

**PART 3430—COMPETITIVE AND
NONCOMPETITIVE NON-FOR-
MULA FEDERAL ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMS—GENERAL AWARD
ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS**

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Subpart A—General Information

§ 3430.1 Applicability of regulations.

(a) *General.* This part provides agency specific regulations regarding the application for, and evaluation, award, and post-award administration of, National Institute of Food and Agri-

culture (NIFA) awards, and is supplementary to the USDA uniform assistance regulations at 7 CFR parts 3016 (State, local, and tribal governments), 3019 (institutions of higher education, hospitals, and nonprofits), and 3015 (all others), as applicable. These regulations apply to the following types of Federal assistance awards: Grants and cooperative agreements.

(b) *Competitive programs.* This part applies to all agricultural research, education, and extension competitive and related programs for which NIFA has administrative or other authority, as well as any other Federal assistance program delegated to the NIFA Director. In cases where regulations of this part conflict with existing regulations of NIFA in Title 7 (*i.e.*, 7 CFR parts 3400 through 3499) of the Code of Federal Regulations, regulations of this part shall supersede. This part does not apply to the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program (7 CFR part 3403) and the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) authorized under section 1415A of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3151a).

(c) *Noncompetitive programs.* Subparts A, B, D, and E, as well as § 3430.35 of subpart C, apply to all noncompetitive agricultural research, education, and extension programs administered by NIFA, as well as any other Federal assistance program delegated to the NIFA Director.

(d) *Federal assistance programs administered on behalf of other agencies.* Subparts A through E, as appropriate, apply to competitive and noncompetitive grants and cooperative agreements administered on behalf of other agencies of the Federal Government. Requirements specific to these Federal assistance programs will be included in the program solicitations or requests for applications (RFAs).

(e) *Federal assistance programs administered jointly with other agencies.* Subparts A through E, as appropriate, apply to competitive and noncompetitive grants and cooperative agreements administered jointly with other agencies of the Federal Government. Requirements specific to these Federal assistance programs will be included in

the appropriate program solicitations or RFAs published by both or either agency.

(f) *Formula fund grants programs.* This part does not apply to any of the formula grant programs administered by NIFA. Formula funds are the research funds provided to 1862 Land-Grant Institutions and agricultural experiment stations under the Hatch Act of 1887 (7 U.S.C. 361a, *et seq.*); extension funds provided to 1862 Land-Grant Institutions under sections 3(b) and 3(c) of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343(b) and (c)) and section 208(c) of the District of Columbia Public Postsecondary Education Reorganization Act, Public Law 93-471; agricultural extension and research funds provided to 1890 Land-Grant Institutions under sections 1444 and 1445 of NARETPA (7 U.S.C. 3221 and 3222); expanded food and nutrition education program funds authorized under section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343(d)) to the 1862 Land-Grant Institutions and the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions; extension funds under the Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 1671, *et seq.*) for the 1862 Land-Grant institutions and the 1890 Land-Grant Institutions; research funds provided to the 1862 Land-Grant Institutions, 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, and forestry schools under the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Act (16 U.S.C. 582a, *et seq.*); and animal health and disease research funds provided to veterinary schools and agricultural experiment stations under section 1433 of NARETPA (7 U.S.C. 3195).

§ 3430.2 Definitions.

As used in this part:

1862 Land-Grant Institution means an institution eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862, as amended (7 U.S.C. 301, *et seq.*). Unless otherwise stated for a specific program, this term includes a research foundation maintained by such an institution.

1890 Land-Grant Institution means one of those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of August 30, 1890, as amended (7 U.S.C. 321, *et seq.*), including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State University. Unless otherwise stated for a specific program, this term includes a research foundation maintained by such an institution.

1994 Land-Grant Institution means one of those institutions as defined in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994, as amended (7 U.S.C. 301 note). These institutions are commonly referred to as Tribal Colleges or Universities.

Advisory Board means the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (as established under section 1408 of NARETPA (7 U.S.C. 3123)).

Agricultural research means research in the food and agricultural sciences.

Applied research means research that includes expansion of the findings of fundamental research to uncover practical ways in which new knowledge can be advanced to benefit individuals and society.

Authorized Departmental Officer or ADO means the Secretary or any employee of the Department with delegated authority to issue or modify award instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

Authorized Representative or AR means the President or Chief Executive Officer of the applicant organization or the official, designated by the President or Chief Executive Officer of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization to the project.

Award means financial assistance that provides support or stimulation to accomplish a public purpose. Awards may be grants or cooperative agreements.

Budget period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.

Cash contributions means the recipient's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the recipient by non-Federal third parties.

College or university means, unless defined in a separate subpart, an educational institution in any State which:

(1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;

(2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;

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(3) Provides an educational program for which a bachelor's degree or any other higher degree is awarded;

(4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and

(5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Unless otherwise stated for a specific program, this term includes a research foundation maintained by such an institution.

Cooperative agreement means the award by the Authorized Departmental Officer of funds to an eligible awardee to assist in meeting the costs of conducting for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program as identified in the program solicitation or RFA, and where substantial involvement is expected between NIFA and the awardee when carrying out the activity contemplated in the agreement.

Department means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Director means the Director of NIFA and any other officer or employee of NIFA to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Education activity or teaching activity means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

Established and demonstrated capacity means that an organization has met the following criteria:

(1) Conducts any systematic study directed toward new or fuller knowledge and understanding of the subject studied; or,

(2) Systematically relates or applies the findings of research or scientific experimentation to the application of new approaches to problem solving, technologies, or management practices; and

(3) Has facilities, qualified personnel, independent funding, and prior projects and accomplishments in research or technology transfer.

Extension means informal education programs conducted in the States in cooperation with the Department.

Extension activity means an act or process that delivers science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions.

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

(1) Animal health, production, and well-being.

(2) Plant health and production.

(3) Animal and plant germ plasm collection and preservation.

(4) Aquaculture.

(5) Food safety.

(6) Soil, water, and related resource conservation and improvement.

(7) Forestry, horticulture, and range management.

(8) Nutritional sciences and promotion.

(9) Farm enhancement, including financial management, input efficiency, and profitability.

(10) Home economics.

(11) Rural human ecology.

(12) Youth development and agricultural education, including 4-H clubs.

(13) Expansion of domestic and international markets for agricultural commodities and products, including agricultural trade barrier identification and analysis.

(14) Information management and technology transfer related to agriculture.

(15) Biotechnology related to agriculture.

(16) The processing, distributing, marketing, and utilization of food and agricultural products.

Fundamental research means research that increases knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of phenomena and has the potential for broad application, and has an effect on agriculture, food, nutrition, or the environment.

Graduate degree means a Master's or doctoral degree.

Grant means the award by the Authorized Departmental Officer of funds to an eligible grantee to assist in meeting the costs of conducting for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program as identified in the program solicitation or RFA.

Grantee means the organization designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

Insular area means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

Integrated project means a project incorporating two or three components of the agricultural knowledge system (research, education, and extension) around a problem area or activity.

Land-grant Institutions means the 1862 Land-Grant Institutions, 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, and 1994 Land-Grant Institutions.

Matching or cost sharing means that portion of allowable project or program costs not borne by the Federal Government, including the value of in-kind contributions.

Merit review means an evaluation of a proposed project or elements of a proposed program whereby the technical quality and relevance to regional or national goals are assessed.

Merit reviewers means peers and other individuals with expertise appropriate to conduct merit review of a proposed project.

Methodology means the project approach to be followed.

Mission-linked research means research on specifically identified agricultural problems which, through a continuum of efforts, provides information and technology that may be transferred to users and may relate to a product, practice, or process.

National laboratories include Federal laboratories that are government-owned contractor-operated or government-owned government-operated.

Non-citizen national of the United States means the award by the Author-

ized Departmental Officer of funds to an eligible awardee to assist in meeting the costs of conducting for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program as identified in the program solicitation or RFA, and where substantial involvement is expected between NIFA and the awardee when carrying out the activity contemplated in the agreement.

Peer reviewers means experts or consultants qualified by training and experience to give expert advice on the scientific and technical merit of applications or the relevance of those applications to one or more of the application evaluation criteria. Peer reviewers may be adhoc or convened as a panel.

Prior approval means written approval by an Authorized Departmental Officer evidencing prior consent.

Private research organization means any non-governmental corporation, partnership, proprietorship, trust, or other organization.

Private sector means all non-public entities, including for-profit and non-profit commercial and non-commercial entities, and including private or independent educational associations.

Program announcement (PA) means a detailed description of the RFA without the associated application package(s). NIFA will not solicit or accept applications in response to a PA.

Program Officer means a NIFA individual (often referred to as a National Program Leader) who is responsible for the technical oversight of the award on behalf of the Department.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by an award.

