGCA is a public *college* or *university* offering a baccalaureate or higher degree in the study of agriculture or forestry, and:

1. is also not a *Hispanic-serving agricultural college or university* (see Part VIII. E., Definitions, and Appendix A, for a current list of these **ineligible** institutions); or
2. is also not any institution designated under:
 - a. the Act of July 2, 1862 (commonly known as the "First Morrill Act"; 7 U.S.C. 301 et seq.); or
 - b. the Act of August 30, 1890 (commonly known as the "Second Morrill Act") (7 U.S.C. 321 et seq.); or
 - c. the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-382; 7 U.S.C. 301 note); or
 - d. Public Law 87-788 (commonly known as the "McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act") (16 U.S.C. 582a et seq.).

An eligible applicant: (1) must meet the definition of an *Eligible Institution* as stated in this RFA (see Part VIII, Definitions), and (2) must demonstrate capacity for, and a significant ongoing commitment to, teaching, research and/or outreach programs within the food and agricultural sciences, generally, and to the specific need and/or discipline(s) for which a grant is requested.

A teacher or student recipient (eligible participant) receiving Federal funds from this grants program must be a citizen or national of the United States, as defined in this RFA. (See Part VIII, Definitions.) Where eligibility is claimed under 8 U.S.C. 1101(a) (22), documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to NIFA upon request.

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

The individual identified on the application as the lead Project Director should be a member of the faculty, a senior staff member, or an administrator, employed by the eligible applicant's institution.

For the purposes of this program, the individual branches of a State *college or university* that are separately accredited as degree-granting institutions are treated as separate institutions, and are therefore eligible to apply for NLGCA Program awards. Separate branches or campuses of a *college or university* that are not individually accredited as degree-granting institutions are not treated as separate institutions, and are therefore not eligible to submit an application. An institution eligible to receive an award under this program includes a research foundation maintained by an eligible *college or university*. Accreditation must be conferred by an agency or association recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Matching support is not a requirement of this grants program, and reviewers will be instructed not to rank proposals based on any reference to matching support included in the project narrative.

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.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AR should see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

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 http://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: <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://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-NLGCA-003809**, 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), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

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

See <http://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: Some forms will contain a field with instructions to attach additional information in a separate file. **All such attachments must be in PDF file format.** Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide (Part III. 3.1) for how to attach files using the proper format.

1. SF 424 (R&R) Cover Sheet

Complete all applicable fields. The following, additional information may be helpful:

Field 2. Date Submitted and Applicant Identifier – This field is provided for the Applicant’s use if they have an internal tracking system they would like to use in tracking applications they have submitted. This field is not required.

Field 3. Date received by State and State Application Identifier – This is not applicable for NLGCA applications; these fields do not need to be completed.

Field 5. Applicant Information – **This must be the legal name of the eligible college or university (See Part III. A, Eligible Applicant).** Official correspondence will be directed to either the Project Director (Field 14) or the Authorized Representative (Field 19).

Field 8. Type of Application – Only ‘New’ applications are permitted.

Field 12. Proposed Project Start Date and End Date – A project’s duration should normally be at least 24 months (to allow time for assessment and evaluation) and no more than 36 months. **Project Start Date should not occur before September 2012.**

Field 15. Estimated Project Funding –

- a. **Total Estimated Project Funding** = Amount of Federal funds requested (See Part II. C. for maximum award amounts permitted)

Field 20. Pre-application – Not applicable to the NLGCA Program. No attachments needed.

2. 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

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide. **Complete all applicable fields. Note: If a ‘Yes’ response is**

provided for Fields 1, 2, or 4.a, the applicant must provide the necessary information prior to an award being made.

Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

Include the following underlined text along with your responses:

- List the Project Title;
- List the Project Director (and any) Co-Project Director(s) (include institutional affiliation for each);
- List your project's *primary* NIFA Priority Area: (see Part I, A.; list only one Area);
- List your project's two (2) Program Categories: (see Part I, C.1-3.); and within each of the two, selected Program Categories, further identify at least one Need Area; and
- List your project's *primary* Discipline Code/Academic Discipline: (Select one from the list below);

