



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

FUNDING YEAR: Fiscal Year (FY) 2023

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: Not Required

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 27, 2023

ANTICIPATED PROGRAM FUNDING: \$28,000,000

AVERAGE INDIVIDUAL AWARD RANGE: \$49,000 - \$750,000

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER: USDA-NIFA-BFR-009746

ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER: 10.311

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

Assistance Listing Number (ALN): The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.311.

Table 1. Key Dates and Deadlines

Task Description	Deadline
Application:	5:00 P.M. Eastern, April 27, 2023
Letter of Intent:	Not Required
Applicants Comments:	Within six months from the issuance of this notice <i>(NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)</i>

Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA). National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when programs are grounded in DEIA. NIFA is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of programs and encourages individuals, institutions, and organizations from underserved communities to apply to funding opportunities as lead, co-lead, or subaward recipient(s), and to engage as leaders in the peer panel review process to support the development of strong networks and collaborations. NIFA encourages applications that engage diverse communities and have broad impacts through research, education, extension, and integrated activities to address current and future challenges.

Stakeholder Input. NIFA seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments, to the extent possible when developing RFAs and uses comments to help meet the requirements of [Section 103\(c\)\(2\) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 \(7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)\)](#). Applicants may submit written comments to Policy@usda.gov (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This request for applications is soliciting applications for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) for the fiscal year (FY) 2023 funding cycle to support delivery of education, mentoring, and technical assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States and its territories that are entering, establishing, building, and managing successful farm and ranch enterprises. The amount available for Standard, Education Team (ET) in FY 2023 is approximately \$28,000,000. No more than \$250,000 per year for three years for a maximum total of approximately \$750,000 will be available for each Standard and Education Team projects that will be funded in FY 2023. The Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse grant is competed once every three years. One Clearinghouse grant project was funded in FY 2022. This grant type will be due for solicitation in the FY 2025 grant cycle.

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

BFRDP 2023 RFA Webinar March 8, 2023, 1-3PM CT

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PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority

The Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) is authorized under [7 U.S.C. 2279 \(d\)](#) as amended requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a competitive grants program or enter into cooperative agreements to support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers or ranchers in the United States; establish beginning farmer and rancher education teams; and establish a curriculum and training clearinghouse for beginning farmers and ranchers.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The primary goal of BFRDP, under assistance listing number 10.311, is to help beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States and its territories enter and/or improve their successes in farming, ranching, and management of nonindustrial private forest lands, through support for projects that provide education, mentoring, and technical assistance to give beginning farmers and ranchers the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations and enhance their sustainability. The term “farmer” is used in the broadest sense and may be interpreted to include agricultural farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers. The term "beginning farmer or rancher" means a person that

- (A)(i) has not operated a farm or ranch; or
- (ii) has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years; and
- (B) meets such other criteria as the Secretary may establish.

Applications from partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and school-based agricultural education organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in agricultural training and outreach for beginning producers will be given priority in funding. According to [7 U.S.C. 2279\(d\)](#), BFRDP grants may fund programs or services relating to these priorities:

1. Basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices.
2. Innovative farm, ranch, and private, nonindustrial forest land transfer and succession strategies.
3. Entrepreneurship and business training.
4. Technical assistance to help beginning farmers or ranchers acquire land from retiring farmers and ranchers.
5. Financial and risk management training, including the acquisition and management of agricultural credit.
6. Natural resource management and planning.
7. Diversification and marketing strategies.
8. Curriculum development.
9. Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
10. Resources and referral;
11. Farm financial benchmarking;
12. Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veteran farmers and ranchers;
13. Farm safety and awareness;
14. Food safety and recordkeeping, and
15. Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers such as: projects that address climate change with climate smart agriculture, food, and forestry solutions;

improved nutritional security; and economic revitalization, particularly in socially disadvantaged communities. Applicants planning to address other similar subject areas not listed in priorities 1-14 are strongly encouraged to confer with the Program Contacts listed in [Appendix I](#) of this RFA to discuss the suitability of the topics prior to submitting an application.

NIFA supports research, education, and extension projects that address key problems of local, regional, national, and global importance. As such, NIFA encourages projects that enhance food and agricultural sciences and their role in human diversity, equity and inclusion, agricultural practices that provide for adaptation to ecological perturbation and mitigate climate change, rural economic development and post-pandemic economic revitalization, nutritional security, open and competitive markets, and other topics responsive to current and emerging needs impacting the U.S. agriculture.

Target Audience - The target audience for BFRDP is farmers and ranchers who have not operated a farm or ranch or have operated a farm or ranch for not more than ten years. Applicants must identify as well as define Beginning Farmer and Rancher (BFR) category of trainees to be served. There are five BFR training categories: has not operated a farm or ranch is in category 1, years 1-3 in category 2, years 4-6 in category 3, years 7-10 in category 4, planning to serve trainees in all categories listed--category 5.

BFRDP's goal is to ensure that all individuals are fully trained after a three-year term of training. These fully trained individuals must be fully equipped with resources to sustainably own or lease a farm business operation. To be fully equipped, these individuals would need to meet the following criteria:

1. need to be age 18 or older by the completion of the project training
2. be able to operate a farm or ranch achieving a minimum annual value of \$1000 in production.

In addition, a portion of BFRDP funding is a targeted set aside for projects that address the needs of two subsets of beginning farmers and ranchers:

1. At least five percent of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; and/or farm workers (including immigrants) desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers.
2. At least five percent of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers who are military veterans. A recipient of such a grant may coordinate with a recipient of a grant from the AgrAbility program (www.agrability.org) in addressing the needs of veteran farmers and ranchers with disabilities.

Please note: Not all applications need to address the needs of these two subsets of beginning farmers and ranchers. Inclusion of socially disadvantaged and of veteran beginning farmers or ranchers in the applications will not result in higher proposal scores or ratings, however, priority may be given to applications that address either of the two subsets, if necessary, to achieve the targets, by awarding funding to the highest-ranked proposals that meet the set-aside.

For applications to be considered under either of the two subsets, they must:

1. Identify the target audience of any of the groups identified above and state what percentage of the project budget will be allocated to serving these groups.
2. Explain how the beginning farmers and ranchers in the identified target audience will be recruited and provided with appropriate training, education, outreach, and mentoring.
3. Provide evidence of the ability to serve the needs of the identified audience, e.g., involvement of partner(s) with expertise and a strong track record of having previously done so.

Handling of baseline data and data collection will be addressed in the Data Management Plan (DMP) in accordance with the [Part IV, B](#) of this RFA.

The BRFDP is aligned with the following:

USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 found at

(<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-fy-2022-2026-strategic-plan.pdf>)

Strategic Goal 1: Combat Climate Change to Support America’s Working Lands, Natural Resources and Communities and specifically addresses Objectives 1.1, 1.2, and 1.4.

Strategic Goal 2: Ensure America’s Agricultural System is Equitable, Resilient, and Prosperous and specifically addresses Objective 2.2

Strategic Goal 3: Foster an Equitable and Competitive Marketplace for All Agricultural Producers and specifically addresses Objective 3.2.

