

Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program – National Integrated Water Quality Program

FY 2012 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 28, 2012



U.S. Department of Agriculture

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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

Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program – National Integrated Water Quality Program

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.303.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **June 28, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the **Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program – National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP)** for fiscal year (FY) 2012 to **address critical agricultural water quality issues in the United States**. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2012 is approximately \$4,000,000.

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

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

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

Section 7129 of the FCEA amended section 406(b) of AREERA (7 U.S.C. 7626(b)), adding Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities (HSACUs) as eligible entities for competitive funds awarded under this authority (see Part III.B. for more information).

NIFA will administer the Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program by determining priorities in U.S. agriculture through Agency stakeholder input processes in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB). The RFA will be developed each fiscal year based on these established priorities and approaches to solving the critical agricultural issues. While the overall approach to solving critical agricultural issues, priorities, or problems will be through an integration of research, education, and extension activities within each individual program, component RFAs, depending on the priority addressed, may request applications that are research, education, or extension only, or a combination thereof.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The goal of the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP) is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of our Nation's **surface water** and **groundwater** resources through research, education, and extension activities. Projects funded through this program will work to solve water resource problems by advancing and disseminating the knowledge base available to agricultural, rural, and urbanizing communities. Funded projects should lead to science-based decision making and management practices that improve the quality of the Nation's surface water and groundwater resources in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing watersheds.

Engaging Youth Audiences:

NIWQP strongly encourages projects that lead to measureable, documented changes in behaviors, actions or conditions for 4-H or other youth audiences in out-of-school time programs. Proposed programs must adhere to the principles of experiential learning and provide young people the opportunity to engage in real-life learning opportunities. Representatives from

4-H or other youth organizations should be partners in the development of the youth elements of the proposal. For more information about the 4-H youth development program and Science, Healthy Living and Citizenship mission mandates, visit:

http://www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/about/4h_programs.htm.

Engaging Consumer Audiences:

NIWQP encourages projects that focus on consumer needs for education and behavior change related to household, lawn, and garden practices that may adversely impact water resources in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing watersheds and related aquifers. Projects that advance consumer understanding of the ecological impact of water use in agricultural products or ecosystem services from agricultural production also are encouraged:

(see http://pdf.wri.org/esr_definitions_of_ecosystem_services.pdf)

Support for International Activities:

Agricultural water resources issues addressed in this program reflect the broader spectrum of international water issues. This program encourages international partnerships, linkages, and exchanges where a clear explanation is provided as to how they will contribute to U.S. national water resources priorities. However, investigators should recognize that such international partnerships, linkages, and exchanges are expected to be a small proportion of the total funding provided through this program.

Support for Minority Serving Institutions:

NIWQP encourages projects that increase the participation of 1890 and 1994 land grant institutions, Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs). Participation can be through proposals submitted by faculty and staff from the 1890, 1994, or HSI institutions or through arrangements that include faculty and students in applicable projects with other institutions.

Support for eXtension:

NIWQP encourages projects that develop content and programs suitable for delivery through the Cooperative Extension System's eXtension Initiative. Funds may be used to contribute to existing Communities of Practice (CoP) or to form a new CoP focused on water. Projects must align with the eXtension vision, mission, and values. A letter of acknowledgement from eXtension is required, and a letter of support may be required from one or more of the CoP. For detailed guidance on how to partner with eXtension, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057>.

All potential applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with projects currently in the NIWQP portfolio prior to submitting an application. A list of funded projects is available at:

http://www.usawaterquality.org/funded_projects/default.html

Applications are being solicited for the NIWQP under the following areas: (See Part II.C. Project Types for specific details.)

1. National Water Resource Projects;

2. Watershed Scale Projects; and
3. NIWQP Synthesis Project.

In each Program Area, projects are solicited for only those topics identified in that program area's description below. It is essential that applicants read the descriptions carefully when preparing applications. Proposals submitted to the Watershed Scale Projects (Program Area Code 110.C) must address the question areas listed in this RFA or applications will not be reviewed.

C. Program Area Description

National Water Resource Projects

Program Area Code 110.A

Proposals are solicited for projects that create or develop capacity within the research, education, and extension system and transfer this capacity to stakeholders and decision-makers at the local, regional, or national level. Specific projects of interest might include synthesis or transfer of existing knowledge on a particular water resource topic or development of new knowledge to improve local decision-making. All projects **MUST** involve collaboration or implementation across multiple states.