Project Director or *PD* means the single individual designated by the awardee in the application and approved by the Authorized Departmental Officer who is responsible for the direction and management of the project, also known as a Principal Investigator (PI) for research activities.

Project period means the total length of time, as stated in the award document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

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Research means any systematic study directed toward new or fuller knowledge and understanding of the subject studied.

Scientific peer review means an evaluation of the technical quality of a proposed project and its relevance to regional or national goals, performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed research work.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

State means any one of the fifty States, the District of Columbia, and the insular areas.

Third party in-kind contributions means the value of non-cash contributions of property or services provided by non-Federal third parties, including real property, equipment, supplies and other expendable property, directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to a funded project or program.

Under Secretary means the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics.

United States means the several States, the District of Columbia, and the insular areas.

Units of State government means all State institutions, including the formal divisions of State government (*i.e.*, the official State agencies such as departments of transportation and education), local government agencies (*e.g.*, a county human services office), and including State educational institutions (*e.g.*, public colleges and universities).

[74 FR 45740, Sept. 4, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 4813, Jan. 27, 2011]

§ 3430.3 Deviations.

Any request by the applicant or awardee for a waiver of or deviation from any provision of this part shall be submitted to the ADO identified in the agency specific requirements. NIFA shall review the request and notify the applicant/awardee, within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of the deviation request, whether the request to deviate has been approved. If the deviation request is still under consideration at the end of 30 calendar days, NIFA shall inform the applicant/award-

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ee in writing of the date when the applicant/awardee may expect the decision.

§ 3430.4 Other applicable statutes and regulations.

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to Federal assistance applications considered for review and to project grants and cooperative agreements awarded under NIFA Federal assistance programs. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129, regarding debt management.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (*i.e.*, OMB Circular Nos. A-21, A-87, and A-122, now relocated at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225, and 230) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3016—USDA implementation of Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

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

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

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations (now relocated at 2 CFR part 215).

7 CFR Part 3021—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).

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

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

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

35 U.S.C. 200 *et seq.*—Bayh-Dole Act, promoting the utilization of inventions arising from federally supported research or development; encouraging maximum participation of small business firms in federally supported research and development efforts; and promoting collaboration between commercial concerns and nonprofit organizations, including universities, while ensuring that the Government obtains sufficient rights in federally supported inventions to meet the needs of the Government and protect the public against nonuse or unreasonable use of inventions (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR part 401).

Subpart B—Pre-award: Solicitation and Application

§ 3430.11 Competition.

(a) *Standards for competition.* Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, NIFA will enter into grants and cooperative agreements, unless restricted by statute, only after competition.

(b) *Exception.* The NIFA ADO and the designated Agency approving official may make a determination in writing that competition is not deemed appropriate for a particular transaction. Such determination shall be limited to transactions where it can be adequately justified that a noncompetitive award is in the best interest of the Federal Government and necessary to the goals of the program.

§ 3430.12 Requests for applications.

(a) *General.* For each competitive and noncompetitive non-formula program, NIFA will prepare a program solicitation (also called a request for applications (RFA)), in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) policy directive, 68 FR 37370-37379 (June 23, 2003), establishing a standard format for Federal agency announcements (*i.e.*, program solicitations or RFAs) of funding opportunities under programs that award discretionary grants or cooperative agreements. This policy directive requires the content of the RFA to be organized in a sequential manner beginning with overview information followed by the full text of the announcement and will apply unless superseded by statute or another OMB policy directive. The RFA may include all or a portion of the following items:

- (1) Contact information.
- (2) Directions for interested stakeholders or beneficiaries to submit written comments in a published program solicitation or RFA.
- (3) Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number.
- (4) Legislative authority and background information.
- (5) Purpose, priorities, and fund availability.
- (6) Program-specific eligibility requirements.
- (7) Program-specific restrictions on the use of funds, if Applicable.
- (8) Matching requirements, if applicable.
- (9) Acceptable types of applications.
- (10) Types of projects to be given priority consideration, including maximum anticipated awards and maximum project lengths, if applicable.
- (11) Program areas, if applicable.
- (12) Funding restrictions, if applicable.
- (13) Directions for obtaining additional requests for applications and application forms.
- (14) Information about how to obtain application forms and the instructions for completing such forms.
- (15) Instructions and requirements for submitting applications, including submission deadline(s).
- (16) Explanation of the application evaluation Process.

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(17) Specific evaluation criteria used in the review Process.

(18) Type of Federal assistance awards (*i.e.*, grants and/or cooperative agreements).

(b) *RFA variations*. Where program-specific requirements differ from the requirements established in this part, program solicitations will also address any such variation(s). Variations may occur in the following:

(1) Award management guidelines.

(2) Restrictions on the delegation of fiscal responsibility.

(3) Required approval for changes to project plans.

(4) Expected program outputs and reporting requirements, if applicable.

(5) Applicable Federal statutes and regulations.

(6) Confidential aspects of applications and awards, if applicable.

(7) Regulatory information.

(8) Definitions.

(9) Minimum and maximum budget requests, and whether applications outside of these limits will be returned without further review.

(c) *Program announcements*. Occasionally, NIFA will issue a program announcement (PA) to alert potential applicants and the public about new and ongoing funding opportunities. These PAs may provide tentative due dates and are released without associated application packages. Hence, no applications are solicited under a PA. PAs are announced in the FEDERAL REGISTER or on the NIFA Web site.

§ 3430.13 Letter of intent to submit an application.

(a) *General*. NIFA may request or require that prospective applicants notify program staff of their intent to submit an application, identified as “letter of intent”. If applicable, the request or requirement will be included in the RFA, along with directions for the preparation and submission of the letter of intent, the type of letter of intent, and any relevant deadlines. There are two types of letters of intent: optional and required.

(b) *Optional letter of intent*. Entities interested in submitting an application for a NIFA award should complete and submit a “Letter of Intent to Submit an Application” by the due date speci-

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fied in the RFA. This does not obligate the applicant in any way, but will provide useful information to NIFA in preparing for application review. Applicants that do not submit a letter of intent by the specified due date are still allowed to submit an application by the application due date specified in the RFA, unless otherwise specified in the RFA.

(c) *Required letter of intent*. Certain programs may require that the prospective applicants submit a letter of intent for specific programs. This type of letter is evaluated by the program staff for suitability to the program and in regard to program priorities, needs, and scope. Invitations to submit a full application will be issued by the Program Officer or his or her representative. For programs requiring a letter of intent, applications submitted without prior approval of the letter of intent by the program staff will be returned without review. Programs requiring a specific letter of intent will be specified in the RFA.

§ 3430.14 Types of applications; types of award instruments.

(a) *Types of applications*. The type of application acceptable may vary by funding opportunity. The RFA will stipulate the type of application that may be submitted to NIFA in response to the funding opportunity. Applicants may submit the following types of applications as specified in the RFA.

(1) *New*. An application that is being submitted to the program for the first time.

(2) *Resubmission*. This is a project application that has been submitted for consideration under the same program previously but has not been approved for an award under the program. For competitive programs, this type of application is evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the area to which it is assigned. Resubmissions are reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications. In addition, applicants must respond to the previous panel review summaries, unless waived by NIFA.

(3) *Renewal*. An application requesting additional funding for a period subsequent to that provided by a current

award. For competitive programs, a renewal application competes with all other applications. Renewal applications must be developed as fully as though the applicant is applying for the first time. Renewal applicants also must have filed a progress report via Current Research Information System (CRIS), unless waived by NIFA.

(4) *Continuation*. A noncompeting application for an additional funding/budget period within a previously approved project.

(5) *Revision*. An application that proposes a change in the Federal Government's financial obligations or contingent liability from an existing obligation; or, any other change in the terms and conditions of the existing award.

(6) *Resubmitted renewal*. This is a project application that has been submitted for consideration under the same program previously. This type of application has also been submitted for renewal under the same program but was not approved. For competitive programs, this type of application is evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the area to which it is assigned. Resubmitted renewal applications are reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications. Applicants must respond to the previous panel review summaries and file a progress report via CRIS, unless waived by NIFA.

(b) *Types of award instruments*. The following is a list of corresponding categories of award instruments issued by NIFA.

(1) *Standard*. This is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period without the announced intention of providing additional support at a future date.

(2) *Renewal*. This is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to provide additional funding under a standard award as specified in paragraph (b)(1) of this section for a project period beyond that approved in an original or amended award, provided that the cumulative period does not exceed any statutory time limitation of the award.

(3) *Continuation*. This is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined period of time with a state-

ment of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the Federal Government and the public.

(4) *Supplemental*. This is an award instrument by which NIFA agrees to provide small amounts of additional funding under a standard, renewal, or continuation award as specified in paragraphs (b)(1), (b)(2), and (b)(3) of this section and may involve a short-term (usually six months or less) extension of the project period beyond that approved in an original or amended award, but in no case may the cumulative period of the project, including short term extensions, exceed any statutory time limitation of the award.