Strategic Goal 4: Provide All Americans Safe, Nutritious Food and specifically addresses Objective 4.1

Strategic Goal 5: Expand Opportunities for Economic Development and Improve Quality of Life in Rural and Tribal Communities and specifically addresses Objectives 5.1 and 5.4.

NIFA supports research, education, and extension projects that address key problems of local, regional, national, and global importance. As such, NIFA encourages projects that enhance food and agricultural sciences and their role in human diversity, equity and inclusion, agricultural practices that provide for adaptation to ecological perturbation and mitigate climate change, rural economic development and post-pandemic economic revitalization, nutritional security, open and competitive markets, farm safety, and other topics responsive to current and emerging needs impacting U.S. agriculture.

Additional requirements on expected performance goals, indicators and targets may be required as a condition of award.

To achieve program goals, BFRDP projects will be expected to conduct training and assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers on one or more of the topics listed in Part I § B. items (1-15). Applicants should carefully consider the topics that will be addressed by the proposed project (i.e., clearly identify the topics in the project narrative and why those topics are the most appropriate for the project’s audience). Evidence of farmer input on topic selection is very important. Applicants should make use of existing curriculum (whether USDA funded or not), including entries in the BFRDP curriculum and training clearinghouse: FarmAnswers.org (<https://farmanswers.org>). New curriculum should be proposed only if the need can be clearly justified. Applications that seek to develop coursework for credit for four-year degrees at

colleges and universities are not appropriate for this program and will not be accepted for review. Applications that seek to educate students for careers in agriculture other than as farmers or ranchers will not be accepted for review. Applications that seek to conduct research will not be accepted for review.

For a program informational webinar please visit the [NIFA Upcoming Events](#) for dates, event registration, and link.

C. Program Area Description

NIFA is soliciting applications under the following program areas:

1. Standard Grants
2. Education Team Grants

Standard Grants

Table 2. Standard Grants Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	BFRDP
Program Code Name:	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Standard
ALN:	10.311
Project Type:	Training and Technical Assistance
Grant Type:	Standard
Application Deadline	April 27, 2023
Grant Duration:	36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	45 awards annually
Maximum Award Amount:	Approximately \$250,000 per year for up to 36 months

Maximum Award: Approximately \$250,000 per year for up to three years for large standard grants; Approximately \$175,000 per year for up to three years for medium standard grants; Approximately \$100,000 per year for up to three years for small standard grants and \$49,999 or less for a simplified standard grant application process for one year.

Both small, medium, and large standard BFRDP projects support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers, on the priority topics listed in Part I § B. items (1-15). The difference in type would be directly related to the scale of the project. Most BFRDP funding will be directed to Standard Grants. The primary goal of Standard Grants is to increase the number of beginning farmers and ranchers and enhance their successes and sustainability by providing them and their families with the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions. Standard Grant applications are expected to identify the audience of beginning farmers and ranchers they aim to serve; describe their characteristics and needs; demonstrate knowledge and experience in education and assistance methods that are appropriate and effective in engaging the audience and meeting their needs; and propose an ambitious yet achievable plan of work that will accomplish meaningful and measurable success in enhancing the number and success of beginning farmers

and ranchers. Most successful standard grant applicants provide training and assistance with business and financial management, as well as production and marketing topics aligned with the priority list in [Part I, B](#) of this RFA (1 - 15).

Small, medium, and large standard grants will be reviewed independently, and funding requests can be for a project duration up to three years; applications will be discussed by three different groups and ranked separately within each group to provide an equitable evaluation. Small grants are a standard grant of up to approximately \$100,000 per year for three-year project duration. Medium grants are a standard grant of up to approximately \$175,000 per year for three-year project duration. Large grants are a standard grant of up to approximately \$250,000 per year for three-year project duration. We will also offer simplified standard grants of \$49,999 or less for applicants with limited capacity to enhance their abilities to create and sustain beginning farmers and ranchers.

Any requests of, and including \$49,999, or less would be considered a simplified standard grant. Evaluation criteria for reviewing the simplified standard grants will be different from those utilized for reviewing small, medium, and large standard grants. Priority for funding under the simplified standard grants will be given to applicants who have not received grant funding in the past. This priority does not exclude previous grant recipients from being funded. Simplified grant is not a planning grant, but a very small standard grant strictly designed for new applicants without much experience in coordinating education and technical training.

Both small, medium, and large standard grant proposals will be evaluated using the same evaluation criteria (see [Part V, B](#) of this RFA), including priority for partnership and collaborations that are led by or include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), or school-based agricultural education organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in beginning agricultural producer training and outreach. The expectations for smaller projects, however, will be commensurate with their size (e.g., smaller audiences, more limited geographic reach, less complex collaborative arrangements) and provide an opportunity for smaller or less experienced organizations to propose projects that have smaller budgets and less complex administration. The federal funds requested should be commensurate with the scope of work. Those with higher award requests will be expected to undertake larger-scale projects, in terms of numbers reached, intensity of training and other services to be provided, and geographic service areas – e.g., being more statewide, regional or even national in scale. Examples of lower level requests would include local initiatives working with small numbers of farmers. The award level per farmer served should be appropriate and not excessive.

Under the authority at [7 U.S.C. 2279\(e\)](#), NIFA is offering simplified standard grants that can be utilized to develop action plans to address societal challenges; strengthen program ideas to develop a full proposal; curriculum development; develop apprenticeship programs and hands-on materials; as well as develop an advisory committee to strengthen future program activities. Simplified standard grant is not designed to be a planning grant. Educating and training a small group of individuals to become farmers and ranchers is a requirement.

BFRDP encourages the creation of partnerships among its extension programs to assist urban agricultural production in food insecure and nutrient short communities across the country.

NIFA encourages applications that include addressing climate change with climate smart agriculture, food and forestry solutions including, but not limited to Conservation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and other environmental concerns; Efficient and renewable energy practices; Building resilience to climate change; Coordination is encouraged in working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Cooperative Extension services to include training on conservation practices, farming principles and practices that increase biodiversity, enrich soils, land, improve watersheds, and enhance ecosystem services. Projects that focus on increasing equitable participation in USDA’s programs and services are also encouraged.

Education Team Grants

Table 3. Education Team Grants Key Information

Title	Description
Program Code:	BFRDP
Program Code Name:	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Education
ALN:	10.311
Project Type:	Education Team
Grant Type:	Training
Application Deadline	April 27, 2023
Grant Duration:	36 Months
Anticipated # of Awards:	Two awards annually
Maximum Award Amount:	Approximately \$250,000 per year for up to three years

The purpose of an Education Team (ET) grant is to enhance beginning farmer efforts based on a particular topic, region, or audience. ET applications must support development of curricula and conduct education programs and workshops for beginning farmers or ranchers in diverse geographical areas of the United States or provide training and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers or ranchers or for trainers and service providers that work with beginning farmers or ranchers. Such applications should complement previously funded ETs, which have addressed environmental management and leadership, regional networks, farmer-to-farmer curricula, financial management, as well as currently active ETs, which are addressing immigrant farming incubators, land access, women farmers, apprenticeships, alternative energy, and the Farm Beginnings curriculum. Education Teams should involve teams of experts with diverse backgrounds (e.g., NGO, CBO, SAEO, farmers, university, and government) to do the following:

1. Identify, collect, and assess existing curricula and programs.
2. Identify gaps, develop, and deliver curricula and train-the-trainer programs to fill the identified gaps; and
3. Collaborate with the BFRDP Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse (<https://farmanswers.org>) and beginning farmers and ranchers’ education providers to enhance successful use of the ET curricula and programs.