Topics of special interest for Fiscal Year 2012 include:

Consumers:

- Developing water decision-making tools and technologies for consumers. For example: Helping consumers understand the environmental impacts of poor lawn and garden practices or developing product labeling that characterizes the environmental/water impact of a product.
- Developing, implementing, and evaluating curricula and/or programs on rural household practices related to water quality with a focus on innovative (smartphone/tablet) technology.

Producers:

- Improving water resource management across the value chain in agriculture. For example: Water management to achieve higher product quality and improve profits for producers (e.g., crops, specialty crops, horticulture, shellfish, food processing) with a particular emphasis on small and community-based food systems.
- Creating potential rewards for producers (through market forces) for improved land, water, and air stewardship.
- Developing and piloting electronic technology on handheld devices (e.g., tablets and smartphones) for improved agricultural water management.

Communities:

- Transforming rural wastewater management by developing tools to accelerate adoption of existing technologies to retrofit onsite (household or small system) wastewater treatment systems.
- Developing and implementing tools for decision makers in rural and agricultural communities to assess the consequences of water use for energy production (e.g., bioenergy, high volume hydraulic fracturing (hydro-fracking), coal-bed methane production, etc.).

Proposals must include a detailed plan and accompanying budget for evaluation of project activities and outcomes throughout the entire duration of the project. Proposals also must include

an appropriate management plan for the project team and all partners to successfully address the water resource issue of concern. Proposals must include a description of stakeholder involvement across project activities.

Total project budgets may not exceed \$440,000. National Water Resource Projects may request up to \$110,000 per year for up to four years.

For the duration of the award, PDs funded in this section of the program are expected to participate in annual NIFA National Water Conferences. Reasonable travel expenses to the NIFA National Water Conference may be claimed as part of the project budget.

Award recipients are expected to provide copies of annual reports and periodic updates to the NIFA National Program Leader for Water Quality (see Part VII - Agency Contacts).

Watershed Scale Projects

Program Area Code 110.C

Proposals are solicited that promote locally focused solutions to watershed scale water resource issues in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing watersheds. All proposals to this section of the RFA MUST:

- Be conducted at a watershed scale;
- Include specific objectives for research, education, and extension; and
- Address at least one (1) of the two (2) following issue areas:
 1. Drought, climate variability, salinity, and competing demands for water resources could lead to 20% less water available for agriculture and rural and urbanizing communities by 2025. Projects are requested that demonstrate conservation of water resources at the watershed scale to meet this potential diminished supply. We are particularly interested in projects that address use of recycled water in agriculture and environmental impacts (positive or negative - including downstream effects) that result from application of recycled water.
 2. Achieving improved water quality in agricultural, rural, and urbanizing watersheds through targeted adoption of appropriate conservation or other management practices at the watershed scale. Projects should focus on biophysical, social, economic, and behavioral practices needed to improve both the adoption and maintenance of practices intended to improve water quality.

Proposals must include a detailed plan and accompanying budget for evaluation of project activities and outcomes throughout the entire duration of the project.

Total project budgets may not exceed \$660,000. Watershed Scale Projects may request up to \$220,000 per year for up to three years.

For the duration of the award, PDs funded in this section of the program are expected to participate in annual NIFA National Water Conferences. Reasonable travel expenses to the NIFA National Water Conference may be claimed as part of the project budget.

Award recipients are expected to provide copies of annual reports and periodic updates to the NIFA National Program Leader for Water Quality (see Part VII - Agency Contacts).

Selected projects, based upon their objectives, may be identified as particularly relevant to the USDA Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) Program. These projects may be asked to participate in CEAP activities and cooperate with CEAP investigators to promote effective conservation at the watershed scale.

NIWQP Synthesis Project

Program Area Code 110.H

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is soliciting applications for a single synthesis project that will increase the scientific understanding of accomplishments made through NIFA's portfolio of funded water projects. The synthesis project should develop critical science questions that address how NIFA funded research, education, extension, and integrated projects have increased knowledge of agricultural water issues and how these projects helped move communities closer to solutions for local water problems. Working from this information, the project should identify priority water topics for NIFA to address in the future.