Discipline Codes & Academic Discipline

- | | |
|--|--|
| (a) Animal health, production, and well-being. | (l) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4-H clubs. |
| (b) Plant health and production. | (m) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis. |
| (c) Animal and plant germ plasm collection and preservation. | (n) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture. |
| (d) Aquaculture. | (o) Biotechnology related to agriculture. |
| (e) Food safety. | (p) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products. |
| (f) Soil, water, and related resource conservation and improvement. | |
| (g) Forestry, horticulture, and range management. | |
| (h) Nutritional sciences and promotion. | |
| (i) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability. | |
| (j) Home economics (Family and Consumer Sciences). | |
| (k) Rural human ecology. | |

- Joint or LCI Project Proposal: Yes or No? (If 'Yes', specify if 'Joint' or 'LCI' Project Application. See 'Definitions', Part VIII. E.);
- Partners: If Joint or LCI Project Proposal, list all partner institutions/organizations that will share grant funding (Note: Each Partner so identified needs to have their budget information submitted on a separate sub award budget attachment);
- Total Funds Requested: List total Federal funds requested for this application. (If this project is a Joint or LCI Project Proposal, also list each partner's total funds requested next to the institution/organization's name); and
- Summary Text - Provide a very concise (approx. 250 word) summary of your project to include:
 - Purpose: What is the major problem your project will address?

- Audience: Who are the intended beneficiaries? Who will be impacted?
- Products: What will be produced?
- Outcome/Impact: What is the intended result (consequence) of your project? Describe as the primary benefits to your audience. Note: outcomes/impacts should be measurable, and should be included in your project's assessment/evaluation plan to demonstrate how you will assess whether or not these benefits were achieved (See explanation of terms in Part IV, B. 3. Field 8. 2.c., below).

Field 8. Project Narrative – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages of written text (excluding up to a maximum of 5 additional pages for supporting figures and tables). This maximum (25-page limit) ensures fair and equitable competition. Reviewers are instructed not to review materials in excess of this limit.

The Project Narrative in this Field 8 attachment contains the major description of your project. It follows the NLGCA Program's Evaluation Criteria (Part V. B). Accordingly, please provide your responses in the following format:

(Note: To facilitate application review and evaluation, **include the following, underlined wording as headings in your attached Project Narrative**, followed by your response for each item.)

1. Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education, Research or Outreach; Significance of the Problem:
 - a. Identification of Education, Research or Outreach Problem and Project Impact. Briefly state: (1) the specific problem/challenge (or opportunity) to be addressed within each chosen Program Category; (2) the anticipated project audience; and (3) the project's target objectives (what change in education, research or outreach is proposed?) and its anticipated, overall *impact* on improving the quality of *food and agricultural sciences* (Note: Your *impact* should be a change you can measure at the project's conclusion.). Clearly identify and explain how the proposed project will address your Need Area described in Part I, C.1-3.
 - b. Project Justification. Describe how and by whom the focus and scope of the project were determined. Summarize the body of knowledge justifying the need for the proposed project. Discuss how the project's Program Categories and Need Areas will be of value at the State, regional, national, or international level(s), and where applicable, how it will advance improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematical (STEM) capabilities in *food and agricultural sciences*. Describe any ongoing or recently completed, significant activities related to the proposed project for which previous funding was received under this program.
 - c. Institutional Long-range Goals. Demonstrate how the institution/organization attributes a high priority to the project; discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution/organization's long-term (five- to ten-year) goals; explain how the project will help satisfy the institution/organization's high-priority objectives, or how the project is linked to and supported by the institution/organization's strategic plan.

- d. Innovation. Describe the proposal's creative approach to improving the quality of teaching, research or outreach in the *food and agricultural sciences* in solving the specified problem. Describe how/why this approach was chosen.
- e. Multidisciplinary and/or Problem-based Focus. Indicate how the project is relevant to multiple disciplines in *food and agricultural sciences*, or with other academic curricula, and how the project will enhance the grant recipient's understanding of complex agricultural systems. Also, discuss whether the project may be adapted by, or serve as a model for, other institutions.

