

Interregional Research Project #4 Minor Crop Pest Management Program

FY 2011 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 19, 2011



**U.S. Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture**

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

INTERREGIONAL RESEARCH PROJECT #4 MINOR CROP PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.200.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **Wednesday, January 19, 2011 (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 Branch; Office of Extramural Programs; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@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 Interregional Research Project #4 Minor Crop Pest Management Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA requests applications for the Interregional Research Project #4 Minor Crop Pest Management Program (IR-4) for fiscal year (FY) 2011. The primary goal of the IR-4 program is to provide safe, effective and economical pest management solutions for growers of minor/specialty crops. For FY 2011, NIFA is soliciting applications in anticipation of funding five projects: one to establish a national headquarters and four to establish geographically-based regional IR-4 centers (three with analytical chemistry programs and one without an analytical chemistry program). The four USDA administrative regions (North Central, Northeastern, Southern, and Western) are described by state/territory at the end of Part I, B. NIFA anticipates that the amount available for support of this program in FY 2011 will be approximately \$11 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for IR-4 projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an IR-4 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

IR-4 is authorized under subsection (c) (1) (B) of section 2 of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 450i).

IR-4 has a history of more than 40 years of cooperation between producers, state Cooperative Extension Services, Land Grant Universities, and federal agencies including the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This program facilitates minor/specialty crop protection by providing expert assistance with product development and registration. IR-4 positively impacts the ability of research and extension personnel, producers, grower organizations, and others to provide a continuous supply of affordable minor/specialty crops to the public. IR-4 is the only publicly supported research program in the United States that provides this service.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The crop protection industry cannot justify the costs associated with the research and development, registration, production, and marketing of crop protection products for minor/specialty crops due to the smaller market base and limited sales potential. IR-4 promotes the development and implementation of new and more effective minor/specialty crop pest management solutions through providing expert assistance, which results in effective collaborations among federal agencies such as the USDA and the EPA, the crop protection industry, and land-grant institutions.

The primary goal of IR-4 is to enable the crop protection industry to provide safe, effective and economical pest management solutions for growers of minor/specialty crops.

This IR-4 program will fund four regional (IR-4) centers nationwide; and an IR-4 headquarters (HQ):

- a) Northeast Region IR-4 Center;
- b) North Central Region IR-4 Center;
- c) Southern Region IR-4 Center;
- d) Western Region IR-4 Center;
- e) IR-4 National HQ.

Successful applicants to this program will demonstrate the capacity and commitment required to achieve the following goals which are regionally oriented:

1. Accelerate the registration of newer, reduced risk pest management tools.
2. Expedite access to these pest management tools for minor/specialty crop growers.
3. Conduct efficacy research to identify new and more effective minor/specialty crop pest management solutions.

The IR-4 program will focus the majority of its efforts on reduced risk products, bio-pesticides and other chemicals with characteristics that are deemed lower risk to humans, non-target organisms, and the environment. In addition, the IR-4 program will concentrate on internal processes that reduce the time needed to complete successful regulatory packages.

Regional IR-4 center directors will be expected to participate in national coordination meetings with IR-4 HQ staff to harmonize and prioritize regional needs and activities into a comprehensive nationally-coordinated program.

Stakeholder input will be emphasized through nationally-oriented meetings seeking input and recommendations on priority setting from producers, land-grant institution representatives, and others interested in minor/specialty crops.

Awardees will be expected to build on the successes and capacity developed by the Minor Crop Pest Management, IR-4 program. Progress reports and a strategic plan can be found at the web site: www.ir4.rutgers.edu.

Applications submitted to the IR-4 program should clearly describe a plan for achieving three core objectives, which are:

- (1) To obtain and maintain regulatory clearances of effective crop protection agents for high-value, minor/specialty food crops and for minor uses (special circumstance needs) on major food crops with special emphasis on lower risk chemicals and uses that are compatible with integrated pest management (IPM) programs.
- (2) To support research to enhance the development and registration of bio-pesticides for use in food and non-food pest management programs.
- (3) To support research on crop protection products that will expand their uses on ornamental crops (nursery, floral, turf, and other non-food crop systems) to allow management of new and important pest species.

List of States and Territories by Region:

North Central: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Northeastern: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, District of Columbia, and West Virginia.