The NIFA Water Portfolio (since fiscal year 2000) includes water research projects funded through the National Research Initiative (NRI), the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), the Small Business Innovation Research Program, and Multi-State water projects funded using Hatch Act formula funds. The portfolio also includes all projects funded through the NIFA National Integrated Water Quality Program. In total, the water portfolio represents an annual investment of approximately \$25 million to support approximately 40 projects and six or seven Hatch Multi-State projects per year.

The Synthesis Project MUST:

- Review the effectiveness of NIFA funded projects and NIFA programs (using targeted interviews and in-depth data collection and analysis) to create change in water resource management in rural, agricultural, and urbanizing watersheds;
- Summarize and describe lessons learned and outcomes from projects funded through the NIFA Water Portfolio;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of national, regional, and watershed scale approaches to promote solutions for agricultural water resource problems;
- Produce science-based knowledge that informs the identification of science priorities to enhance the effectiveness of future research, education, and extension programs on agricultural water resources funded by NIFA;
- Describe examples where the NIFA Water Portfolio funding mechanisms have worked synergistically or where they have failed to develop synergies;
- Include a plan for delivering results of the synthesis to NIFA, the science community, and relevant stakeholder groups and other partner organizations; and
- Include a detailed management plan including a timeline of products and deliverables resulting from the synthesis.

Key Questions applicants MUST address include:

- What are the critical findings of the NIFA Water Portfolio (since fiscal year 2000)?
- How effective have integrated (research, education, and extension) projects been at moving stakeholders closer to solutions for water management issues in rural, agricultural, and urbanizing watersheds?

- What synergies developed among national, regional, and watershed scale projects that resulted in improved leveraging of resources and accelerated movement toward solutions?
- Working from the analysis, what water quality and quantity issues should NIFA address as science priorities in the future and what is the best means to address those issues through research, education, and extension efforts?

The total project budget may not exceed \$750,000. Applications for the NIWQP Synthesis Project may request up to \$250,000 per year for up to three years.

For the duration of the award, PDs funded in this section of the program are expected to participate in annual NIFA National Water Conferences. Reasonable travel expenses to the NIFA National Water Conference may be claimed as part of the project budget.

Award recipients are expected to provide copies of annual reports and periodic updates to the NIFA National Program Staff (see Part VII - Agency Contacts).

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Approximately **\$4,000,000** is available to fund applications in FY 2012.

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

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2012, applications may be submitted to the NIWQP Program as one of the following types of requests:

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

(2) Renewal application. This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications, and additionally must contain a Progress Report (see Project Narrative, Part IV). Renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

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

(4) Resubmitted renewal application. This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. In addition, this is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to the NIWQP Program but not funded. Therefore, PDs must provide a Progress Report as required under the Project Narrative, Part IV, and must respond to the previous review panel summary as required under Response to Previous Review, Part IV. Resubmitted renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate areas to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

The following are NIFA funding estimates for FY 2012, number of awards anticipated, maximum annual project budgets, and acceptable project periods for each of the program areas within the NIWQP.

Program Area	Funding Estimate FY 2012	Number of Anticipated Awards FY 2012	Maximum Annual Project Budget	Acceptable Project Period
National Water Resource Projects – Program Area Code 110.A	\$1,000,000	2-3	\$110,000	1-4 years
Watershed Scale Projects – Program Area 110.C	\$2,250,000	3-5	\$220,000	1-3 years
NIWQP Synthesis Project – Program Area 110.H	\$750,000	1	\$250,000	1-3 years

Applications that include requests for annual project budgets in excess of the maximum annual project budgets established above, or propose project periods outside the acceptable project ranges above, for the applicable Program Area, will be excluded from NIFA review.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Colleges and universities (as defined in section 1404 of NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3103) are eligible to submit applications for the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP). Section 1404 of NARETPA was amended by section 7101 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246) to define Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACUs) (see Part III, B. and Part VIII, E. for more information), and to include research foundations maintained by eligible colleges or universities.

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

Hispanic-serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities

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

Eligibility under the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP)

Pursuant to section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA), 7 U.S.C. 7626, Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grant Program, all four (4) year HSIs are eligible to apply for a grant under the National Integrated Water Quality Program (NIWQP). Two (2) year HSIs, however, may be eligible to apply only upon a determination by NIFA that the institution offers an associate or other accredited degree programs in agriculture-related fields. To seek an eligibility determination for grants under this RFA, two (2) year HSIs may submit a one-page request to NIFA certifying that they are a Hispanic-serving institution, as defined in section 502 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1101a), and providing a justification that they do offer associate or other accredited degree programs in agriculture-related fields. Eligibility determinations are valid for FY 2012 only and must be renewed every FY.