(c) *Obligation of the Federal Government*. Neither the acceptance of any application nor the award of any project shall commit or obligate the United States in any way to make any renewal, supplemental, continuation, or other award with respect to any approved application or portion of an approved application.

§ 3430.15 Stakeholder input.

Section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)) requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on each program RFA from persons who conduct agricultural research, education, and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. NIFA will provide instructions for submission of stakeholder input in the RFA. NIFA will consider any comments received within the specified timeframe in the development of the future RFAs for the program.

§ 3430.16 Eligibility requirements.

(a) *General*. Program-specific eligibility requirements appear in the subpart applicable to each program and in the RFAs.

(b) *Foreign entities*—(1) *Awards to institutions*. Unless specifically allowed, foreign commercial and non-profit institutions are not considered eligible to apply for and receive NIFA awards.

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(2) *Awards to individuals.* Unless otherwise specified, only United States citizens, non-citizen nationals of the United States, and lawful permanent residents of the United States are eligible to apply for and receive NIFA awards.

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

§ 3430.17 Content of an application.

The RFA provides instructions on how to access a funding opportunity. The funding opportunity contains the application package, which includes the forms necessary for completion of an application in response to the RFA, as well as the application instructions. The application instructions document, “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov,” is intended to assist applicants in the preparation and submission of applications to NIFA. It is also the primary document for use in the preparation of NIFA applications via Grants.gov.

§ 3430.18 Submission of an application.

(a) *When to submit.* The RFA will provide deadlines for the submission of letters of intent, if requested and required, and applications. NIFA may

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issue separate RFAs and/or establish separate deadlines for different types of applications, different award instruments, or different topics or phases of the Federal assistance programs. If applications are not received by applicable deadlines, they will not be considered for funding. Exceptions will be considered only when extenuating circumstances exist, as determined by NIFA, and justification and supporting documentation are provided to NIFA.

(b) *What to submit.* The contents of the applicable application package, as well as any other information, are to be submitted by the due date.

(c) *Where to submit.* The RFA will provide addresses for submission of letters of intent, if requested or required, and applications. It also will indicate permissible methods of submission (*i.e.*, electronic, e-mail, hand-delivery, U.S. Postal Service, courier). Conformance with preparation and submission instructions is required and will be strictly enforced unless a deviation had been approved. NIFA may establish additional requirements. NIFA may return without review applications that are not consistent with the RFA instructions.

§ 3430.19 Resubmission of an application.

(a) *Previously unfunded applications.* (1) Applications that are resubmitted to a program, after being previously submitted but not funded by that program, must include the following information:

(i) The NIFA-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application.

(ii) Summary of the previous reviewers’ comments.

(iii) Explanation of how the previous reviewers’ comments or previous panel summary have been addressed in the current application.

(2) Resubmitting an application that has been revised based on previous reviewers’ critiques does not guarantee the application will be recommended for funding.

(b) *Previously funded applications.* (1) NIFA competitive programs are generally not designed to support multiple Federal assistance awards activities

that are essentially repetitive in nature. PDs who have had their projects funded previously are discouraged from resubmitting relatively identical applications for further funding. Applications that are sequential continuations or new stages of previously funded projects must compete with first-time applications, and should thoroughly demonstrate how the proposed project expands substantially on previously funded efforts and promotes innovation and creativity beyond the scope of the previously funded project.

(2) An application may be submitted only once to NIFA. The submission of duplicative or substantially similar applications concurrently for review by more than one program will result in the exclusion of the redundant applications from NIFA consideration.

§ 3430.20 Acknowledgment of an application.

The receipt of all letters of intent and applications will be acknowledged by NIFA. Applicants who do not receive an acknowledgement within a certain number of days (as established in the RFA, e.g., 15 and 30 days) of the submission deadline should contact the program contact. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number by NIFA, that number should be cited on all future correspondence.

§ 3430.21 Confidentiality of applications and awards.

(a) *General.* Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application contents and evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permissible by law.

(b) *Identifying confidential and proprietary information in an application.* If an application contains proprietary information that constitutes a trade secret, proprietary commercial or financial information, confidential personal information, or data affecting the national security, it will be treated in confidence to the extent permitted by law, provided that the information is clearly marked by the proposer with the term “confidential and proprietary information” and that the following statement is included at the bottom of the project narrative or any other at-

tachment included in the application that contains such information: “The following pages (specify) contain proprietary information which (name of proposing organization) requests not to be released to persons outside the Government, except for purposes of evaluation.”

(c) *Disposition of applications.* By law, the Department is required to make the final decisions as to whether the information is required to be kept in confidence. Information contained in unsuccessful applications will remain the property of the proposer. However, the Department will retain for three years one file copy of each application received; extra copies will be destroyed. Public release of information from any application submitted will be subject to existing legal requirements. Any application that is funded will be considered an integral part of the award and normally will be made available to the public upon request, except for designated proprietary information that is determined by the Department to be proprietary information.

(d) *Submission of proprietary information.* The inclusion of proprietary information is discouraged unless it is necessary for the proper evaluation of the application. If proprietary information is to be included, it should be limited, set apart from other text on a separate page, and keyed to the text by numbers. It should be confined to a few critical technical items that, if disclosed, could jeopardize the obtaining of foreign or domestic patents. Trade secrets, salaries, or other information that could jeopardize commercial competitiveness should be similarly keyed and presented on a separate page. Applications or reports that attempt to restrict dissemination of large amounts of information may be found unacceptable by the Department and constitute grounds for return of the application without further consideration. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, the Department will limit dissemination of such information to its employees and, where necessary for the evaluation of the application, to outside reviewers on a confidential basis. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

Subpart C—Pre-award: Application Review and Evaluation

§ 3430.31 Guiding principles.

The guiding principle for Federal assistance application review and evaluation is to ensure that each proposal is treated in a consistent and fair manner regardless of regional and institutional affiliation. After the evaluation process by the review panel, NIFA, through the program officer, ensures that applicants receive appropriate feedback and comments on their proposals, and processes the awards in as timely a manner as possible.

§ 3430.32 Preliminary application review.

Prior to technical examination, a preliminary review will be made of all applications for responsiveness to the administrative requirements set forth in the RFA. Applications that do not meet the administrative requirements may be eliminated from program competition. However, NIFA retains the right to conduct discussions with applicants to resolve technical and/or budget issues, as deemed necessary by NIFA.

§ 3430.33 Selection of reviewers.

(a) *Requirement.* NIFA is responsible for performing a review of applications submitted to NIFA competitive award programs in accordance with section 103(a) of AREERA (7 U.S.C. 7613(a)). Reviews are undertaken to ensure that projects supported by NIFA are of high quality and are consistent with the goals and requirements of the funding program. Applications submitted to NIFA undergo a programmatic evaluation to determine the worthiness of Federal support. The scientific peer review or merit review is performed by peer or merit reviewers and also may entail an assessment by Federal employees.

(b) *NIFA Peer Review System.* The NIFA Application Review Process is accomplished through the use of the NIFA Peer Review System (PRS), a Web-based system which allows reviewers and potential reviewers to update personal information and to complete and submit reviews electronically to NIFA.

(c) *Relevant training and experience.* Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields taking into account the following factors:

(1) Level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, and extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities.

(2) Need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, and extension fields.

(3) Need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.

(4) Need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, State and Federal agencies, private profit and nonprofit organizations) and geographic locations.

(5) Need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution.

(6) Need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

(d) *Confidentiality.* The identities of reviewers will remain confidential to the maximum extent possible. Therefore, the names of reviewers will not be released to applicants. If it is possible to reveal the names of reviewers in such a way that they cannot be identified with the review of any particular application, this will be done at the end of the fiscal year or as requested. Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. Reviewers are expected to be in compliance with NIFA Confidentiality Guidelines. Reviewers provide this assurance through PRS.

(e) *Conflicts of interest.* During the evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may

impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined. Reviewers are expected to be in compliance with NIFA Conflict-of-Interest Guidelines. Reviewers provide this assurance through PRS.

§ 3430.34 Evaluation criteria.

(a) *General.* To ensure any project receiving funds from NIFA is consistent with the broad goals of the funding program, the content of each proposal/application submitted to NIFA will be evaluated based on a pre-determined set of review criteria. It is the responsibility of the Program Officer to develop, adopt, adapt, or otherwise establish the criteria by which proposals are to be evaluated. It may be appropriate for the Program Officer to involve other scientists or stakeholders in the development of criteria, or to extract criteria from legislative authority or appropriations language. The review criteria are described in the RFA and shall not include criteria concerning any cost sharing or matching requirements per section 103(a)(3) of AREERA (7 U.S.C. 7613(a)(3)).