Applicants interested in applying for all grant types are strongly encouraged to confer with the Programmatic Contacts listed in Part VII to discuss the suitability of the topic prior to submitting an application.

PART II. AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) grants is approximately \$28,000,000 in FY 2023. USDA is not committed to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA.

B. Application Restrictions

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. All applications for FY 2023 should state September 15 project starting dates on all applications. In FY 2023, applications may be submitted to BFRDP as one of the following types of requests:

1. **New application.** New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) of this RFA for definition). This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to BFRDP or an application from a previously funded BFRDP project that has completed its project work and is applying for a continuation or starting a completely new project. We will review all new applications competitively using the screening for administrative requirements, review panel evaluation of proposals using evaluation criteria, and selection process described in Part V—Application Review Requirements. Applications from previously funded and terminated BFRDP projects seeking grant funds to start new BFRDP projects are also considered new applications. The new applications from a Project Director (PD) who has received a prior BFRDP award must contain the same information as required for new applications; they also must contain an additional one-page “Accomplishment-Based” narrative (see Project Narrative, Part IV). All previously funded and terminated BFRDP project applications must be received by the relevant due date, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications, plus based on performance during the previous BFRDP grant(s) and adequacy of plans for continuous improvement. Evaluation of performance during the previous BFRDP grant(s) will include the outcomes achieved and (where appropriate) contributions to the BFRDP Clearinghouse and Project Directors’ Annual Meeting. While budgets should account for this travel, virtual or hybrid meetings may be considered based on local and national pandemic conditions.
2. In order to meet the legislative requirement for geographical distribution to achieve regional balance, Project Directors (PDs) of active BFRDP awards are strongly discouraged from applying, unless the active award is in its final year of project work.
3. **Resubmitted application.** Resubmitted applications must include the response to the previous review panel comments and are subject to the same criteria and due dates herein. Resubmitted applications must enter the NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application in the Federal Field (Field 4) on the application form (see [Appendix III](#) of this RFA for definition). This is an application that had previously been submitted to BFRDP but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel comments (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. Addressing previous comments is important, but since each year is a new competition, resubmitting applicants should strengthen their proposals in every way possible.

C. Project and Grant Types

Applications will be accepted for two project types in FY 2023:

1. Standard BFRDP Projects consisting of large, medium, small, and simplified standard grants
2. Education Team (ET) Projects

1. Standard BFRDP Projects and Simplified Standard Grants:

- a. **Standard BFRDP Projects:** The long-term goals of the Standard BFRDP projects are to enhance the sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers through education, training, mentoring and outreach programs that enhance self-employment in farming, ranching and forestry opportunities. The maximum award for a large standard grant is approximately \$250,000 per year for up to three years; medium standard grants of no more than \$175,000 per year for up to three years of project duration; small standard grants of no more than \$100,000 per year for up to three years of project duration and simplified standard grants of \$49,999 or less for one year of project duration. All work must be completed within three years, except simplified standard grants. A no cost extension may be requested for up to 12 months. Please see NIFA Policy Guide for additional details.
- b. **Simplified Standard Grants:** Simplified Standard Grants are intended to assist organizations: 1) to sustain and enhance important collaborations and innovative activities relevant to beginning farmer and rancher programs; and 2) to initiate and develop beginning farmer and rancher project ideas to lead to future program success or success in obtaining other grants for beginning farmer and rancher education.

Letters of reference or any additional application materials not submitted with the application package by the application deadline is considered late and will not be accepted for consideration.

2. Education Team Projects:

The long-term goals of Education Team (ET) projects are to identify gaps in beginning farmer and rancher training by evaluating all existing programs, and to develop and conduct train-the-trainer projects to address these gaps. The maximum award for an ET project is approximately \$250,000 per year for up to three years. A no cost extension may be requested for up to 12 months. Please see NIFA Policy Guide for additional details.

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

D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects

In accordance with sections [2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422](#), institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear

primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients must, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research](#) for further information. Please note that research is unallowable in BFRDP.

PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility Requirements

Applicants for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) must meet all the requirements discussed in this RFA. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or, preclude NIFA from making an award. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

Applications may only be submitted by a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally based network or partnership of qualified public and/or private entities. These collaborations may include the following entities: State Cooperative Extension Services; Federal, State, municipal or tribal agencies; community-based organizations (CBOs); nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); junior and four-year colleges or universities or foundations maintained by a college or university; and private for-profit organizations.

Application submission of a project effort that is a duplicate of a current beginning farmer project will not be accepted for review under this program.

Inclusions of beginning and/or non-beginning farmers and ranchers as part of the collaborative group is strongly encouraged.

Applications submitted by individuals, or by organizations that do not involve other entities in a network or partnership, are not eligible for consideration under any category applicable to the BFRDP and will be excluded from review.

To meet geographical diversity, multiple awards will not be made to the same organization, institution, or Project Director in the same calendar year. Further, organizations and institutions that have received a regular, standard, or education team grant in the last two funding cycles (FY 2021 or FY 2022) are ineligible to apply. Since simplified standard grants are awarded for one year only, recipients of these grants that were awarded in FY 2022 may apply for grants in FY 2023. Please do not apply for another simplified standard grant if you have previously received a simplified standard grant award in BFRDP. Simplified standard grants are designed for new trainers who have never received grants nor gained more than three years of experience in assisting with the development of beginning farmers and ranchers.

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

Duplicate or Multiple Submissions – duplicate or multiple submissions is not allowed. NIFA will disqualify both applications if an applicant submits duplicate or multiple submissions. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Match Required –For FY 2023, BFRDP awardees must provide a match from non-Federal sources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount equal to 25 percent of the funds provided by the grant or cooperative agreement. However, NIFA may waive the matching funds requirement for a grant if NIFA determines that such a waiver or modification is necessary to effectively reach an underserved area or population.

If you plan to serve an underserved area or population and would like to request the 25% match waiver, please enter the statement below, at the top of your budget justification form.

“This applicant plans to serve an underserved area or population, and would like to request the 25% match waiver”

See [Part IV, B](#) of this RFA, R&R Budget Federal and Non-Federal, for details on requesting a match- waiver.

The matching funds must be from non-Federal sources except when authorized by statute. An award will not be issued unless all matching funds over the life of the grant are secured with match support documentation, which will be requested of applicants at the time they are recommended for an award. There can be no contingencies on the matching amount.

The Budget Justification must list matching sources along with the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match as well as the total dollar amount being pledged.). However, you are still subject to documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, etc. as specified in [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(the Uniform Guidance\),”](#) [7 CFR 3430, “Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions,”](#) and program-specific regulations, as applicable. In instances where match is required, any resulting award will require the signature of an Authorized Representative (AR). Only when NIFA receives the award signed by the AR will award funds be released and available for draw down.