2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages:

- a. Plan of Operation and Methodology. Describe procedures for accomplishing the objectives of the project. Describe plans for management of the project to ensure its proper and efficient administration. Describe the way in which resources and personnel will be used to conduct the project.
- b. Timetable. Identify all important project milestones (performance targets that indicate when project goals will be met) and dates as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination, and closeout.
- c. Products, Results and Measurable Outcomes. Outline the expected products/results and their outcome (impact) on strengthening education in *food and agricultural sciences* in the United States. (**Important Note: Make sure to differentiate among the three terms:**
 - 1. “Products” may be actual *items or services* acquired with funds, e.g., “...developed three, new Web-based courses”;
 - 2. “Results” are *accomplishments* related to the products, e.g., “...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours”; and
 - 3. “Outcomes/Impacts” are the *benefits* to your audience. Outcomes/impacts are the consequences of your project and the most critical elements in your Evaluation Plan. They are a measure of the results by comparison to what might have happened in the absence of the funded project, e.g., “...an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, Web-based course materials”.)
- d. Evaluation Plans. State the methodologies to be used in assessing the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable outcomes from the project. Discuss the strategies and metrics for evaluating progress toward meeting the four NLGCA Program Goals from Part I, A. Describe any data to be collected and analyzed. Demonstrate how the project will improve education. This section should clearly indicate how you plan to measure outcomes/impacts. (See Part I.C.6. for additional *Evaluation Plan* information)
- e. Dissemination Plans. The application must document how project accomplishments (products, results and impacts...etc.) will be published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. Discuss the institution/organization's commitment to disseminate project results and products and potential for institutionalization. Identify target audiences and explain methods of communication. This section should clearly indicate how you plan to publicize your

project's outcomes/impacts. (See Part I, C.4. for additional *Dissemination Plan* information)

- f. Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts. Explain how the project will maximize partnership and collaborative efforts to strengthen education, research, or outreach in the food and agricultural sciences (e.g., involvement of faculty in related disciplines at the same institution, joint or LCI projects with other educational institution/organizations, or cooperative activities with business or industry). Also explain how it will stimulate academia, the States, or the private sector to join with the Federal partner in enhancing food and agricultural sciences education, research or outreach. Provide evidence, via letters from the parties involved in the partnership or collaborative arrangement.

3. Institution Capability and Capacity Building:

- a. Institution/organizational Commitment and Capability. Demonstrate that the applicant's administration is committed to this project and has the capability to ensure its completion.
- b. Institution/organizational Resources. Document that necessary institution/organizational resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials), and other appropriate resources, will be made available to the project. Demonstrate how the institution/organizational resources to be made available to the project, when combined with the support requested from USDA, will be adequate to carry out the activities of the project.
- c. Academic Enhancement. Document how this project will improve and strengthen teaching, research or outreach at the institution (including any partner institution/organizations). Include how any project performance target(s) identified above (2.b., Timetable) will be incorporated into institutional procedures. Discuss how the benefits to be derived from the project will transcend the applicant institution/organization or the grant period.
- g. Continuation Plans. Discuss the likelihood of, or specific plans for, continuation or expansion of the project beyond the period of USDA support. For example, does the institution/organization's long-range budget or academic plan provide for the realistic continuation or expansion of the initiative undertaken by this project after the grant period ends? Are plans for eventual self-support built into the project? Are plans being made to institutionalize the program if it meets with success? Are there indications of other continuing non-Federal support (Part I, C.4. for additional *Continuation Plan* information)?

4. Key Personnel: Discuss the adequacy, specific attributes, and project responsibilities of each key person associated with the project. Also include the background and qualifications of those personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering the project evaluation and reporting process.

5. Budget and Cost-effectiveness:

- a. Budget. In addition to the separate, required budget forms and budget justification, discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed project activities. Explain how such budget items as professional or technical staff time and salary, travel, equipment, etc., are necessary and reasonable to achieve project objectives. Justify that the total budget is allocated adequately between the applicant and any collaborating

institution/organization(s), and will be appropriate to carry out the activities of the project.

- b. **Cost-effectiveness.** Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, or leverages additional funds. For example, discuss how the project has the potential to generate a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on a Need Area, or to promote coalition building that could lead to future ventures.

For a **Conference/Planning application type**, in addition to providing responses to any appropriate items listed directly above in Field 8, #1-5, the Project Narrative must also describe specifics of your proposed conference under consideration, to include all of the following:

- 1) Justification for the meeting;
- 2) Recent meetings on the same subject with dates and locations;
- 3) Names and organizational affiliations of the chairperson and other members of the organizing committee;
- 4) Proposed program (or agenda for the conference), including a listing of scheduled participants and their institutional affiliations; and
- 5) Method of announcement or invitation to be used.