(b) *Guidance for reviewers.* In order that all potential applicants for a program have similar opportunities to compete for funds, all reviewers will receive from the Program Officer a description of the review criteria. Reviewers are instructed to use those same evaluation criteria, and only those criteria, to judge the merit of the proposals they review.

§ 3430.35 Review of noncompetitive applications.

(a) *General.* Some projects are directed by either authorizing legislation and/or appropriations to specifically support a designated institution or set of institutions for particular research, education, or extension topics of importance to the nation, a State, or a region. Although these projects may be awarded noncompetitively, these projects or activities are subject to the same application process, award terms and conditions, Federal assistance laws and regulations, reporting and monitoring requirements, and post-award administration and closeout policies

and procedures as competitive Federal assistance programs. The only difference is these applications are not subject to a competitive peer or merit review process at the Agency level.

(b) *Requirements.* All noncompetitive applications recommended for funding are required to be reviewed by the program officer and, as required, other Departmental and NIFA officials; and the review documented by the NIFA program officer. For awards recommended for funding at or greater than \$10,000, an independent review and a unit review by program officials are required.

§ 3430.36 Procedures to minimize or eliminate duplication of effort.

NIFA may implement appropriate business processes to minimize or eliminate the awarding of NIFA Federal assistance that unnecessarily duplicates activities already being sponsored under other awards, including awards made by other Federal agencies. Business processes may include the review of the Current and Pending Support Form; documented CRIS searches prior to award; the conduct of PD workshops, conferences, meetings, and symposia; and agency participation in Federal Government-wide and other committees, taskforces, or groups that seek to solve problems related to agricultural research, education, and extension and other activities delegated to the NIFA Director.

§ 3430.37 Feedback to applicants.

Copies of individual reviews and/or summary reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, will be sent to the applicant PDs after the review process has been completed.

Subpart D—Award

§ 3430.41 Administration.

(a) *General.* Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the NIFA ADO shall make Federal assistance awards to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in the RFA. The date specified by the NIFA ADO as the effective date of the award shall be no later

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than September 30th of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the award effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds awarded by NIFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are awarded in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (e.g., parts 3015, 3016, and 3019 of 7 CFR).

(b) *Notice of Award.* The notice of award document (i.e., Form NIFA-2009, Award Face Sheet) will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Director has awarded a grant or cooperative agreement.

(2) Title of project.

(3) Name(s) and institution(s) of Project Director(s).

(4) Identifying award number assigned by NIFA or the Department.

(5) Project period.

(6) Total amount of NIFA financial assistance approved.

(7) Legal authority(ies) under which the grant or cooperative agreement is awarded.

(8) Appropriate CFDA number.

(9) Approved budget plan (that may be referenced).

(10) Other information or provisions (including the Terms and Conditions) deemed necessary by NIFA to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular grant or cooperative agreement.

§ 3430.42 Special award conditions.

(a) *General.* NIFA may, with respect to any award, impose additional conditions prior to or at the time of any award when, in the judgment of NIFA, such conditions are necessary to ensure or protect advancement of the approved project, the interests of the public, or the conservation of grant or cooperative agreement funds. NIFA

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may impose additional requirements if an applicant or recipient has a history of poor performance; is not financially stable; has a management system that does not meet prescribed standards; has not complied with the terms and conditions of a previous award; or is not otherwise responsible.

(b) *Notification of additional requirements.* When NIFA imposes additional requirements, NIFA will notify the recipient in writing as to the following: The nature of the additional requirements; the reason why the additional requirements are being imposed; the nature of the corrective actions needed; the time allowed for completing the corrective actions; and the method for requesting reconsideration of the additional requirements imposed.

(c) *Form NIFA-2009, Award Face Sheet.* These special award conditions, as applicable, will be added as a special provision to the award terms and conditions and identified on the Form NIFA-2009, Award Face Sheet, for the award.

(d) *Removal of additional requirements.* NIFA will promptly remove any additional requirements once the conditions that prompted them have been corrected.

Subpart E—Post-Award and Closeout

§ 3430.51 Payment.

(a) *General.* All payments will be made in advance unless a deviation is accepted (see § 3430.3) or as specified in paragraph (b) of this section. All payments to the awardee shall be made via the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Payment Management System (DHHS-PMS), U.S. Department of the Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system, or another electronic funds transfer (EFT) method, except for awards to other Federal agencies. Awardees are expected to request funds via DHHS-PMS, ASAP, or other electronic payment system for reimbursement basis in a timely manner.

(b) *Reimbursement method.* NIFA shall use the reimbursement method if it determines that advance payment is not feasible and that the awardee does not maintain or demonstrate the willingness to maintain written procedures

that minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and disbursement by the awardee, and financial management systems that meet the standards for fund control and accountability.

§ 3430.52 Cost sharing and matching.

(a) *General.* Awardees may be required to match the Federal funds received under a NIFA award. The required percentage of matching, type of matching (e.g., cash and/or in-kind contributions), sources of match (e.g., non-Federal), and whether NIFA has any authority to waive the match will be specified in the subpart applicable to the specific Federal assistance program, as well as in the RFA.

(b) *Indirect Costs as in-kind matching contributions.* Indirect costs may be claimed under the Federal portion of the award budget or, alternatively, indirect costs may be claimed as a matching contribution (if no indirect costs are requested under the Federal portion of the award budget). However, unless explicitly authorized in the RFA, indirect costs may not be claimed on both the Federal portion of the award budget and as a matching contribution, unless the total claimed on both the Federal portion of the award budget and as a matching contribution does not exceed the maximum allowed indirect costs or the institution's negotiated indirect cost rate, whichever is less. An awardee may split the allocation between the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget only if the total amount of indirect costs charged to the project does not exceed the maximum allowed indirect costs or the institution's negotiated indirect cost rate, whichever is less. For example, if an awardee's indirect costs are capped at 22 percent pursuant to section 1462(a) of NARETPA (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), the awardee may request 11 percent of the indirect costs on both the Federal portion of the award and as a matching contribution. Or, the awardee may request any similar percentage that, when combined, does not exceed the maximum indirect cost rate of 22 percent.

§ 3430.53 Program income.

(a) *General.* NIFA shall apply the standards set forth in this subpart in requiring awardee organizations to account for program income related to projects financed in whole or in part with Federal funds.

(b) *Addition method.* Unless otherwise provided in the authorizing statute, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the award, program income earned during the project period shall be retained by the awardee and shall be added to funds committed to the project by NIFA and the awardee and used to further eligible project or program objectives. Any specific program deviations will be identified in the individual subparts.

(c) *Award terms and conditions.* Unless the program regulations identified in the individual subpart provide otherwise, awardees shall follow the terms and conditions of the award.

§ 3430.54 Indirect costs.

Indirect cost rates for grants and cooperative agreements shall be determined in accordance with the applicable assistance regulations and cost principles, unless superseded by another authority. Use of indirect costs as in-kind matching contributions is subject to § 3430.52(b).

§ 3430.55 Technical reporting.

(a) *Requirement.* All projects supported with Federal funds under this part must be documented in the Current Research Information System (CRIS).

(b) *Initial Documentation in the CRIS Database.* Information collected in the "Work Unit Description" (Form AD-416) and "Work Unit Classification" (Form AD-417) is required upon project initiation for all new awards in CRIS (*i.e.*, prior to award).

(c) *Annual CRIS Reports.* Unless stated differently in the award terms and conditions, an annual "Accomplishments Report" (Form AD-421) is due 90 calendar days after the award's anniversary date (*i.e.*, one year following the month and day on which the project period begins and each year thereafter up until a final report is required). An annual report covers a one-year period. In addition to the Form

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AD-421, the following information, when applicable, must be submitted to the programmatic contact person identified in block 14 of the Award Face Sheet (Form NIFA-2009): a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period (where the output of the project can be expressed readily in numbers, a computation of the cost per unit of output should be considered if the information is considered useful); the reasons for slippage if established goals were not met; and additional pertinent information including, when appropriate, analysis and explanation of cost overruns or unexpectedly high unit costs. The annual report of "Funding and Staff Support" (Form AD-419) is due February 1 of the year subsequent to the Federal fiscal year being reported.

(d) *CRIS Final Report.* The CRIS final report, "Accomplishments Report" (Form AD-421), covers the entire period of performance of the award. The report should encompass progress made during the entire timeframe of the project instead of covering accomplishments made only during the final reporting segment of the project. In addition to providing the information required under paragraph (c) of this section, the final report must include the following when applicable: a disclosure of any inventions not previously reported that were conceived or first actually reduced to practice during the performance of the work under the award; a written statement on whether or not the awardee elects (or plans to elect) to obtain patent(s) on any such invention; and an identification of equipment purchased with any Federal funds under the award and any subsequent use of such equipment.