The applicant must establish the value of matching contributions in accordance with applicable cost principles. Refer to [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards,”](#) for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 4** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process. [The NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is contained in the specific funding opportunity package or a sample of the guide can be found [here](#). When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

Table 4. Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to Grants.gov must register early with Grants.gov prior to submitting an application (Register Here).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install Adobe Reader (see Adobe Software Compatibility for basic system requirements).
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number USDA-NIFA-BFR-009746 , search for application here: Opportunity Package .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization’s readiness to submit an electronic application.

Table 5. Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
Grants.gov Online Support Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: support@grants.gov Self-service customer-based support: Grants.gov iPortal Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except federal holidays .	Email: grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except federal holidays

B. Content and Form of the Application

The [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the NIFA Grants Application Guide if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. Applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA’s review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all

applications that meet the requirements of this RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. Table 6 outlines other key instructions for applicants.

Table 6. Key Application Instructions

Instruction	References (All references are to the NIFA Grants Application Guide)
Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF) format.	Part IV
Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.	Part IV
Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.	Part IV
Follow the submission instructions.	Part IV
Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.	Part V
Contact the Grants.gov helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.	N/A
Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 30 days of the application deadline.	N/A

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

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

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

1. **Field 7.** Project Summary (PS)/Abstract. The PS must show how the project goals align with the project goals of the BFRDP. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.
 - a. Project Title
 - b. List of Project Directors (PDs) and Co-PDs and their institutions/organizations.
 - c. Concise (250 words or less) description of the project.
 - d. Project summary must include objectives to carry out project work as well as anticipated project outcomes.
 - e. List of other collaborating institutions/organizations/farmer and rancher groups.
 - f. Percent of total federal funds requested that are allocated to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and school-based agricultural education organizations (SAEOs).

- g. For applications to be considered under either of the target audience set asides:
- h. Percent of budget allocated to serving military veterans; and/or Percent of budget allocated to serving socially disadvantaged, limited resource, or farmworker audiences; and
- i. List of any previous or current BFRDP projects that PD has been a part of leading (list project director and award number 20XX-XXXXX-XXXXX); see [Abstracts of BFRDP Projects from Fiscal Years 2009-2022](#) for the full list of abstracts of previously funded projects).

2. **Field 8.** Project Narrative (PN).

Project Narrative for Small, Medium and Large Standard Grants, and Education Team Grants Applications.

Note: The PN shall not exceed 20 pages of written text (see [Table 8](#) of this RFA for suggestions), regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced, using font no smaller than 12 point and with at least 1-inch margins. This total includes figures and tables. We have established this maximum (20 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Organizing your proposal, clearly labeling each section, and sequencing them as indicated below, will help reviewers find the information to evaluate your proposal. It is encouraged that you include a one-page table of contents in the project narrative, which will not count towards the narrative's 20-page limitation. The PN must include all the following clearly defined sections.

- a. **Introduction.** The introduction should include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) of the proposed project. Justify the need for the program by identifying the target audience and explaining their needs (size, region, value of sales, structure of the industry (the number of small, medium and large farms), critical barriers, etc.); and by briefly summarizing any similar beginning farmer and rancher education and training programs that are available for the identified target audience, including all programs at www.FarmAnswers.org. If necessary, provide a map of the region. Show evidence that beginning farmers and ranchers were involved in conceptualizing the project and designing the activities. If the project type is Education Team, present the rationale for the geographic, topic or other appropriate focus of the Team and the Team's composition. All works cited must be referenced (see 7(i) Bibliography & References Cited in this section). Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages for this section (Related evaluation criteria (see [Part V, B](#) of this RFA): Relevancy.)
- b. **Objectives and Outcomes.** Concisely present the goals, associated objectives and expected outputs and outcomes of the project in relation to the audience and needs identified in the introduction. Provide numbers of beginning farmers and ranchers that will be served. Estimate how many of them will attain specific, anticipated knowledge gains or actions (e.g., starting farming; improving production practices; entering new markets) and project the expected resulting impacts of those gains and actions on the success of their operations. Discuss whether and how this program can be adapted to other regions, communities and/or agricultural systems. Applicants are

encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages for this section. (Related evaluation criteria: Technical merit.)

c. **Approach.**

The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Applicants are encouraged to use approximately six of the 20 pages for this section. Specifically, this section must include:

- i. A description of the activities proposed for each objective.
- ii. A timeline of the proposed project. The timeline should include activities and major outputs and associated outcomes for each year of the project.
- iii. Discuss how and where the activities will be provided and the appropriateness of the approach for the target audience.
- iv. For Standard BFRDP projects: how will the beginning farmers and ranchers be recruited for this training?
- v. For Education Team Projects: how will beginning farmer and rancher curricula and programs be identified and evaluated? How will you help guide curriculum and program development and delivery in future years?
- vi. How will the project, and its partnerships and collaborations be sustained beyond the life of the grant (e.g., plans for eventual self-support or institutionalization or other sources of support)? If there are no plans to sustain the effort, explain why not, and how the impact of the project will be lasting.
- vii. The inclusion of a logic model to guide program planning, implementation, and evaluation. To receive credit for the logic model, this model must be included within the project narrative. Use graphical depiction to show the relationships between the various elements leading to the outcomes in the logic model. Logic model page will not count against the 20-page project narrative limitation since it will be the 21st page which does not count as a demerit.
- viii. Any novel ideas or contributions of the proposed project.
- ix. Pitfalls that may be encountered and limitations to proposed procedures, and how you will address them. For Standard BFRDP projects, identify possible challenges to of your proposed strategy for participant recruitment and how you plan to address those challenges. (Related evaluation criteria: Technical merit; Achievability).

- d. **Personnel and Resources.** Describe in detail the Key Personnel's experience in serving the identified or other audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers and ability to provide effective education, training, outreach, and mentoring programs for the identified audience. For any audience, but particularly for socially disadvantaged audiences and/or veterans, it is very important to have partner(s) who have knowledge and experience working with such audiences, and that such partner(s) be involved in the leadership of the project (see "Management and Collaboration Plan" below). Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project, and their impacts. This information may include: the years and locations of prior activities; number of training assistance or education activities previously carried out; number of participants and graduates from the program;

success rate in completing the program; percentage of graduates who are still in farming; and/or percentages of those who improved their operations. Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages (of the Project Narrative) for this section. (Related evaluation criteria: Expertise and track record; Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel).

- e. **Plan for Outcome Based Reporting.** Clearly identify a minimum of two expected project specific outcomes within the life of the project and explain the plan to document and evaluate these outcomes. Third-party evaluators are strongly recommended. Participatory evaluation, and formative as well as summative evaluation, are encouraged. All projects must describe methods and resources for documenting and evaluating their outcomes and impacts. Because of the diversity in the types of BFRDP projects funded, it is not possible to require all applicants to report on identical measurable outcomes. However, all Standard BFRDP applicants should consider using as their outcomes:
 - i. The expected number of new farm startups that would result from their project, and
 - ii. The expected number of new farmers (i.e., those who are already farming but in their first ten years of operation) who will make beneficial changes (and describe those changes) as a result of the project.