Field 9. Bibliography & Cited References - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format)

If needed, provide a complete list of all references cited in the application. **For each reference, provide the complete name for each author, the year of the publication, full title of the article, name of the journal or book published, volume, and the page numbers.** The references should be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author.

Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format)

Describe the types, location, and availability of instrumentation and physical facilities necessary to carry out the work proposed. **If special academic, private or government laboratories or facilities are being used, include a letter in the application from the authorized representative of the facility describing the proposed arrangements and availability.** Any such letter should be included as a part of Other Attachments, see Field 12 below.

Field 11. Equipment Documentation - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format)

Field 12. Other Attachments - (Must be PDF format) as applicable.

- **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as ‘Appendices’ in the document header and save file as ‘Appendices’. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations. Such appendices are not part of the 25-page application limit.
- **Collaborative Arrangements – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Collaborative Arrangements’ in the document header and save file as ‘CollaborativeArrangement’. If it is necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and

justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of the application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support signed by the AR of the consultant/collaborating organization) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.

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

Complete all applicable fields. Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

An R&R Senior/Key Person Profile should be completed, at a minimum, for the PD, each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. A paraprofessional is an individual who through formal education, work experience and/or training has the knowledge and expertise to assist a professional person.

Also, **you must attach** ‘Current and Pending Support’ information (see NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide p. 34, item 5.3, for guidelines and information format) for each senior/key person identified above. **Note: Even if no other funding is currently reported under the ‘Active’ section of this attachment, you must still list information for this grant application under the ‘Pending’ section of this attachment for each senior/key person identified above.**

The time commitments for this project stated on the Current and Pending include Federal and any cost shared salaries. Time commitments stated on the Current and Pending should not be lower than the Federal percentage of salary on the budget.

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. Complete all applicable fields. Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions. The following, additional information may be helpful:

Complete one R&R Budget Form for each 12-month period. If your project involves partners with whom you plan to share Federal funds (Joint or LCI Project Proposal), make sure (a) you include a sub award attachment for each project partner (sub award/consortium), for each 12-month period and (b) your budget figures reflect the required budget sharing criteria (See ‘Definitions’, Part VIII. E, Joint or LCI Project Proposal). Reasonable travel expenses to attend the Project Director’s Conference may be included in the travel expenses.

Field H. Indirect Costs –

Pursuant to Section 720 of the General Provisions in Title VII of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Programs (HR 112-284), indirect costs are limited 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.

Field K. Budget Justification – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

- (a) Provide a Budget Justification that reflects each 12-month period, plus a cumulative justification for the entire project. If your project involves partners with whom you plan to share Federal funds (Joint or LCI Project Proposal), make sure the attachment reflects information (a) for the applicant institution (each project partner (sub award/consortium), for each 12-month period, plus a cumulative column total for the entire project, and (b) your budget figures reflect the required budget sharing criteria (See ‘Definitions’, Part VIII. E, *Joint Project Proposal*). Letters of consent or collaboration or other evidence should be provided to show that collaborators have agreed to participate (such letters are to be included in Field 12).

The Budget Justification should follow a standard spreadsheet format (‘Budget Line Item’ = row; ‘Budget Year’ and ‘Cumulative Project’ = columns) including a detailed, itemized breakdown of each of the line item categories reported on the R&R Budget form. This Budget Justification attachment provides a more detailed, itemized breakdown for each budget line item reported on the R&R Budget Form (i.e., itemize your complete list of ‘Materials and Supplies’ showing per unit costs and number of units to be purchased, etc.). Items should be justified and include relevance to the project objectives. Include a description for each requested budget line item found on the R&R Budget form (i.e., total budget amount reported on the R&R Budget Form should equal the total budget amount reported on the Budget Justification attachment).

- (b) **Matching: Matching support is not a requirement of this grants program, and reviewers will be instructed not to rank proposals based on any reference to matching support included in the project narrative.**

Allowable costs will be determined in accordance with the applicable program legislation, the purpose of the grant award, the terms and conditions for the grant award, and by the following Federal cost principles that are applicable to the type of organization receiving the award, regardless of the type of award or tier (i.e., prime awardee, sub award) as are in effect at the time of the award:

- (1) **2 CFR Part 220** (OMB Circular No. A-21), “Cost Principles for Educational Institutions.”
- (2) **2 CFR Part 225** (OMB Circular No. A-87), “Cost Principles for State and Local Government (including certain Indian tribal governments).”