(e) *CRIS Web Site Via Internet.* The CRIS database is available to the public on the worldwide web. CRIS project information is available via the Internet CRIS Web site at <http://cris.nifa.usda.gov>. To submit forms electronically, the CRIS forms Web site can be accessed through the CRIS Web site or accessed directly at <http://cwf.uwm.edu/cris>.

(f) *Additional reporting requirements.* Awardees may be required to submit other technical reports or submit the

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CRIS reports more frequently than annually. Additional requirements for a specific Federal assistance program are described in the applicable subpart after subpart E and are identified in the RFA. The Award Face Sheet (Form NIFA-2009) also will specify these additional reporting requirements as a special provision to the award terms and conditions.

§ 3430.56 Financial reporting.

(a) *SF-269, Financial Status Report.* Unless stated differently in the award terms and conditions, a final SF-269, Financial Status Report, is due 90 days after the expiration of the award and should be submitted to the Awards Management Branch (AMB) at Awards Management Branch; Office of Extramural Programs, NIFA; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2271; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-2271. The awardee shall report program outlays and program income on the same accounting basis (*i.e.*, cash or accrual) that it uses in its normal accounting system. When submitting a final SF-269, Financial Status Report, the total matching contribution, if required, should be shown in the report. The final SF-269 must not show any unliquidated obligations. If the awardee still has valid obligations that remain unpaid when the report is due, it shall request an extension of time for submitting the report pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section; submit a provisional report (showing the unliquidated obligations) by the due date; and submit a final report when all obligations have been liquidated, but no later than the approved extension date. SF-269, Financial Status Reports, must be submitted by all awardees, including Federal agencies and national laboratories.

(b) *Awards with Required Matching.* For awards requiring a matching contribution, an annual SF-269, Financial Status Report, is required and this requirement will be indicated on the Award Face Sheet, Form -2009, in which case it must be submitted no later than 45 days following the end of the budget or reporting period.

(c) *Requests for an extension to submit a final SF-269, Financial Status Report—*
(1) *Before the due date.* Awardees may

request, prior to the end of the 90-day period following the award expiration date, an extension to submit a final SF-269, Financial Status Report. This request should include a provisional report pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, as well as an anticipated submission date and a justification for the late submission. Subject to §3430.63 or other statutory or agency policy limitations, funds will remain available for drawdown during this period.

(2) *After the due date.* Requests are considered late when they are submitted after the 90-day period following the award expiration date. Requests to submit a final SF-269, Financial Status Report, will only be considered, up to 30 days after the due date, in extenuating circumstances. This request should include a provisional report pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section, as well as an anticipated submission date, a justification for the late submission, and a justification for the extenuating circumstances. However, such requests are subject to §3430.63 or any other statutory or agency policy limitations. If an awardee needs to request additional funds, procedures in paragraph (d) of this section apply.

(d) *Overdue SF-269, Financial Status Reports.* Awardees with overdue SF-269, Financial Status Reports, or other required financial reports (as identified in the award terms and conditions), will have their applicable balances at DHHS-PMS, ASAP, or other electronic payment system restricted or placed on "manual review," which restricts the awardee's ability to draw funds, thus requiring prior approval from NIFA. If any remaining available balances are needed by the awardee (beyond the 90-day period following the award expiration date) and the awardee has not requested an extension to submit a final SF-269, Financial Status Report, the awardee will be required to contact AMB to request permission to draw any additional funds and will be required to provide justification and documentation to support the draw. Awardees also will need to comply with procedures in paragraph (c) of this section. AMB will approve these draw requests only in extenuating circumstances, as determined by NIFA.

(e) *SF-272, Federal Cash Transactions Report.* Awardees receiving electronic payments through DHHS-PMS are required to submit their SF-272, Federal Cash Transactions Report, via the DHHS-PMS by the specified dates. Failure to submit this quarterly report by the due date may result in funds being restricted by DHHS-PMS. Awardees not receiving payments through DHHS-PMS may be exempt from this reporting requirement.

(f) *Additional reporting requirements.* NIFA may require additional financial reporting requirements as follows: NIFA may require forecasts of Federal cash requirements in the "Remarks" section of the report; and when practical and deemed necessary, NIFA may require awardees to report in the "Remarks" section the amount of cash advances received in excess of three days (*i.e.*, short narrative with explanations of actions taken to reduce the excess balances). When NIFA needs additional information or more frequent reports, a special provision will be added to the award terms and conditions and identified on the Form NIFA-2009, Award Face Sheet. Should NIFA determine that an awardee's accounting system is inadequate, additional pertinent information to further monitor awards may be requested from the awardee until such time as the system is brought up to standard, as determined by NIFA. This additional reporting requirement will be required via a special provision to the award terms and conditions and identified on the Form -2009, Award Face Sheet.

§ 3430.57 Project meetings.

In addition to reviewing (and monitoring the status of) progress and final technical reports and financial reports, NIFA Program Officers may use regular and periodic conference calls to monitor the awardee's performance as well as PD conferences, workshops, meetings, and symposia to not only monitor the awards, but to facilitate communication and the sharing of project results. These opportunities also serve to eliminate or minimize NIFA funding unneeded duplicative project activities. Required attendance at these conference calls, conferences, workshops, meetings, and symposia

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will be identified in the RFA and the awardee should develop a proposal accordingly.

§ 3430.58 Prior approvals.

(a) *Subcontracts.* No more than 50 percent of the award may be subcontracted to other parties without prior written approval of the ADO except contracts to other Federal agencies. Any subcontract awarded to a Federal agency under an award must have prior written approval of the ADO. To request approval, a justification for the proposed subcontractual arrangements, a performance statement, and a detailed budget for the subcontract must be submitted to the ADO.

(b) *No-cost extensions of time—(1) General.* Awardees may initiate a one-time no-cost extension of the expiration date of the award of up to 12 months unless one or more of the following conditions apply: the terms and conditions of the award prohibit the extension; the extension requires additional Federal funds; and the extension involves any change in the approved objectives or scope of the project. For the first no-cost extension, the awardee must notify NIFA in writing with the supporting reasons and revised expiration date at least 10 days before the expiration date specified in the award.

(2) *Additional requests for no-cost extensions of time before expiration date.* When more than one no-cost extension of time or an extension of more than 12 months is required, the extension(s) must be approved in writing by the ADO. The awardee should prepare and submit a written request (which must be received no later than 10 days prior to the expiration date of the award) to the ADO. The request must contain, at a minimum, the following information: the length of the additional time required to complete the project objectives and a justification for the extension; a summary of the progress to date; an estimate of the funds expected to remain unobligated on the scheduled expiration date; a projected timetable to complete the portion(s) of the project for which the extension is being requested; and signature of the AR and the PD.

(3) *Requests for no-cost extensions of time after expiration date.* NIFA may

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consider and approve requests for no-cost extensions of time up to 120 days following the expiration of the award. These will be approved only for extenuating circumstances, as determined by NIFA. The awardee's AR must submit the requirements identified under paragraph (b)(2) of this section as well as an "extenuating circumstance" justification and a description of the actions taken by the awardee to minimize these requests in the future.

(4) *Other requirements.* No-cost extensions of time may not be exercised merely for the purpose of using unobligated balances. All extensions are subject to any statutory term limitations as well as any expiring appropriation limitations under § 3430.63.

§ 3430.59 Review of disallowed costs.

(a) *Notice.* If the NIFA Office of Extramural Programs (OEP) determines that there is a basis for disallowing a cost, NIFA OEP shall provide the awardee written notice of its intent to disallow the cost. The written notice shall state the amount of the cost and the factual and legal basis for disallowing it.

(b) *Awardee response.* Within 60 days of receiving written notice of NIFA OEP's intent to disallow the cost, the awardee may respond with written evidence and arguments to show the cost is allowable, or that, for equitable, practical, or other reasons, shall not recover all or part of the amount, or that the recovery should be made in installments. The 60-day time period may be extended for an additional 30 days upon written request by the awardee; however, such request for an extension of time must be made before the expiration of the 60-day time period specified in this paragraph. An extension of time will be granted only in extenuating circumstances.

(c) *Decision.* Within 60 days of receiving the awardee's written response to the notice of intent to disallow the cost, NIFA OEP shall issue a management decision stating whether or not the cost has been disallowed, the reasons for the decision, and the method of appeal that has been provided under this section. If the awardee does not respond to the written notice under paragraph (a) of this section within the

time frame specified in paragraph (b) of this section, NIFA OEP shall issue a management decision on the basis of the information available to it. The management decision shall constitute the final action with respect to whether the cost is allowed or disallowed. In the case of a questioned cost identified in the context of an audit subject to 7 CFR part 3052, the management decision will constitute the management decision under 7 CFR 3052.405(a).

(d) *Demand for payment.* If the management decision under paragraph (c) of this section constitutes a finding that the cost is disallowed and, therefore, that a debt is owed to the Government, NIFA OEP shall provide the required demand and notice pursuant to 7 CFR 3.11.