Additionally, more specific outcomes, may include the number of new farmers who will learn and/or act on their learning (e.g., develop a business plan, and adopt a new production or marketing practice). Reporting of evaluation measures is managed through the Results Verification System at [RVS Reporting](#). For greater detail on appropriate evaluation measurement for a BFRDP grant, please see the [Outcomes Guide](#). All Education Team applicants must consider using the anticipated number of users of information products created as a result of their Education Team activities as one of their metrics. Include a table summarizing the two to five primary outcome targets and related measurements:

- i. Data management plan (DMP).
- ii. Response to previous review: The response to previous review must not exceed one page. This does not count towards the page limit for the PN.
- iii. Field 12, Add Other Attachments. See Part V of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

Table 7. Reporting Measures

Outcome	Target Number	How Measured
Number of new farm start-ups		
Number of new farmers who will... (describe action and/or condition change)		
Number of new farmers who will... (describe <i>another</i> action and/or condition change)		
(if ET) Number of users of (describe info/product(s))		
(if ET) Number of trainers trained or # of organizations		

Applicants for Standard grants that include instruction in farm financial management are also strongly encouraged to employ the applicable evaluation instruments available in the Farm Business Health Assessment tool. Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages for the outcome-based reporting section. (Related evaluation criteria: Adequacy of plans for the participatory evaluation process).

- f. **Management and Collaboration Plan.** It is critical to have a clearly articulated management plan that describes the roles and functions of all partners, collaborators, and the organizations, as related to the proposed project. Strong partnerships among complementary organizations (e.g., NGOs, CBOs, SAEOs and universities) with shared leadership are essential to most successful BFRDP projects, see “Definitions” ([Appendix III](#) of this RFA) for definitions of Partner and Collaborator. Include time allocated by each partner for attainment of objectives; key roles of each partner and collaborator; and plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance and partnerships. Describe the plans for coordination, communication, data-sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups. Describe the commitment of the organization and partners to this project; and how the collaboration and its impact will be sustained beyond the period of the award. An applicant’s failure to provide the requested information in the Management and Collaboration Plan may preclude NIFA from making an award. Applicants are encouraged to use approximately two of the 20 pages for this section. In addition, letters of commitment signed by the AR of the partnering organization demonstrating that the partners involved have agreed to abide by the Management Plan should be provided (see “Other Attachments” below). (Related evaluation criteria: Partnerships and collaboration; Achievability).
- g. **Additional Narrative Pages.** The following situations represent exceptions and require Additional Narrative Pages. In addition to the 20-page limit for the above sections of Narrative, proposals must use additional pages to provide the sections specified below if the proposals fall into the following categories:
 - i. **Response to Previous Review.** Required for “Resubmitted Applications” as described under
 - ii. [Part II, B](#) of this RFA, “Types of Applications”. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary. The Response to Previous Review is limited

to one page. Use the subheading “Response to Previous Review”. (Related evaluation criteria: Technical merit – Additional evaluation criteria).

- iii. **Prior BFRDP Accomplishments.** If the Project Director (PD) has been involved in leading prior BFRDP project(s), list those projects in the Project Summary (see 3.A above) and add to the narrative a brief description of what was learned from the past project(s), what can be improved upon, and how those lessons and improvements are being incorporated into the current application to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting program goals. This information must be added at the end of the project narrative, in no more than one page. Use the subheading “Prior BFRDP Accomplishments”. (Related evaluation criteria: Technical merit – Additional evaluation criteria).

Table 8 summarizes the sections of the Project Narrative for Standard Grant and Education Grant-Other applications suggest an approximate number of pages to allocate to each section and shows the evaluation criterion most relevant to each section. **These are merely suggested number of pages to be utilized for each criterion. It is not a must that applicants should restrict themselves to the suggested number of pages per criterion, but the maximum total number of pages is 20.**

Table 8. Project Narrative Components

Narrative Section	Suggested # of Pages (20 Max)	Related Evaluation Criteria (see <u>Part V, B</u> of this RFA)
Introduction	2 of 20	Relevancy
Objectives and Outcomes	2 of 20	Technical merit
Approach	6 of 20	Technical merit; Achievability
Personnel and Resources	2 of 20	Expertise and track record of the applicants; Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities
Plan for Outcome-Based Reporting	2 of 20	Adequacy of plans for the participatory evaluation process, outcome-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results beyond the immediate
Management and Collaboration Plan	2 of 20	Partnerships and collaboration; Achievability
Covid-19 Relief	2 of 20	For COVID-19 relief efforts, or could be interwoven into the entire proposal as you deem appropriate
Response to Previous Review (if applicable)	Limit 1	Responsiveness to previous comments and recommendations by reviewers
Prior BFRDP Accomplishments (if applicable)	Limit 1	Performance during the previous BFRDP grant(s); Adequacy of plans for continuous improvement

3. **Field 12**, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#). Commitment Letters. PDF attachment(s). No page limit. Letters of commitment from all partners (signed by the AR of the partnering organization) stating that the partners involved have agreed to their stated roles in the project and have agreed to abide by the Management Plan. Letters from other organizations or people whose participation is important to the success of the project, committing those collaborators to specific roles, are also encouraged.

Title the attachment(s) as ‘Letter of Commitment – Organization Name’ in the document header and save file as ‘Letter of Commitment Organization Name. General letters of support (i.e., from those who are not committing to a specific role in the project) are not needed and should not be included.

Please do not add any other attachments not specifically requested in this RFA. Specifically, do not attach examples of curricula or other appendices that were allowed in previous years’ BFRDP RFAs. Attaching additional narrative or figures or tables other than those specifically requested in this RFA will result in disqualification from review.

Check List – Please reference and include Table 9 with project narrative. This inclusion will not count towards the narrative’s page limitation. Table 9 is a tool to ensure that applicants include all required forms and attachments. It is not a substitute for the requirements of this or the instructions herein or in the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

Table 9. BFRDP FY2023 Checklist for Standard Grant Application

File Name for PDF Attachment (or Application Form/Section)	Contents (see the FY23 RFA, the Application Package, and NIFA Grants Application Guide)	Check-Off
SF-424 R&R	Forms in the Application Package – see	
Cover Sheet	instructions in the NIFA Grants.gov Application	
Project/Perf.	Guide for all three (3) forms	
Site		
Location(s)		
Other Project		
Information		
Project Summary (PDF)	Use the suggested template at: NIFA-19-004 BFRDP Project Summary Format	
Table of Contents	Have you included a one-page table of contents?	
	Title	
	List of Project Directors/Co-PDs & Institutions	
	Project summary- 250 words or less	
	List of other collaborating organizations not on PD/co PD list	
	Logic Model in graphic depiction	