- (3) **2 CFR Part 230** (OMB A-122), “Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations” other than institutions of higher education (nonprofit organizations excluded from coverage are listed in Attachment C of OMB Circular No. A-122).
- (4) **Federal Acquisition Regulations** (48 CFR Subpart 31.2), “Principles for determining costs with profit making firms and those nonprofits organizations that are specifically excluded from the provisions of OMB Circular No. A-122.”
- (5) **45 CFR Part 74, Appendix E**, “Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Grants and Contracts with Hospitals.”

The Code of Federal Regulations is accessible through the National Archives and Records Administration.

7. R&R Subaward Budget Attachment (Only required if submitting a LCI or Joint Project Proposal)

8. Supplemental Information

Complete all applicable fields. Consult the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

Field 2. Program Code -

For the ‘Program Code Name’ field, enter:

“**Capacity Building Grants for Non Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture**”

For the ‘Program Code’ field, enter:

“**NLGCA**”

Field 8. Conflict of Interest List - (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

See format in NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide, Section VI, 1.8, p.49, for instructions.

Include this one-page attachment even if your responses to the questions are “N.A.”.

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 July 6, 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 acknowledged by 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 a confirmation message from NIFA within 30 days of the established deadline, please contact the Agency 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

Consistent with other competitive grant programs, NIFA has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for student tuition remission, on-campus room and board, academic fees or other financial assistance (no scholarships or fellowships). Also, funds may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment (e.g., equipment that is unmovable or unusable if detached) in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities (i.e., no greenhouses, laboratories, barns, or other structures). Promotional items (e.g., T-shirts and other give-a-ways) and food functions (e.g., cookouts or other social meal gatherings) are considered ‘entertainment’ expenses, and are, therefore, also *not allowed* under this grants program.

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 2-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, outreach, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or outreach experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or outreach activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or outreach 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. Review Criteria

The following criteria and weights below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Potential for Advancing Quality of Education, Research or Outreach/Significance of the Problem (25 points). This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences education, research or outreach, by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, potential for adoption by other institutions and contribution to current body of knowledge in areas addressed. The proposed project must also show its relevance to NIFA's Priority Areas and how it will contribute to the goals of the NLGCA Program. Potential project impacts must be stated.

2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages (30 points). This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, project evaluation, and dissemination plans. The approach must be based on sound research concepts and educational principles and may be documented through background literature or actual institutional data. Emphasis is placed on the quality of education, research or outreach support provided to the applicant institution/organization through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project. Any perceived pitfalls and

alternative strategies or approaches should be addressed. A thorough evaluation plan must be included that includes both a strategy for monitoring the project as it evolves (to provide feedback to guide these efforts), as well as a strategy for evaluating the effectiveness of the project in achieving its goals and for identifying positive and negative findings when the project is completed.

3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building (20 points).

This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its teaching, research or outreach capacity. Elements include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic or research enhancement, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support. Institutional data should be included to show the institution's ability to support the proposed project.

4. Key Personnel (15 points).

This criterion relates to 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 and the dissemination of these findings. Specific roles for each key personnel must be defined to ensure appropriate project leadership and to avoid any duplication of effort.

5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (10 points).

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority education, research or outreach.

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: <http://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 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.

(Note: ***This management information will also be required from designated Fiscal Agents.***)

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, 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 Administrator has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs 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 Administrator 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 <http://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 and 48 CFR 3.2, 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 New 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 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 Federal Assistance Programs-- General Award 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.

Project Directors Conference

During the tenure of a grant, Project Director(s) may be invited to attend at least one national Project Directors meeting, if offered, in Washington, D.C., or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, future directions for education reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in your proposal's travel expenses.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Mr. P. Gregory Smith; National Education Program Leader; Institute of Youth, Family and Community; Division of Community and Education; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; STOP 2251; 1400 Independence Ave, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2251; Telephone: (202) 720-1973; Fax: (202) 720-2030; E-mail: NLGCA@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. Changes in Project Period: 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 five years. 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: 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. 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 Federal Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions, for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program. The following are additional definitions that apply to this program.

Agriculture, renewable resources, and other similar disciplines means -specifically for this NLGCA Program- those *food and agricultural sciences* topical areas defined below.

