

U.S. Department Agriculture (USDA) Proposal Guidance

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is made up of 29 agencies and offices, each with their own unique mission and focus areas. The selected funding agencies under the USDA have prepared their own guidelines, requirements, and templates for proposal preparation and submission. Each RFP/FOA/NOFO should be reviewed closely alongside the agency-specific guidelines when developing and preparing a proposal package.

Look for any agency-specific guidelines

Summarize programs

Select agencies and key points:

Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is USDA's principal in-house research agency. ARS is organized into National Programs. These programs serve to bring coordination, communication, and empowerment to approximately 600 [research projects](#) carried out by ARS. The National Programs focus on the relevance, impact, and quality of ARS research. National Programs include:

- Nutrition, Food Safety/Quality
- Animal Production and Protection
- Crop Production and Protection
- Natural Resources and Sustainable Agricultural Systems

NIFA (NRI and AFRI) - NIFA's mission is to invest in and advance agricultural research, education, and extension to solve societal challenges. NIFA's investments in transformative science directly support the long-term prosperity and global preeminence of U.S. agriculture.

NIFA announces opportunities and accepts applications through Grants.gov. The NIFA Grants Application Guide (provided in the Grants.gov opportunity documents) provides guidance for the preparation and submission of NIFA grant applications via the Grants.gov system. This guide provides general information and references pertaining to the grant application process as well as NIFA-specific instructions and requirements.

The NIFA Policy Guide provides comprehensive guidance on roles and responsibilities, application and review processes, award notification and administration procedures, award terms and conditions, uniform administrative requirements, allowable costs, reporting requirements, closeout procedures and audit requirements.

Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) provides leadership in ensuring the health and care of animals and plants. The agency improves agricultural productivity and competitiveness and contributes to the national economy and the public health.

APHIS announces opportunities and accepts applications through Grants.gov and ezFedGrants (*cross-listed with NIFA*), with some cross-listed opportunities available on Research.gov (*in partnership with the National Science Foundation (NSF)*).

NIFA may require [specific templates](#) for proposal submission including:

- Conflict of Interest List
- Project Summary
- Confidentiality Agreement Template
- Current and Pending Support Template
- Organizational Information Form

Indirect Costs (IDC) Treatment -

The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (commonly known as the Farm Bill) increased the indirect cost cap for many of NIFA's mandatory program from 22% of total federal funds awarded (TFFA) to 30% of TFFA and applies the cap to the total of the prime as well as subs indirect costs.

NIFA provides an [FAQ](#) document which helps breakdown how the rate of 30% Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) is applied, especially in regards to projects with subawards.

Proposal Preparation and Submission

Registrations:

- Register your organization with U.S. Government System for Award Management (SAM) (SAM.gov)
- Register organization, PIs, and any other administrative personnel including Authorized Organization Representatives (AOR) to Grants.gov
- Other potential systems:
 - o ezFedGrants
 - o Research.gov
 - o REEports (*NIFA*)