File Name for PDF Attachment (or Application Form/Section)	Contents (see the FY23 RFA, the Application Package, and <u>NIFA Grants Application Guide</u>)	Check-Off
	Percent of total federal funds allocated to NGO/CBO/SAEOs	
	Percent of budget allocated to serving military veterans if applicable	
	Percent of budget allocated to serving socially disadvantaged audiences (if applicable)	
	List of previous BFRDP projects that PD has led	
	1. Introduction	
	2. Objectives and Outcomes	
	3. Approach	
	4. Personnel and Resources	
	5. Plan for Outcome Based Reporting (with summary table)	
	6. Management and Collaboration Plan	
	Additional section(s) beyond 20-page limit if applicable	
	a. Response to Previous Review (if Resubmission) – limit one (1) page	
	b. Prior BFRDP Accomplishments – limit one (1) page	
	7. NIFA Data Management Plan – limit two (2) pages will not count among the twenty (20) page narrative.	
Bibliography (pdf)	Bibliography and References (no page limit)	
Letter of Commitment_ Organization Name(pdf attachment(s))	Signed letter(s) that partners have agreed to their role in the project and to abide by management plan; often multiple attachments, no page limit.	
R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (form)	Information and Bibliographical Sketch form for each person. Current and Pending Support is required with this application.	
R&R Personal Data	Providing this information is required.	
R&R Budget Federal and Non- Federal (form)	Complete three (3) R&R budget forms reflecting each year of the project; plus, a total final budget, annual budgets are required at the time of application.	
Budget Justification (PDF)	Explain each item, no page limit. The Budget Justification must list matching sources along with the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match as well as the total dollar amount being pledged.	

File Name for PDF Attachment (or Application Form/Section)	Contents (see the FY23 RFA, the Application Package, and NIFA Grants Application Guide)	Check-Off
	NIFA is no longer requiring written verification of commitments of matching support and pledge agreements). If you are requesting a waiver of the match, include your rationale for the waiver.	
R&R Sub- award Budget (form)	Required if any sub-awards	
Supplemental Information Form(form)	Program Code = BFRDA for Standard Grants Program Code = BFRDB for Education Grants Program Code	
Conflict of Interest (PDF)	Complete a Conflict-of-Interest form for each key/senior person. Conflict of Interest then combined into one (1) PDF document to attach.	

Project Narrative for Simplified Standard Grant Applications (Field 8)

NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 10 pages of written text, regardless of whether it is single- or double-spaced, using font no smaller than 12 point and with at least 1-inch margins. This total includes figures and tables. We have established this maximum (10 pages) to ensure fair and equitable competition. Organizing your proposal, clearly labeling each section, and sequencing them as indicated below, will help reviewers find the information to evaluate your proposal. It is encouraged that you include a one-page table of contents in the project narrative, which will not count towards the narrative’s 10-page limitation. The Project Narrative must include all the following clearly defined sections:

- a. **Introduction.** The introduction must include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) of the proposed project. Justify the need for the program by identifying the target audience and explaining their needs (size, region, value of sales, structure of the industry), the number of small, medium and large farms), (critical barriers, etc.); and by briefly summarizing all the other similar beginning farmer and rancher education and training programs that are available for the identified target audience, including all programs at FarmAnswers.org. If necessary, provide a map of the region.
- b. **Objectives and Outcomes.** Concisely present the goals, associated objectives and expected outputs and outcomes of the specific, anticipated knowledge gains or actions (e.g., starting farming; improving production practices; entering new markets) and project the expected resulting impacts of those gains and actions on the success of their operations.
- c. **Approach.** The activities proposed to achieve each objective must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described.
 - i. A description of the activities proposed for each objective.
 - ii. A timeline of the proposed project. The timeline should include activities and major outputs and associated outcomes for each year of the project.

- iii. Discuss how and where the activities will be provided and the appropriateness
 - iv. of the approach for the target audience.
 - v. How will the beginning farmers and ranchers be recruited for this training?
 - vi. How will the project, and its partnerships and collaborations, be sustained beyond the life of the grant (e.g., plans for eventual self-support or institutionalization or other sources of support)? If there are no plans to sustain the effort, explain why not, and how the impact of the project will be lasting.
 - vii. The inclusion of a logic model to guide program planning, implementation, and evaluation.
 - viii. Any novel ideas or contributions of the proposed project.
 - ix. Pitfalls that may be encountered and limitations to proposed procedures, and how you will address them.
- d. **Personnel and Resources.** Describe in detail the Key Personnel’s experience in serving the identified or other audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers and ability to provide effective education, training, outreach, and mentoring programs for the identified audience. For any audience, but particularly for socially disadvantaged audiences and/or veterans, it is very important to have partner(s) who have knowledge and experience working with such audiences, and that such partner(s) be involved in the leadership of the project.
- e. **Commitment Letters.** PDF attachment(s). No page limits. Letters of commitment from all partners (signed by the AR of the partnering organization) stating that the partners involved have agreed to their stated roles in the project. Letters from other organizations or people whose participation is important to the success of the project, committing those collaborators to specific roles, are also encouraged. Title the attachment(s) as ‘Letter of Commitment – Organization Name’ in the document header and save file as ‘Letter of Commitment Organization Name’. Other more general letters of support (i.e., from those who are not committing to a specific role in the project) are not needed and should not be included.

Table 10. Checklist for Simplified Standard Grant Application

Document Type	Criteria	Check-Off
Table of Contents	Have you included a one-page table of contents?	
	Title	
	List of Project Directors/Co-PDs & Institutions	
	Project summary - 250 words or less	
	List of other collaborating organizations not on PD/ co-PD list	
	Logic Model in graphic depiction. It cannot be an attachment. It must be included within the project narrative, and would not count against the 10-page limit required for project narrative	
Project Narrative (PDF)	No more than 10 pages, include the following Sections:	
	Introduction	
	Objectives and Outcomes	

Document Type	Criteria	Check-Off
	Approach	
	Personnel and Resources	
	Project Evaluation	
	Project Results and Dissemination	
Budget Justification (PDF)	Explain each item, no page limit. The Budget Justification must list matching sources along with the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match as well as the total dollar amount being pledged. NIFA is no longer requiring written verification of commitments of matching support and pledge agreements). If you are requesting a waiver of the match, include your rationale for the waiver of the match on the top page of the budget justification form. Enter this statement at the top of the budget justification form to be considered for a match waiver – “This applicant plans to serve underserved group or population and hereby requests a match waiver”	
R&R Sub-Award Budget	Required if any sub-awards	
Supplemental Information Form (form)	Program Code = BFRDA for Simplified Standard Grant	
Conflict of Interest (pdf)	Complete a Conflict-of-Interest form for each key /senior person NIFA Application Support Templates then combine them into one (1) PDF document to attach.	

R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded). See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.

R&R Personal Data. This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)).

R&R Budget. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. Match – If an applicant concludes that the matching requirements described under [Part III, B](#) of this RFA is not applicable to them; the applicant must include an explanation of their conclusion in the *budget justification*. NIFA will consider this justification when determining final matching requirements or if required matching can be waived. NIFA retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements. Grants that require matching funds as specified under [Part III, B](#) of this RFA must list in their *budget justification* the matching sources, the identification of the entity(ies) providing the match, and the total pledged amount. A written verification of commitments of matching support (a pledge agreement) is not required. However, applicants are subject to the documentation, valuing and reporting requirements, as

specified in [2 CFR Part 200, “Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards \(the Uniform Guidance\),”](#) and [7 CFR 3430, “Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-Formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions.”](#)

2. Indirect costs (IDC) – See [Part IV, C](#) of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for additional information.