HSIs that seek a determination of eligibility may submit a request before the application due date to Dr. Lawrence directly or as a PDF attachment to the SF-424-R&R application package submitted through Grants.Gov.

Additional questions on HSACU eligibility can be addressed to Dr. Irma Lawrence, HSI National Program Leader, Division of Community and Education, at ilawrence@nifa.usda.gov, (202) 720-2082, or via fax (202) 720-3398.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply directly for funds provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

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

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

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

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

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

New Users of Grants.gov

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

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see 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-ICGP-003789** in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

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

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

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

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

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

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of NIWQP. See Part V. 4.7 of NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide for further instructions and a link to a suggested template.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages of written text, figures and tables regardless of whether it is single or double-spaced. This maximum (20 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

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

- (1) Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders and to ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research, education, and extension programs;
- (2) Role of the stakeholders in problem identification, planning, and implementation and evaluation as appropriate;
- (3) Reasons for having the work performed at the proposing institution; and
- (4) Value of the proposed project activities and outcomes that extend beyond the boundaries of a single state or watershed.

(b) Objectives: Include clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort in all proposals. Watershed Scale Projects (Program Area Code 110.C) must include specific objectives for each function: research, education, and extension (as appropriate).

(c) Methods: Explicitly state the procedures or methods to be applied to the proposed effort.

Include, but are not necessarily limited to:

Description of stakeholder involvement in problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation;

- (1) Description of the proposed project activities in the sequence in which it is planned to carry them out;
- (2) Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project;
- (3) Kinds of results expected;
- (4) Means by which extension and education activities will be evaluated;
- (5) Means by which data will be analyzed and interpreted;
- (6) Details of plans to communicate results to stakeholders and the public;
- (7) Pitfalls that might be encountered; and
- (8) Limitations to proposed procedures.

(d) Project Timetable: Outline all important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant funding period. Include specific, measurable accomplishments for each year of NIWQP funding.

(e) Progress Report: For renewal applications and resubmitted renewal applications (as defined in Part II, B.), a progress report must be included within the page limitation set for the Project Narrative portion of the application.

(f) Response to Previous Review. This requirement applies to ALL "Resubmitted Applications" as described under Part II, B., "Types of Applications." PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page, titled "RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW." The addition of response to previous review should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

In addition to the contents required above, applications proposing National Water Resource Proposals (Program Area Code 110.A) and NIWQP Synthesis Proposals (Program Area Code 110.H) must describe the roles and responsibilities of central coordinators and present a management plan for the administration of the project including facilitation of communication, planning, and annual report preparation.

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

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

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

6. R&R Budget

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

Matching.

If a grant provides a particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, the grant recipient is required to provide funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and/or in-kind contributions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

value was determined; and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

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

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

7. Supplemental Information Form

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

- a. Field 2. Program to which you are applying.** Enter the program code name and the program code.

National Water Resource Projects	110.A
Watershed Scale Projects	110.C
NIWQP Synthesis Project	110.H

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

C. Submission Dates and Times

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on June 28, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

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

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

If the AR has not received correspondence **from NIFA** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of the established deadline, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA (for the Small Business Innovation Research program (SBIR) the Program Contacts are specified under subsection 1.5 of the SBIR Program Solicitation) and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

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

Section 720 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55) limits indirect costs to 30 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 30 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

Applications that are strong in all three areas and that address special emphasis areas identified in this RFA will be given priority to receive NIWQP funding.

1. Technical merit of all aspects of the application, including research, education, and extension components, as appropriate.
 - a. Adequacy and appropriateness of objectives for research, education, and extension, as appropriate;
 - b. Extent to which proposed work addresses identified stakeholder needs and water resource issues of concern;
 - c. Suitability and feasibility of methodology for conducting work;
 - d. Reasonability of time allocated for attainment of objectives;
 - e. Qualifications of key project personnel;
 - f. Institutional experience and competence in proposed area of work; and
 - g. Adequacy of available support personnel, equipment, and facilities.
2. Relevance of proposed project to NIWQP purpose (see Part I, B.).
 - a. Relationship of project objectives to national themes (see www.usawaterquality.org);

- b. Extent to which special emphasis areas are addressed;
- c. Transferability of project results or developed materials beyond the project scale;
- d. Evidence of necessary involvement from interdisciplinary teams;
- e. Extent to which partnerships with other institutions (Federal, State, other) are developed;
- f. Extent to which end users were/will be involved in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation;
- g. Probability of success of the project;
- h. Quality of the evaluation plan for project activities and outcomes and appropriateness of the budget for the evaluation plan; and
- i. Extent to which potential impact(s) can/will be documented.