Southern: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Western: Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Federated States of Micronesia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Northern Marianas, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

C. Program Area Description

Regional centers are a key component to the continued success of IR-4 due to the geographical limitations on minor and specialty crop production. Each region has environmental factors which un-alterably influence which crops can be feasibly grown there. IR-4 funds should be used for:

- Program management and support staff both at IR-4 HQ and regional IR-4 centers;
- Regional scientific field and laboratory research staff;
- Subcontractors providing services integral to the goals of IR-4;
- Field and laboratory research equipment;
- Conferences;
- Workshops;
- Training;
- Travel and other associated direct costs.

No indirect costs are recoverable under the IR-4 program.

Proposals may be submitted for up to a 12-month project period.

IR-4 encourages projects that develop content suitable for delivery through eXtension (<http://extension.org>). This content is for end users, as opposed to staff development, and must align with the eXtension Strategic Roadmap (available at <http://about.extension.org/wiki/Planning>). Applicants establishing new Communities of Practice (CoPs), or enhancing existing ones, that focus on providing safe, effective and economical pest management solutions for growers of specialty crops, must first follow the corresponding steps outlined by eXtension.org, (http://about.extension.org/wiki/NIFA_RFA_Information).

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application. NIFA anticipates awarding a total of one IR-4 HQ grant and four regional IR-4 center grants, one in each USDA administrative region: North Central, Northeastern, Southern, and Western (a state/territory listing by region is provided at the end of Part I, B.). NIFA anticipates that approximately \$11 million will be available to fund applications in FY 2011.

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

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2011, applications may be submitted to the IR-4 program as one of the following two types of requests:

(1) **New application**. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the IR-4 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.

C. Project Types

Three types of projects will be funded, one of two types for each of the regional IR-4 centers and one for the national IR-4 HQ. Maximum funding for FY 2011 will be as follows:

- a) Regional IR-4 centers with analytical chemistry programs: Up to \$3,600,000 each;
- b) Regional IR-4 center without an analytical chemistry program: Up to \$1,000,000;
- c) IR-4 national HQ: Up to \$4,800,000.

NIFA will give priority consideration to IR-4 applications that demonstrate effective resource allocation to accomplish the following goals:

IR-4 HQ Goals:

Coordinate activities nationally and internationally with other agencies and organizations including, but not limited to the U.S. EPA, USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Canada's Pest Management Centre of Agriculture, Agri-Food Canada, and the crop protection industry.

Demonstrate the capability to interact with the crop protection industry in selecting acceptable projects that the industry will ultimately support through the Federal and State Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) regulatory process.

Conduct workshops where each proposed use is evaluated by state and federal scientists, commodity group representatives, growers, and other experts and given a priority based on the availability and efficacy of alternative management products, the potential damage from the target pest, the performance of the proposed product in managing the target pest, the compatibility of the proposed product with IPM programs, and level of safety to humans, non-target organisms and the environment.

Identify key IR-4 HQ staff with experience in managing pesticide registration protocol, preparing and submitting petitions. These professionals must be available at the start of the grant for immediate implementation.

IR-4 HQ *and* Regional Centers Shared Goals:

Demonstrate the capability and availability of resources to identify pest management needs from the submission of requests from research and extension personnel, farmers, grower organizations and others through a nationwide network of liaison representatives to the regional and national offices.

Demonstrate the capability to successfully integrate multiple pest disciplines in the management and execution of IR-4 programs.

Identify a network of qualified field research scientists who can conduct the necessary research trials and develop the data under EPA mandated Good Laboratory Practices (GLP) guidelines following specific directions in the research protocol.

Outline plans and identify key personnel for a quality assurance unit for GLP compliance and to format all research data and reports for submission to the EPA.

Describe process of providing expert assistance for development and registration of biological agents for use in pest management strategies on minor and specialty crops.

IR-4 Regional Centers Goals:

Outline a process where research coordinators verify each request for assistance and add that information to a master list.

Identify field, laboratory, and quality assurance representatives experienced in generating data according to GLPs for pesticide registration. These professionals must be available at the start of the grant for immediate implementation.

Demonstrate the ability to conduct field trials at EPA-approved locations immediately at the start of the grant.

For the three regional IR-4 centers with analytical chemistry programs, demonstrate the capability to analyze the residue samples from field trials as well as residue samples from USDA, ARS Specialty Crops Programs per EPA guidelines and GLPs. This infrastructure must be available at the start of the grant for immediate implementation.