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

Supplemental Information Form. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. **Field 2.** Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name and the program code. See **Table 11: Program Codes**. Accurate entry is critical.
2. **Field 8.** Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

Table 11. Program Codes

Proposal Type	Program Code Name	Program Code
Standard Grant	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Standard (includes simplified, small and large standard grants)	BFRDA
Education Team Grant	Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Education	BFRDB

C. Funding Restrictions

Section 12301 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334) [7 U.S.C. 2279\(l\)\(7\)](#) limits indirect costs for this program to 10% of total federal funds awarded. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants for Standard Grants, and Education Teams (ETs), proposals must limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to 10 percent of the total funds requested.

Funds under BFRDP grants may not be used for the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility.

D. Other Submission Requirements

Follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV of [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#). For information about the status of a submitted application, see Part III of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. NIFA's Evaluation Process

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this RFA. All administrative requirements must be met in order for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

Scientific Peer Review Process:

NIFA selects reviewers for the review panel based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities.
2. The need to include experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.
3. The need to include other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, researchers, public health practitioners, educators, consumers, and commercial reviews) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations.
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to race, ethnicity, gender representation, and an equitable age distribution.
6. The need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of each application to producers and the general public.

After each peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the responsible program staff of NIFA will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

After the review process has been completed, NIFA sends copies of reviews, *not* including the identity of reviewers, and a summary (if applicable) of the review panel comments to the PD.

Conflicts of interest. NIFA takes extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may influence the review or evaluation (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

B. Evaluation Criteria

NIFA will use the following criteria to evaluate this RFA:

1. NIFA will use the following evaluation criteria for Small, Medium and Large Standard Grants and Education Team Grant Applications to evaluate this RFA:
 - a. **Partnerships and Collaborations (10 points):** To what extent does the application represent a substantial and effective collaborative network or partnership of public and/or private entities? Does proposal include the necessary partners to meet the needs of the audience, and does it make appropriate use of the expertise and other strengths of each partner?
 - b. **Consultation of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (10 points):** Explain and document the role beginning farmers and ranchers played in the design, implementation, and decision making related to the proposed initiative to support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives to increase opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers.
 - c. **Relevancy (5 points):** Explanation and documentation that the project is directed towards specific topic areas identified in [Part I, B](#) of this RFA. These topics are designed to yield improvements in and sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers as defined in the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Pub. L. 115-334). In addition, relevancy will be evaluated by description of the necessity of the project based on needs identified for the target audience, inclusion of beginning farmers and ranchers in conceptualization and development of project activities, and degree to which the project addresses audience(s), needs, and/or geographic area(s) not served by previous and alternative training, outreach, mentoring and education programs.
 - d. **Technical merit (25 points):**
 - i. Clarity and Clarity and delineation of objectives, activities, and outcomes.
 - ii. Likelihood of success of the proposed activities and conceptual adequacy of the success of the proposed activities to meet the needs of targeted audience including suitability and feasibility of the approach (e.g., social, economic, and cultural relevance, distance based versus face-to-face).
 - iii. Innovation and originality of objectives and activities.
 - iv. Expected reasonable performance targets, outcomes and impacts as indicated in Plan for Outcome Based Reporting.
 - v. Adaptability to other locations, communities, and/or agricultural products and technologies.
 - vi. Sustainability of the project partnerships and collaborations beyond the life of the grant, or a compelling explanation of how the project impact will be lasting if the collaboration itself is not sustained; and
 - vii. Reasonableness of the budget for planned activities. (Size of the budget must be commensurate with project scope.)

Additional evaluation criteria for New and/or Resubmitted Applications from Project Directors (PDs) of prior BFRDP projects Standard and ET grants):

 - viii. Performance during the Previous BFRDP grant(s). Applicant should include a description of the achievement of prior project outcomes and prior project contributions of curriculum to the BFRDP Clearinghouse. Applicant should also describe their participation and contributions to the Results Verification System and annual report to REEport. Prior project

outcomes, prior project curricula contributions to the Clearinghouse, and participation in the Project Directors' (PDs) meetings will be taken into consideration in the evaluation of the proposal. BFRDP may require Project Directors to participate in PDs' annual meetings that can be expensed with awarded grant funds not to exceed \$2,500 per award year. Annual meetings allow grantees to network, encourage partnerships, and gain additional knowledge on evaluation methods to strengthen documentation of project outcomes in measurable terms. While budgets should account for this travel, virtual or hybrid meetings may be considered based on local and national pandemic conditions."

- ix. Adequacy of Plans for Continuous Improvement. Includes what was learned from the past project(s), what can be improved upon, and how those lessons and improvements are being incorporated into this application to make the ongoing project more effective and successful at meeting program goals.

For Education Team applicants, this includes: Adequacy of dissemination plans for evaluation reports, including number and description of activities planned for disseminating evaluation reports and new curricula. A clear plan to identify gaps in beginning farmer and rancher training by evaluating all existing programs, and to develop and conduct train-the-trainer projects. Does this proposal complement previously funded ETs, as well as currently active ETs, which are addressing immigrant farming incubators, land access, women farmers, apprenticeships, alternative energy, and the Farm Beginnings curriculum? Does this Education Team proposal include the anticipated number of users of information products created as a result of their Education Team activities as one of their metrics? Include a table summarizing the two to five primary outcome targets

- e. **Achievability (10 points):** Probability of success of the project is appropriate given level of originality, target audience and budget for each activity. Extent to which applicant identifies potential pitfalls and how they will be addressed. There should be sufficient time commitment of project directors and co-directors for project activities including management. Plans for management and collaborative arrangements of the proposed project should be adequate, e.g., sufficient time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; clearly defined project roles and relationships among key participants and collaborators; plan for decision-making; and plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, and collaborative efforts.
 - i. Projects that address climate change with climate smart agriculture, food and forestry solutions including, but not limited to conservation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and other environmental concerns; Efficient and renewable energy practices; Building resilience to climate change; Coordination is essential in working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to include training on conservation practices, farming principles and practices that increase

biodiversity, enrich soils, land, improve watersheds, and enhance ecosystem services. **(5 points)**

- ii. Projects that focus on increasing equitable participation in USDA's programs and services **(5 points)**.
- f. **Expertise and track record of the applicants (10 points):** To what extent does application demonstrate expertise through successful multi-year experience in education outreach, mentoring and/or technical assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers? The successful multi-year experience can be demonstrated by number of training, assistance, or education activities previously carried out; number of participants or graduates of the program, success rate and their current occupation; number of years a program or activity has been offered. Extent to which qualifications of the applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project activities are detailed. Applicant's ability to evaluate project outcomes. Applicant's demonstration of experience and competence in serving the needs of identified target audience.
- g. **Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation (10 points):** Includes expertise of consultants and collaborators, sufficiency of the education facilities and equipment for the proposed education and outreach methods.
- h. **Adequacy of plans for participatory evaluation process, outcome-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results beyond the immediate target audience (10 points):** Includes number and expertise of evaluation team members who have agreed to serve or who have been identified. A data management plan is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the PD and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project.