Capacity Building means enhancing and strengthening the quality and depth of an institution's research and academic programs as evidenced by its: faculty expertise, scientific and technical resources, research environment, curriculum, student experiential learning opportunities, scientific instrumentation, library resources, academic standing and racial, ethnic, or gender diversity of its faculty and student body, faculty and student recruitment and retention programs, and organizational structures and reward systems for attracting and retaining first-rate research and teaching faculty or students.

Citizen or national of the United States means (1) a citizen or native resident of a State; or, (2) a person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States.

"College" and "university" – From 7 USC Section 3103, mean an educational institution in any State which: (i) 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, (ii) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of *education* beyond secondary education, (iii) provides an educational program for which a bachelor's degree or any other higher degree is awarded, (iv) is a public or other nonprofit institution, and (v) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Inclusions: The terms "college" and "university" include research foundations maintained by a college or university. **Note: A college or university that is also a NLGCA Institution (and is, therefore, eligible to apply to this grants program) is further defined below in NLGCA Institution.**

Education – See ‘Teaching’, below.

Eligible institution means a NLGCA institution (non-land-grant college of agriculture), as defined in this Section.

Eligible participant means an individual who is a citizen or national of the United States as defined in this section.

Food and agricultural sciences – From 7 USC Section 3103, means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable energy and natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, including activities relating to the following:

- (a) Animal health, production, and well-being.
- (b) Plant health and production.
- (c) Animal and plant germ plasm collection and preservation.
- (d) Aquaculture.
- (e) Food safety.
- (f) Soil, water, and related resource conservation and improvement.
- (g) Forestry, horticulture, and range management.
- (h) Nutritional sciences and promotion.
- (i) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability.
- (j) Home economics (Family and Consumer Sciences).
- (k) Rural human ecology.
- (l) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4-H clubs.
- (m) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis.
- (n) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture.
- (o) Biotechnology related to agriculture.
- (p) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products.

Hispanic-serving agricultural college or university – See Appendix A.

Joint project proposal means a application for a project: (1) which will involve the applicant institution working in cooperation with **one or more** other entities not legally affiliated with the applicant institution, including other schools, *colleges*, *universities*, community colleges, junior

colleges, units of State government, private sector organizations, or a consortium of institutions; and (2) where the applicant institution and each cooperating entity will assume a significant role in the conduct of the proposed project. To demonstrate a substantial involvement with the project, **the applicant institution/organization submitting a joint project proposal must retain at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the awarded funds, and no cooperating entity may receive less than 10 percent of awarded funds.** Only the applicant institution must meet the definition of an *eligible institution/organization* as specified in this RFA; other entities participating in a joint project proposal are not required to meet the definition of an *eligible institution/organization*.

Large-scale, Comprehensive Initiative (LCI) project proposal means an application for a project: (1) which will involve the applicant institution/organization working in cooperation with **two or more** other entities not legally affiliated with the applicant institution, including other schools, *colleges, universities*, community colleges, junior colleges, units of State government, private sector organizations, or a consortium of institutions; and (2) where the applicant institution and each cooperating entity will assume a significant role in the conduct of the proposed project. To demonstrate a substantial involvement with the project, **the applicant institution/organization submitting a LCI proposal must retain at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the awarded funds, and no cooperating entity may receive less than 10 percent of awarded funds.** Only the applicant institution must meet the definition of an *eligible institution* as specified in this RFA; other entities participating in a *joint project proposal* are not required to meet the definition of an *eligible institution*. LCI Project Proposals must support a multi-partner approach to solving a major state or regional challenge in agricultural sciences education at the postsecondary level. LCI Project Proposals are characterized by multiple partners (each providing a specific expertise) organized and led by a strong applicant with documented project management ability to organize and carry out the initiative. To be funded, in addition to meeting this grant program's Evaluation Criteria, a LCI project application must encourage study in areas that contribute to any of the five NIFA Priority Areas listed above in Part I, A.