D. Scientific Peer Review

Subsection (c)(5) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 450i(c)(5)) requires applicants to conduct scientific peer review of their proposed research activities in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary prior to the Secretary making a grant award under this authority. Regulations implementing this requirement are set forth in 7 CFR Part 3400.20. The regulations impose the following requirements:

(1) **Scientific peer review**. Prior to the award of a standard or continuation grant by NIFA, any proposed project shall have undergone a review arranged by the grantee. For research projects, such review must be a scientific peer review conducted in accordance with 7 CFR 3400.21.

(2) **Credible and independent review**. A review arranged by the grantee must provide for a credible and independent assessment of the proposed project. A credible review is one that provides an appraisal of technical quality and relevance sufficient for an organizational representative to make an informed judgment as to whether the proposal is appropriate for submission for Federal support. To provide for an independent review, such review may include USDA employees, but should not be conducted solely by USDA employees.

(3) **Notice of completion and retention of records**. A notice of completion of the review shall be conveyed in writing to NIFA as part of the Other Attachments (Field 12. of the R&R Other Project Information Form). The written notice constitutes certification by the applicant that a review in compliance with these regulations has occurred. Applicants are not required to submit results of the review to NIFA; however, proper documentation of the review process and results should be retained by the applicant.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by State agricultural experiment stations, land-grant colleges and universities, research foundations established by land grant colleges and universities, colleges and universities receiving funds under the Act of October 10, 1962 (16 U.S.C. 582a et seq.), and accredited schools or colleges of veterinary medicine, for the purpose of facilitating or expanding ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research programs.

Award recipients may subcontract and/or implement a fee for service arrangement to organizations not eligible to apply 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

NIFA does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

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

New Users of Grants.gov

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR) (also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If the organization is not prepared (e.g., the institution/organization is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov), then the one-time registration process must be completed PRIOR to submitting an application. It can take as much as two weeks to complete the registration process so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. In such situations the AR should go to **“Get Registered” on the Grants.gov left navigation bar (or go to www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for information on registering the institution/organization with Grants.gov. A quick reference guide listing the steps is available as a 4-page PDF document at the following website: www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf.**

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to www.grants.gov, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on **“Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions,”** enter the funding opportunity number **“NIFA-SRGP-003377”** in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

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

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

Grants.gov customer support

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 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 Part 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 CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM NIFA REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from NIFA review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications 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/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>.

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. Please find the suggested Project Summary/Abstract Template at: www.nifa.usda.gov/home/faq_apply.html#abstract. The summary **must** include:

- the Project type (IR-4 HQ or Regional IR-4 Center);
- physical location(s) of proposed HQ or center;
- categorized listing of partners and collaborators;
- a clear overview of the proposal;
- the anticipated impact of the proposed project on minor/specialty crop industry; and
- the relevance of the project to the goals of IR-4.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative.

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

- 1) Identify the mission and goals of the proposed IR-4 HQ the regional IR-4 center specifically designated in the application;
- 2) Identify the director and other key personnel (or positions) of the IR-4 HQ the regional center specifically designated in the application;
- 3) Describe the management process the IR-4 HQ or regional center will use (if funded) to:
a) establish broad-based advisory committees, b) involve stakeholders and partner institutions in its operations through working groups and other mechanisms, c) identify program needs and priorities, and d) develop a strategic plan that will be followed to address national and regional priorities and achieve goals and objectives identified in this request for applications;
- 4) Demonstrate the ability to establish and maintain an interactive information network that will provide a mechanism to share current pest management information and successes with pest managers, funding organizations, policy-makers, and other stakeholders;
- 5) Describe the process that will be used to ensure effective management of IR-4 resources and provide a plan to assess progress and accomplishments throughout the project; and

- 6) Describe a process for managing sub-awards and/or fee for service arrangements made from NIFA funding provided through the IR-4 center award. The management processes must ensure: a) the needs identification and prioritization process is kept separate from the funding process, b) that eligible applicants are notified of funding opportunities, and c) that funding is distributed in a fair and equitable fashion.
- 7) Renewal applications (as described in Part II.B.) should include a clearly marked performance report (aka progress report) describing results to date from the previous award. The section should contain the following information: (1) a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the previous award; (2) the reasons established goals were not met, if applicable; and (3) a listing of any publications resulting from the previous award. Copies of reprints or preprints may be included in the Appendices to the Project Narrative portion of the submission.

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.