Target Audience - The target audience for BFRDP is farmers and ranchers who have not operated a farm or ranch or have operated a farm or ranch for not more than ten years. Applicants must identify as well as define Beginning Farmer and Rancher (BFR) category of trainees to be served. There are five BFR training categories: has not operated a farm or ranch is in category 1, years 1-3 in category 2, years 4-6 in category 3, years 7-10 in category 4, planning to serve trainees in all categories listed--category 5. Please provide recruitment strategies you plan to adopt for all categories. **(5 Bonus points)**.

2. NIFA will use the following evaluation criteria for Simplified Standard Grant Applications to evaluate this RFA:
 - a. **Partnerships and Collaborations (10 points):** To what extent does the application represent a substantial and effective collaborative network or partnership of public and/or private entities?
 - b. **Consultation of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers (10 points):** Explain and document role that beginning farmers and ranchers played in the design, implementation, and decision making related to proposed initiative to support new and established local training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives to increase opportunities for beginning farmers and ranchers.
 - c. **Relevancy (5 points):** Relevancy will be evaluated by description of necessity of the project based on needs identified for target audience, inclusion of beginning

farmers and ranchers in the conceptualization and development of project activities, and degree to which the project addresses audience(s) needs, and/or geographic area(s) not served by previous and alternative training, outreach, mentoring and education programs.

- d. **Technical Merit (15 points):**
 - i. Clarity and delineation of objectives, activities, and outcomes.
 - ii. Explanation of the method of delivery and applicability to audience: Distance- based versus face-to-face; (c). Expected performance targets, outcomes, and impacts.
- e. **Achievability (15 points):** Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality, target audience and budget for each activity. The extent to which applicant identifies potential pitfalls and how they will be addressed. Sufficient time commitment of project directors and co-directors for project activities, including management.
- f. **Projects that address climate change with climate smart agriculture, food and forestry solutions including, but not limited to (5 points):** Conservation, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and other environmental concerns; Efficient and renewable energy practices; Building resilience to climate change; Coordination is essential in working with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to include training on conservation practices, farming principles and practices that increase biodiversity, enrich soils, land, improve watersheds, and enhance ecosystem services.
- g. **Expertise and track record of the applicants (10 points):** To what extent does application demonstrate expertise through successful multi-year experience in education, outreach, mentoring, training and/or technical assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers?
- h. **Personnel (10 points):** Each application must implement sound and effective project management practices. Applications demonstrating strong leadership and skills in delivering training and outreach to target audience will be given priority. Expertise of consultants and collaborators will be taken into consideration.
- i. **Project Evaluation (10 points):** Project evaluation must be fully described including a graphic logic model to be utilized for the evaluation. For example, one page of write up can be devoted to a logic model graphic illustration to be utilized. Third party evaluator is strongly encouraged. A data management plan is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the PD and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project.
- j. **Project Results and Dissemination (10 points):** Plans for reporting, and communication of findings and results within target audience and local area. Each application must demonstrate project benefits and results to growing new and beginning farmers and ranchers. Emphasis is on creating and sustaining beginning farmers and ranchers.

C. Organizational Management Information

Applicants must submit specific management information prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only need to provide an update if there was a change in previously provided information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award

under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

D. Application Disposition

Applicants may withdraw at any time before NIFA makes a final funding decision. NIFA will retain all applications, including withdrawn applications and unfunded applications.

PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds authorized, the NIFA awarding official will make grants to responsible and eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the grant must be no later than September 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and [NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions, 7 CFR Part 3430, subparts A through E](#).

Award Notice. The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION

A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget

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

Changes in Budget or Project Plans. In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring).
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project.
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX, \(Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals\)](#), or [48 CFR](#), unless waived by the federal awarding agency,
5. [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
6. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
7. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR 200.333, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
8. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
9. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw at any time prior to the final action thereon.

C. Regulatory Information

This program is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. Chapter 35](#)), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under [OMB Document No. 0524-0039](#).

APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

Program Contacts

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Mark Heap

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816-401-6846

For administrative questions related to;

1. Grants.gov, see [Part IV](#) of this RFA
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov
3. Awards under this RFA, please email awards@usda.gov

U.S. Postal Mailing Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture

P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

Courier/Package Delivery Address:

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

United States Department of Agriculture

2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000

Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of Terms

Authorized Representative – AR
Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 – AREERA
Beginning Farmer and Rancher – BFR
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program – BFRDP
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance – CFDA
Community Based Organizations – CBO
Data Management Plan – DMP
Education Team – ET
Indirect Costs – IDC
National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA
Nongovernmental Organization – NGO
Portable Document Format – PDF
Project Director – PD
Project Narrative – PN
Project Summary – PS
Request for Application – RFA
Research, Education, and Economics – REE
School-based Agricultural Education Organization – SAEO
United States Department of Agriculture – USDA

APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

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

Definitions

Beginning Farmer or Rancher:

A person that has not operated a farm or ranch or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years.

Clearinghouse:

An online repository that will make available to beginning farmers or rancher's education curricula and training materials and programs, and which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.

Collaborator:

A person or an organization that cooperates with the applicant in the conduct of the project but is not immediately connected to the management of the project.

Community Based Organizations (CBOs):

Private non-profit organizations that are representative of a community or a significant segment of a community that provides services to that local community.

Education:

An act or process that delivers knowledge and informal education programs to beginning farmers and ranchers, enabling them to make practical decisions.

Limited resource farmer or rancher:

An operator of a farm or ranch that has both low levels of farm sales and low household income.

Military Veteran:

A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable.

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs):

Legally constituted, non-governmental organizations created by natural or legal persons with no participation or representation of any government and serving one (1) or more communities.

Partnership:

A relationship involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities in the management of the project.

Performance target:

A specific, verifiable change in people's actions or conditions. It defines how many people will change and what degree of change constitutes success.

Producer:

An individual, family, or other entity in the U.S. engaged in the business of agriculture, crop, livestock, forestry, and range production, management, and marketing.

Qualified Public and Private Entities:

Public or private groups, organizations, or institutions that have established and demonstrated capacities to conduct projects that accomplish the purposes of the program as designated in these guidelines.

Regions:

Are subdivided into four categories and include the states and territories as described below:

1. The Northeast Region: Includes the 12 Northeast States and the District of Columbia (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia).
2. The Southern Region: Includes 13 States plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma).
3. The North Central Region: Includes 12 States (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri; Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota) and;
4. The Western Region: Includes 12 States and the American Territories in the Pacific (Hawaii, Alaska, Washington State, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Micronesia).

School-based agricultural education organizations (SAEOs):

Organizations that deliver career and/or technical education in agriculture to high school students, which may include classroom and/or experiential learning, for example, FFA (formerly known as the Future Farmers of America), National Young Farmer Education Organization, or other similar organizations.

Socially disadvantaged beginning farmer or rancher:

A farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group (i.e., a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) ([7 U.S.C. 2003\(e\)](#)).

Veteran farmer or rancher:

A farmer or rancher who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released from the service under conditions other than dishonorable. (See [7 U.S.C. 2279\(a\)\(7\)](#) for further details.)