(e) *Review process.* Within 60 days of receiving the demand and notice referred to in paragraph (d) of this section, the awardee may submit a written request to the NIFA OEP Assistant Director for a review of the final management decision that the debt exists and the amount of the debt. Within 60 days of receiving the written request for a review, the NIFA OEP Deputy Administrator (or other senior NIFA official designated by the NIFA OEP Assistant Director) will issue a final decision regarding the debt. Review by the NIFA OEP Assistant Director or designee constitutes, and will be in accordance with, the administrative review procedures provided for debts under 7 CFR part 3, subpart F.

§ 3430.60 Suspension, termination, and withholding of support.

(a) *General.* If an awardee has failed to materially comply with the terms and conditions of the award, NIFA may take certain enforcement actions, including, but not limited to, suspending the award pending corrective action, terminating the award for cause, and withholding of support.

(b) *Suspension.* NIFA generally will suspend (rather than immediately terminate) an award to allow the awardee an opportunity to take appropriate corrective action before NIFA makes a termination decision. NIFA may decide to terminate the award if the awardee does not take appropriate corrective action during the period of suspension.

NIFA may terminate, without first suspending, the award if the deficiency is so serious as to warrant immediate termination. Termination for cause may be appealed under the NIFA award appeals procedures specified in § 3430.62.

(c) *Termination.* An award also may be terminated, partially or wholly, by the awardee or by NIFA with the consent of the awardee. If the awardee decides to terminate a portion of the award, NIFA may determine that the remaining portion of the award will not accomplish the purposes for which the award was originally made. In any such case, NIFA will advise the awardee of the possibility of termination of the entire award and allow the awardee to withdraw its termination request. If the awardee does not withdraw its request for partial termination, NIFA may initiate procedures to terminate the entire award for cause.

(d) *Withholding of support.* Withholding of support is a decision not to make a non-competing continuation award within the current competitive segment. Support may be withheld for one or more of the following reasons: Adequate Federal funds are not available to support the project; an awardee failed to show satisfactory progress in achieving the objectives of the project; an awardee failed to meet the terms and conditions of a previous award; or for whatever reason, continued funding would not be in the best interests of the Federal Government. If a non-competing continuation award is denied (withheld) because the awardee failed to comply with the terms and conditions of a previous award, the awardee may appeal that determination under § 3430.62.

§ 3430.61 Debt collection.

The collection of debts owed to NIFA by awardees, including those resulting from cost disallowances, recovery of funds, unobligated balances, or other circumstances, are subject to the Department's debt collection procedures as set forth in 7 CFR part 3, and, with respect to cost disallowances, § 3430.59.

§ 3430.62 Award appeals procedures.

(a) *General.* NIFA permits awardees to appeal certain post-award adverse administrative decisions made by

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NIFA. These include: termination, in whole or in part, of an award for failure of the awardee to carry out its approved project in accordance with the applicable law and the terms and conditions of award or for failure of the awardee otherwise to comply with any law, regulation, assurance, term, or condition applicable to the award; denial (withholding) of a non-competing continuation award for failure to comply with the terms of a previous award; and determination that an award is void (*i.e.*, a decision that an award is invalid because it was not authorized by statute or regulation or because it was fraudulently obtained). Appeals of determinations regarding the allowability of costs are subject to the procedures in § 3430.59.

(b) *Appeal Procedures.* The formal notification of an adverse determination will contain a statement of the awardee's appeal rights. As the first level in appealing an adverse determination, the awardee must submit a request for review to the NIFA official specified in the notification, detailing the nature of the disagreement with the adverse determination and providing supporting documents in accordance with the procedures contained in the notification. The awardee's request to NIFA for review must be received within 60 days after receipt of the written notification of the adverse determination; however, an extension may be granted if the awardee can show good cause why an extension is warranted.

(c) *Decision.* If the NIFA decision on the appeal is adverse to the awardee or if an awardee's request for review is rejected, the awardee then has the option of submitting a request to the NIFA OEP Assistant Director for further review. The decision of the NIFA OEP Assistant Director is considered final.

§ 3430.63 Expiring appropriations.

(a) *NIFA awards supported with agency appropriations.* Most NIFA awards are supported with annual appropriations. On September 30th of the 5th fiscal year after the period of availability for obligation ends, the funds for these appropriations accounts expire per 31 U.S.C. 1552 and the account is closed, unless otherwise specified by law. Funds that have not been drawn

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through DHHS–PMS, ASAP, or other electronic payment system by the awardee or disbursed through any other system or method by August 31st of that fiscal year are subject to be returned to the U.S. Department of the Treasury after that date. The August 31st requirement also applies to awards with a 90-day period concluding on a date after August 31st of that fifth year. Appropriations cannot be restored after expiration of the accounts. More specific instructions are provided in the NIFA award terms and conditions.

(b) *NIFA awards supported with funds from other Federal agencies (reimbursable funds).* NIFA may require that all draws and reimbursements for awards supported with reimbursable funds (from other Federal agencies) be completed prior to June 30th of the 5th fiscal year after the period of availability for obligation ends to allow for the proper billing, collection, and close-out of the associated interagency agreement before the appropriations expire. The June 30th requirement also applies to awards with a 90-day period concluding on a date after June 30th of that fifth year. Appropriations cannot be restored after expiration of the accounts. More specific instructions are provided in the NIFA award terms and conditions.

Subpart F—Specialty Crop Research Initiative

§ 3430.200 Applicability of regulations.

The regulations in this subpart apply to the program authorized under section 412 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7632).

§ 3430.201 Purpose.

(a) *Focus areas.* The purpose of this program is to address the critical needs of the specialty crop industry by developing and disseminating science-based tools to address needs of specific crops and their regions, including the following five focus areas:

- (1) Research in plant breeding, genetics, and genomics to improve crop characteristics, such as—
 - (i) Product, taste, quality, and appearance;

(ii) Environmental responses and tolerances;

(iii) Nutrient management, including plant nutrient uptake efficiency;

(iv) Pest and disease management, including resistance to pests and diseases resulting in reduced application management strategies; and

(v) Enhanced phytonutrient content.

(2) Efforts to identify and address threats from pests and diseases, including threats to specialty crop pollinators.

(3) Efforts to improve production efficiency, productivity, and profitability over the long term (including specialty crop policy and marketing).

(4) New innovations and technology, including improved mechanization and technologies that delay or inhibit ripening.

(5) Methods to prevent, detect, monitor, control, and respond to potential food safety hazards in the production and processing of specialty crops, including fresh produce.

(b) *Other*. NIFA will award research and extension, including integrated, grants to eligible institutions listed in § 3430.203. In addition to the focus areas identified in this section, NIFA may include additional activities or focus areas that will further address the critical needs of the specialty crop industry. Some of these activities or focus areas may be identified by stakeholder groups or by NIFA in response to emerging critical needs of the specialty crop industry.

§ 3430.202 Definitions.

The definitions applicable to the program under this subpart include:

Integrated project means a project that incorporates the research and extension components of the agricultural knowledge system around a problem area or activity.

Specialty crop means fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, and horticulture and nursery crops (including floriculture).

Trans-disciplinary means a multi-discipline approach that brings biological and physical scientists together with economists and social scientists to address challenges in a holistic manner.

§ 3430.203 Eligibility.

Eligible applicants for the grant program implemented under this subpart include: Federal agencies, national laboratories; colleges and universities (offering associate's or higher degrees); research institutions and organizations; private organizations or corporations; State agricultural experiment stations; individuals; and groups consisting of 2 or more entities identified in this sentence.

§ 3430.204 Project types and priorities.

For each RFA, NIFA may develop and include the appropriate project types and focus areas (in addition to the five focus areas identified in § 3430.201) based on the critical needs of the specialty crop industry as identified through stakeholder input and deemed appropriate by NIFA. Of the funds made available each fiscal year, not less than 10 percent of these funds shall be allocated for each of the five focus areas identified in § 3430.201. In making awards for this program, NIFA will give higher priority to projects that are multistate, multi-institutional, and multidisciplinary; and include explicit mechanisms to communicate the results to producers and the public.

§ 3430.205 Funding restrictions.

(a) *Prohibition against construction*. Funds made available under this subpart shall not be used for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

(b) *Indirect costs*. Subject to § 3430.54, indirect costs are allowable.

§ 3430.206 Matching requirements.

(a) *Requirement*. Grantees are required to provide funds or in-kind support from non-Federal sources in an amount that is at least equal to the amount provided by the Federal government. The matching contribution must be provided from non-Federal sources except when authorized by statute. The matching requirements under this subpart cannot be waived.

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(b) *Indirect costs.* Use of indirect costs as in-kind matching contributions is subject to § 3430.52.

§ 3430.207 Other considerations.