3. Review criteria for specific program areas.

National Water Resource Projects:

- 1. Degree to which the project facilitates development of public policy or increases public understanding and involvement in community decision-making for water resources;
- 2. Appropriateness of expected outcomes and impacts described in the project;
- 3. Evidence of new or enhanced partnerships and networks;
- 4. Quality of management plans for administering the national or multi-regional effort;
- 5. Suitability and feasibility of methods for evaluating success of project activities; and
- 6. Degree to which the project develops or strengthens eXtension.

Watershed Scale Projects:

- 1. Degree of integration of research, education and extension;
- 2. Inclusion of an interdisciplinary team that includes physical, chemical, biological and social scientists (as appropriate);
- 3. Identification of the cause of water resource degradation;
- 4. Suitability of scale;
- 5. Likelihood that project will fill knowledge gaps that are critical to the development of practices and programs and improve the quality of the Nation's water resources;
- 6. Identification of the appropriate audience or stakeholder group of interest and effectiveness of plan to deliver an extension/outreach program that will lead to measurable outcome-oriented impacts (where appropriate);
- 7. Appropriateness of watershed-scale project plan (developed with input from key stakeholders) and likelihood that it will lead to measurable improvements in the watershed condition;
- 8. Quality of monitoring and evaluation plans; and
- 9. Inclusion of plans to evaluate the costs and benefit of best management practices (as needed).

NIWQP Synthesis Project:

- 1. Extent to which ALL NIFA funded water resource projects (NRI, AFRI, SBIR, Multi-State, NIWQP) are included in the work plan;
- 2. Degree to which lessons learned from existing programs are assessed and formulated into recommendations for future programs;

3. Extent to which the project will inform research, education, and extension priorities for future programs on agricultural water resources;
4. Effectiveness of the plan to deliver results to NIFA, stakeholders, and the scientific community;
5. Appropriateness of the management plan;
6. Evaluation of the effectiveness of integration in national, regional, and watershed scale projects; and
7. Evaluation of the synergies among national, regional, and watershed scale projects funded by the NIWQP.

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

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of NIFA shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of NIFA as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

B. Award Notice

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

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PD's chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <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, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225 and 230), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224)), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

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

Annually each grantee must submit a one (1) to two (2) page technical Summary of Work to the NIFA National Program Leader for Water Quality (see Part VII - Agency Contacts). Once a project is complete, the grantee is required to submit a Final Technical Report to the NIFA National Program Leader for Water Resources. The Final Technical Report should summarize all work conducted and detail outcomes, accomplishments, and outputs of funded work. This report should not exceed 15 single-spaced, typed pages. Grantees also must participate in annual conferences or symposiums, organized on behalf of the NIWQP, where project results and outcomes are presented and discussed.

Grantees are required to submit annual and summary evaluation reports via NIFA's Current Research Information System (CRIS). CRIS is an electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects.

The NIFA Agency-specific Terms and Conditions include the requirement that a Financial Status Report (Form SF-425) is due on an annual basis no later than 90 days following the end of the award anniversary date. A final "Federal Financial Report," Form SF-425, is due 90 days after the expiration date of this award.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact:

Michael P. O'Neill

Title: National Program Leader

Unit(s): Division of Environmental Systems;
Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment

Location: 3190 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 205 - 5952

Fax: (202) 401 - 1706

Email: moneill@nifa.usda.gov

James P. Dobrowolski

Title: National Program Leader

Unit: Division of Environmental Systems;
Institute of Bioenergy, Climate, and Environment

Location: 3130 Waterfront Centre

[Full Address and Directions](#)

Phone: (202) 401-5016

Fax: (202) 401 - 1706

Email: jdobrowolski@nifa.usda.gov

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

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

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

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

2. Changes in Project Plans

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

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

D. Regulatory Information

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

E. Definitions

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