Also, you must attach ‘Current and Pending Support’ information (see NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide p. 32, item 5.3, for guidelines and a suggested format) for each senior/key person identified above. Please find the suggested Current and Pending Support Template at: www.nifa.usda.gov/home/faq_apply.html#current.

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.

At least one member from the successful IR-4 headquarters and one member from each successful regional IR-4 center must attend from 4 to 6 leadership meetings to report on IR-4 activities. Reasonable travel expenses should be claimed as part of the project budget.

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 Code. Enter the program code name “**IR-4 Crop Pest Management**” and the program code enter “**RR**”.

b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. Conflict of interest information is required for each senior/key person included in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile. Please find the suggested Conflict of Interest Template at: www.nifa.usda.gov/home/faq_apply.html#coi.

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 **Wednesday, January 19, 2011 (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 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

Pursuant to Section 1473 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 3319, indirect costs or tuition remission are not allowable costs under section 2(c)(1)(B) projects, and no funds will be approved for this purpose. Further, costs that are a part of an institution's indirect cost pool (e.g., administrative or clerical salaries) may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable.

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.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.”

Described below are the requirements for successful submission of an application, all of the following steps must be met for an application to be considered for peer review:

- 1) Meeting the deadline: To electronically send the application to Grants.gov the submit button is pressed, which triggers a date and time stamp on the application. The date and time stamp is used to determine whether the application was received by Grants.gov before the deadline, which is prior to close of business **(5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) on Wednesday, January 19, 2011**. An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline is late. Consideration of late applications is only given in extenuating circumstances (e.g., natural disasters, confirmed Grants.gov outage) with proper documentation and support of the Agency Contact (see Part VII). The occurrence of one of these situations does not automatically ensure that a late application will be accepted. If an applicant wants a late application considered under an extenuating circumstance, the applicant should contact the Agency Contact accordingly.
- 2) Successful Grants.gov validation: The Grants.gov system performs a limited check of the application, and applicants are notified by Grants.gov of the outcome of the initial review. Applications meeting Grants.gov requirements are made available to the funding agency for further processing. Applications that fail Grants.gov validation may be resubmitted to Grants.gov if the original agency deadline has not passed. (Note that the Grants.gov system may allow applications to be submitted after the deadline has passed, but the application is considered late by NIFA.)
- 3) Successful Agency validation: NIFA staff performs precursory review of the application. The agency validation process includes, for example, meeting eligibility requirements and following agency application guidelines (e.g., formatting, page limitations, limits on budget requests). Applicants are notified by NIFA of the outcome of this review.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

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

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

- 1) Relevance of the application to the accomplishment of program goals and objectives, as described in Part I, B; **25 Points**
- 2) Adequacy of the proposal response to items listed in the Project Narrative, including a process for managing sub-awards made from NIFA funding; **25 Points**
- 3) Quality and extent of documented stakeholder involvement in application development; **15 Points**
- 4) Capacity of host institution(s) to provide support, including commitment to IPM programs; **15 Points**
- 5) Experience, accomplishments and time commitments of key project personnel; and **10 Points**
- 6) Appropriateness of requested budget. **10 Points**

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: www.hepinc.com.

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

D. Organizational Management Information

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

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

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

B. Award Notice

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

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to 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 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 Director during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html to view NIFA award terms and conditions);

(10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

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

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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 and A-122 (2 CFR Parts 220 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 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—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).

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

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES 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

At least one member from the successful IR-4 Headquarters and one member from each successful regional IR-4 center must attend from 4 to 6 leadership meetings to report on IR-4 activities. Reasonable travel expenses may be claimed as part of the project budget.

Grantees are to submit initial project information and annual 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.

For informational purposes, the “Federal Financial Report,” Form SF-425, consolidates into a single report the former Financial Status Report (SF-269 and SF-269A) and the Federal Cash Transactions Report (SF-272 and SF-272A). The [NIFA Agency-Specific Terms and Conditions](#) include the requirement that Form SF-425 is due on a **quarterly basis no later than 30 days following the end of each reporting period. 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: Dr. Monte Johnson; National Program Leader for Environmental Toxicology; Institute of Food Production and Sustainability; NIFA, USDA; telephone: 202-401-1108; fax: 202-401-4888; e-mail: mpjohnson@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 Federal Assistance Programs--General Award Administrative Provisions](#), for the applicable definitions for this NIFA grant program.