The term of a grant under this subpart shall not exceed 10 years.

Subpart G—Agriculture and Food Research Initiative

SOURCE: 75 FR 54761, Sept. 9, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3430.300 Applicability of regulations.

The regulations in this subpart apply to the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) authorized under section 2(b) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act (7 U.S.C. 450i(b)).

§ 3430.301 Purpose.

The purpose of this program is to make competitive grants for fundamental and applied research, extension, and education to address food and agricultural sciences, as defined under section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103).

§ 3430.302 Definitions.

The definitions applicable to the competitive grant programs under this subpart include:

Food and Agricultural Science Enhancement (FASE) awards means funding awarded to eligible applicants to strengthen science capabilities of Project Directors, to help institutions develop competitive scientific programs, and to attract new scientists into careers in high-priority areas of National need in agriculture, food, and environmental sciences. FASE awards may apply to any of the three agricultural knowledge components (*i.e.*, research, education, and extension). FASE awards include Pre- and Postdoctoral Fellowships, New Investigator grants, and Strengthening grants.

Limited institutional success means institutions that are not among the most successful universities and colleges for receiving Federal funds for science and engineering research. A list of success-

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ful institutions will be provided in the RFA.

Minority means Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian American, African-American, Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, or Pacific Islander. The Secretary will determine on a case-by-case basis whether additional groups qualify under this definition, either at the Secretary's initiative, or in response to a written request with supporting explanation.

Minority-serving institution means an accredited academic institution whose enrollment of a single minority or a combination of minorities exceeds fifty percent of the total enrollment, including graduate and undergraduate and full- and part-time students. An institution in this instance is an organization that is independently accredited as determined by reference to the current version of the *Higher Education Directory*, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042.

Multidisciplinary project means a project on which investigators from two or more disciplines collaborate to address a common problem. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences.

Small and mid-sized institutions means academic institutions with a current total enrollment of 17,500 or less, including graduate and undergraduate as well as full- and part-time students. An institution, in this instance, is an organization that possesses a significant degree of autonomy. Significant degree of autonomy is defined by being independently accredited as determined by reference to the current version of the *Higher Education Directory*, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042 (703-532-2300).

Strengthening grants means funds awarded to institutions eligible for FASE grants to enhance institutional capacity, with the goal of leading to future funding in the project area, as well as strengthening the competitiveness of the investigator's research, education, and/or extension activities.

Strengthening grants consist of standard and Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) grant types as well as seed grants, equipment grants, and sabbatical grants.

USDA EPSCoR States (Experimental Program for Stimulating Competitive Research) means States which have been less successful in receiving funding from AFRI, or its predecessor, the National Research Initiative (NRI), having a funding level no higher than the 38th percentile of all States based on a 3-year rolling average of AFRI and/or NRI funding levels, excluding FASE Strengthening funds granted to EPSCoR States, and small, mid-sized, and minority-serving degree-granting institutions. The most recent list of USDA EPSCoR States will be provided in the RFA.

§ 3430.303 Eligibility.

(a) *General.* Unless otherwise specified in the RFA or this subpart, eligible applicants for the grant program implemented under this subpart include:

- (1) State agricultural experiment stations;
- (2) Colleges and universities (including junior colleges offering an associate's degree);
- (3) University research foundations;
- (4) Other research institutions and organizations;
- (5) Federal agencies;
- (6) National laboratories;
- (7) Private organizations or corporations;
- (8) Individuals; and
- (9) Any group consisting of 2 or more entities identified in paragraphs (a)(1) through (8) of this section.

(b) *Integrated projects.* Eligible entities for the integrated component under this subpart include:

- (1) Colleges and universities;
- (2) 1994 Institutions; and
- (3) Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103).

(c) *FASE Grants.*

(1) *New investigator awards.* To be eligible to apply, a new investigator must be in the beginning of his/her career, without an extensive publication record, and must have less than 5 years

of postgraduate, career-track experience. To be eligible to receive a grant, the new investigator may not have received competitively awarded Federal funds, with the exception of pre- or postdoctoral awards or NRI/AFRI Seed Grants. The AFRI RFA will contain specific instructions for New Investigator Grant eligibility, restrictions, and application preparation.

(2) *Pre- and postdoctoral fellowships.* The following eligibility requirements apply to applicants for pre- and postdoctoral fellowships.

(i) The doctoral degree of the applicant must be received not earlier than January 1 of the calendar year three years prior to the submission of the proposal and not later than nine months after the proposal due date; and

(ii) For pre-doctoral applications, the applicant must have advanced to candidacy by the application deadline.

(3) *Strengthening grants.* Eligibility for all strengthening categories includes:

(i) Small and mid-sized academic institutions that have had limited institutional success;

(ii) Degree-granting institutions and State agricultural experiment stations (SAES) in USDA Experimental Program for Stimulating Competitive Research (EPSCoR) states; and

(iii) Minority-serving institutions with limited institutional success.

§ 3430.304 Project Types and priorities.

For each RFA, NIFA may develop and include the appropriate types of projects and focus areas to address the needs of scientists and educators in advanced or early stages of their careers and the differences in institutional capabilities. Types of projects will be revisited periodically based on stakeholder input and as deemed appropriate by NIFA. Types of projects under AFRI include, but are not limited to, the following.

(a) *Project Types.*

(1) *Research projects.* Single-function fundamental and applied Research Projects are conducted by individual investigators, co-investigators within the same discipline, or multidisciplinary teams.

(2) *Education projects.* Single-function Education Projects provide funding to conduct classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related educational matters. Projects may include faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methods.

(3) *Extension Projects.* Single-function Extension Projects provide funding for programs and activities that deliver science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions.

(4) *Integrated Projects.* Multifunction Integrated Projects bring together at least two of the three components of the agricultural knowledge system (*i.e.*, research, education, and extension) around a problem or issue. The functions addressed in the project should be interwoven throughout the life of the project and act to complement and reinforce one another. The proposed research component of an Integrated Project should address knowledge gaps that are critical to the development of practices and programs to address the stated problem. The proposed education component of an Integrated Project should strengthen institutional capacities and result in curricula and related products that will be sustained beyond the life of the project. The proposed extension component of an Integrated Project should lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions in an identified audience or stakeholder group. Appropriate project activities will be discussed in the RFA.

(b) *Grant Types.*

(1) *Standard Grants.* Standard Grants support targeted, original scientific Research, Education, Extension, or Integrated Projects.

(2) *Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) Grants.* A CAP is a type of Research, Education, Extension, or Integrated Project that supports large-scale multi-million dollar projects that promote collaboration, open communication, and the exchange of information; reduce duplication of effort; and coordinate activities among individ-

uals, institutions, States, and regions. Integrated CAP grants address problems through multi-function projects that incorporate at least two of the three components of the agricultural knowledge system (*i.e.*, research, extension and education). Please note that there occasionally may be programs in which an Integrated CAP Grant is required to address all three components of the agricultural knowledge system. In a CAP, participants serve as a team that conducts targeted research, education and/or extension in response to emerging or priority area(s) of national need. A CAP contains the needed science-based expertise in research, education, and/or extension, as well as expertise from principle stakeholders and partners, to accomplish project goals and objectives.

(3) *Planning/Coordination Grants.* Planning/Coordination Grants provide assistance to applicants in the development of quality future CAP applications. Applications must articulate benefits accrued from formal planning activities and provide evidence of a high likelihood that quality future applications will be submitted. These activities can take the form of workshops or symposia that bring together biological, physical, and social scientists and others as appropriate, including end-users and technology providers, to identify research, education, and/or extension needs, foster collaboration, and create networking opportunities. These events and the information they generate should be used to build teams that can develop applications to address priorities identified in the RFA.

(4) *Conference grants.* AFRI provides partial or total funding for a limited number of scientific meetings that bring together scientists to identify research, education, or extension needs within the scope of AFRI.

(5) *FASE Grants.*

(i) *General.* FASE Grants are designed to help institutions develop competitive Research, Education, Extension, and Integrated Projects and to attract new scientists into careers in high-priority areas in agriculture, food, and environmental sciences. The FASE

grants provide funding for new investigators, pre- and postdoctoral fellowships, and strengthening grants. FASE grants will be awarded as follows:

(A) To an institution to allow for the improvement of the research, development, technology transfer, education, and extension capacity of the institution through the acquisition of special research equipment and the improvement of agricultural research, education, and extension;

(B) To single investigators or co-investigators who are beginning research, education, or extension careers and do not have an extensive publication record;

(C) To ensure that the faculty of small, mid-sized, and minority-serving institutions who have not previously been successful in obtaining competitive grants under this subsection receive a portion of the grants; and

(D) To improve research, extension, and education capabilities in USDA EPSCoR States, as defined in § 3430.302.

(ii) *Types of FASE Grants.*

(A) *New Investigator Grant.* These awards support Project Directors who meet the eligibility criteria of § 3430.303.