NLGCA institution; (non-land-grant college of agriculture) – From 7 USC Section 3103, means a public *college* or *university* offering a baccalaureate or higher degree in the study of agriculture or forestry. **Exclusions - The terms "NLGCA Institution" and "non land grant college of agriculture" do not include** (and, therefore, the following institutions **are not eligible to apply** to this grants program):

1. Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities (See Appendix A, below); or
2. any institution designated under:
 - a. the Act of July 2, 1862 (commonly known as the "First Morrill Act"; 7 U.S.C. 301 et seq., or the '1862 Land Grants');
 - b. the Act of August 30, 1890 (commonly known as the "Second Morrill Act") (7 U.S.C. 321 et seq., or the '1890 Land Grants');
 - c. the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-382; 7 U.S.C. 301 note, or the '1994 or Tribal Colleges Land Grants');
 - d. Public Law 87-788 (commonly known as the "McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act") (16 U.S.C. 582a et seq.).

Outcomes means specific, measurable project results and benefits that, when assessed and reported, indicate the project's plan of operation has been achieved. Measurable outcomes include:

- Results are intended or unintended consequences of the project, (e.g., "...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours");
- Products may be actual items or services acquired with funds, (e.g., "...mechanisms and content to transition existing course(s) or elements of course(s) for Web-based access" or "created new and innovative prevention and intervention initiatives"); and
- Impacts are a measure of the results by comparing what might have happened in the absence of the funded project, (e.g., "...an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, Web-based course materials".)

Regular project proposal means a proposal for a project: (1) where the applicant institution will be the sole entity involved in the execution of the project; or (2) which will involve the applicant institution and one or more other entities, but where the involvement of the other entity(ies) does not meet the requirements for a *joint project proposal* as defined in this section.

Sustainable Agriculture - From 7 USC Section 3103, means an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long-term— (A) satisfy human food and fiber needs; (B) enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends; (C) make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; (D) sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and (E) enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

"Teaching" and "education" - From 7 USC Section 3103, means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters relating thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by *colleges* and universities offering baccalaureate or higher degrees.

Appendix A- List of HSACU Institutions, 2011-2012

The institutions listed in this appendix are granted HSACU certification by the Secretary and are eligible for HSACU programs for the period starting October 1, 2011 and ending September 30, 2012. Institutions are listed alphabetically under the state of the school's location, with the campus indicated where applicable.

Due to their HSACU designation, the following institutions listed directly below are not eligible to apply to this NLGCA grants program during the designated 2011-2012 period (see Definition for "NLGCA", above).

Arizona (3)

Arizona Western College
Phoenix College
Pima Community College

California (22)

Allan Hancock College
Bakersfield College
California State Polytechnic University-Pomona
California State University-Bakersfield
California State University-Fullerton
California State University-Monterey Bay
California State University-San Bernardino
College of the Desert
El Camino Community College District
Fullerton College
Hartnell College
Merced College
Mt. San Antonio College
Porterville College
Reedley College
San Diego Mesa College
San Joaquin Delta College
Santa Ana College
Southwestern College
University of California-Merced
West Hills College Coalinga
Whittier College

Florida (3)

Florida International University
Miami Dade College
Saint Thomas University

Illinois (2)

City Colleges of Chicago-Harold Washington College
Triton College

Kansas (1)

Seward County Community College

New Mexico (7)

Central New Mexico Community College
Eastern New Mexico University-Main Campus
New Mexico Highlands University

New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology
Northern New Mexico College
University of New Mexico-Main Campus
Western New Mexico University

New York (3)

CUNY City College
CUNY LaGuardia Community College
Mercy College

Puerto Rico (14)

Bayamon Central University
Institute Tecnologico de Puerto Rico-Manati
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-Aguadilla
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-Bayamon
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-Metro
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-Ponce
Inter American University of Puerto Rico-San German
Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico-Ponce
Universidad Del Turabo
Universidad Metropolitana
University of Puerto Rico-Arecibo
University of Puerto Rico-Medical Sciences Campus
University of Puerto Rico-Rio Piedras Campus
University of Puerto Rico-Utuado

Texas (15)

Clarendon College
Lee College
Midland College
Palo Alto College
Sul Ross State University
Texas A&M International University
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
Texas A&M University-Kingsville
Texas State Technical College-Harlingen
University of Houston-Clear Lake
University of Texas at Brownsville
University of Texas at El Paso
University of Texas at San Antonio
University of Texas of the Permian Basin

Washington (1)

Heritage University

Generic Logic Model for NIFA Reporting NIFA - Office of Planning & Accountability

(This model is intended to be illustrative guide for reporting on NIFA funded research, education and extension activities. It is not a comprehensive inventory of our programs.)