(B) *Pre- and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants.* Doctoral candidates and individuals who recently have received or will soon receive their doctoral degree, and meet the eligibility criteria of § 3430.303, may submit proposals for pre- and postdoctoral fellowships.

(C) *Strengthening Grants.* Strengthening awards consist of the following four types of grants.

(1) *Strengthening Standard and CAP Grant.* These grants provide funding to eligible entities, as defined in § 3430.303, who submitted meritorious Standard Grant or CAP Grant applications that were highly ranked but were below the funding line.

(2) *Equipment Grant.* These grants provide funding for the purchase of one major piece of equipment. The amount requested shall not exceed 50 percent of the cost of the equipment. Unless eligible for a waiver (as described in § 3430.306(b)(2)), the Project Director is responsible for securing the required non-Federal funds. No installation, maintenance, warranty, or insurance expenses may be paid from these

awards, nor may these costs be part of the matching funds.

(3) *Seed Grant.* A Seed grant is intended to provide funds to enable investigators to collect preliminary data in preparation for applying for a Standard Research, Standard Education, Standard Extension, or Integrated Grant. The grants are not intended to fund stand-alone projects, but rather projects that will lead to further work applicable to one of the priority areas in AFRI.

(4) *Sabbatical grants.* A Sabbatical grant is intended to provide an opportunity for faculty to enhance their capabilities through sabbatical leaves.

§ 3430.305 Funding restrictions.

(a) *Construction.* Funds made available under this subpart shall not be used for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

(b) *Indirect costs.* Subject to § 3430.54, indirect costs are allowable. However, indirect costs are not allowed on pre- and postdoctoral grants, equipment grants, or conference grants.

§ 3430.306 Matching requirements.

(a) *General.* Matching funds are not required as a condition of receiving grants under this subpart except as provided in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section.

(b) *Indirect costs.* Use of indirect costs as in-kind matching contributions is subject to § 3430.52(b).

(c) *Equipment grants.*

(1) Except as provided in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the amount of an equipment grant may not exceed 50 percent of the cost of the special research equipment or other equipment acquired using funds from the grant.

(2) *Waiver.* The Secretary may waive all or part of the matching requirement under paragraph (c)(1) of this section in the case of a college, university, or research foundation maintained by a college or university that ranks in the lowest 1/3 of such colleges, universities, and research foundations on the basis of Federal research funds received, if the equipment to be acquired using

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funds from the grant costs not more than \$25,000, and has multiple uses within a single project or is usable in more than 1 project.

(d) *Applied research grants.* As a condition of making a grant for applied research, the Secretary shall require the funding of the grant to be matched with equal matching funds from a non-Federal source if the grant is for applied research that is:

- (1) Commodity-specific; and
- (2) Not of national scope.

§ 3430.307 Coordination and stakeholder input requirements.

(a) *Stakeholder input.* In making grants under this Part, NIFA shall solicit and consider input from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, extension, or education in accordance with section 102(b) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7612(b)).

(b) *Allocation of funds to high-priority research.* To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary, in coordination with the Under Secretary, shall allocate grants under this subpart to high-priority research as defined in section 1672 of Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, 7 U.S.C. 5925. NIFA shall take into consideration, when available, the determinations made by the Advisory Board.

§ 3430.308 Duration of awards.

The Secretary may set award limits up to 10 years based on priorities and stakeholder input, subject to other statutory limitations. The duration of individual awards may vary as specified in the RFA and is subject to the availability of appropriations.

§ 3430.309 Priority areas.

NIFA will award competitive grants in the following areas:

(a) Plant health and production and plant products. Plant systems, including:

- (1) Plant genome structure and function;
- (2) Molecular and cellular genetics and plant biotechnology;
- (3) Conventional breeding, including cultivar and breed development, selection theory, applied quantitative ge-

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netics, breeding for improved food quality, breeding for improved local adaptation to biotic stress and abiotic stress, and participatory breeding;

- (4) Plant-pest interactions and bio-control systems;
- (5) Crop plant response to environmental stresses;
- (6) Unproved nutrient qualities of plant products; and
- (7) New food and industrial uses of plant products.

(b) Animal health and production and animal products. Animal systems, including:

- (1) Aquaculture;
- (2) Cellular and molecular basis of animal reproduction, growth, disease, and health;
- (3) Animal biotechnology;
- (4) Conventional breeding, including breed development, selection theory, applied quantitative genetics, breeding for improved food quality, breeding for improved local adaptation to biotic stress and abiotic stress, and participatory breeding;
- (5) Identification of genes responsible for improved production traits and resistance to disease;
- (6) Improved nutritional performance of animals;
- (7) Improved nutrient qualities of animal products and uses; and
- (8) The development of new and improved animal husbandry and production systems that take into account production efficiency, animal well-being, and animal systems applicable to aquaculture.

(c) Food safety, nutrition, and health. Nutrition, food safety and quality, and health, including:

- (1) Microbial contaminants and pesticides residue relating to human health;
 - (2) Links between diet and health;
 - (3) Bioavailability of nutrients;
 - (4) Postharvest physiology and practices; and
 - (5) Improved processing technologies.
- (d) Renewable energy, natural resources, and environment. Natural resources and the environment, including:
- (1) Fundamental structures and functions of ecosystems;
 - (2) Biological and physical bases of sustainable production systems;

(3) Minimizing soil and water losses and sustaining surface water and ground water quality;

(4) Global climate effects on agriculture;

(5) Forestry; and

(6) Biological diversity.

(e) Agriculture systems and technology. Engineering, products, and processes, including:

(1) New uses and new products from traditional and nontraditional crops, animals, byproducts, and natural resources;

(2) Robotics, energy efficiency, computing, and expert systems;

(3) New hazard and risk assessment and mitigation measures; and

(4) Water quality and management.

(f) Agriculture economics and rural communities. Markets, trade, and policy, including:

(1) Strategies for entering into and being competitive in domestic and overseas markets;

(2) Farm efficiency and profitability, including the viability and competitiveness of small and medium-sized dairy, livestock, crop and other commodity operations;

(3) New decision tools for farm and market systems;

(4) Choices and applications of technology;

(5) Technology assessment; and

(6) New approaches to rural development, including rural entrepreneurship.

§ 3430.310 Allocation of AFRI funds.

(a) *General.* The Secretary shall decide the allocation of funds among research, education, extension, and integrated multifunctional projects in an appropriate manner and in accordance with the allocation restrictions found in this section.

(b) *Integrated programs.* Not less than 30 percent of funds allocated to AFRI each fiscal year shall be used to fund integrated programs.

(c) *FASE awards.*

(1) Each fiscal year, a percentage of AFRI funding (no less than 10 percent of the available funding) will be awarded as FASE awards. This percentage requirement may be adjusted by the Secretary based upon priorities and stakeholder input.

(2) The Secretary shall use not less than 25 percent of the funds made available for FASE grants to provide fellowships to outstanding pre- and postdoctoral students for research in the agricultural sciences.

(d) *Rapid Response Food and Agricultural Science for Emergency Issues Awards.* The Secretary may allocate some funding to address emergency issues in the food and agricultural sciences as determined by the Secretary. Letters of intent and applications may be requested, as appropriate. Although the solicitation and award processes may be expedited for these awards, NIFA will adhere to AFRI peer review and competitive requirements of this subpart.

§ 3430.311 Allocation of research funds.

(a) *Fundamental research.* Of the amount allocated by the Director for research, not less than 60 percent shall be used to make grants for fundamental research (as defined in subsection (f)(1) of section 251 of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6971)).

(1) *Research by multidisciplinary teams.* Of the amount allocated by the Director for fundamental research under this paragraph (a), not less than 30 percent shall be made available to make grants for research to be conducted by multidisciplinary teams.

(2) *Equipment grants.* Of the amount allocated by the Director for fundamental research under this paragraph (a) not more than 2 percent shall be used for equipment grants.

(b) *Applied research.* Of the amount allocated by the Director for research, not less than 40 percent shall be made available to make grants for applied research.

§ 3430.312 Emphasis on sustainable agriculture.

NIFA shall ensure that grants made under this subpart are, where appropriate, consistent with the development of systems of sustainable agriculture as defined in section 1404 of NARETPA.

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**Subpart H—Organic Agriculture
Research and Extension Initiative**

SOURCE: 75 FR 54761, Sept. 9, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3430.400 Applicability of regulations.

The regulations in this subpart apply to the program authorized under section 1672B of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (FACT Act), as amended by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA), Public Law 110-246 (7 U.S.C. 5925b).

§ 3430.401 Purpose.

(a) The purpose of this program is to make competitive grants, in consultation with the Advisory Board, to support research and extension activities regarding organically grown and processed agricultural commodities.

(b) Grants may be made for the following purposes:

(1) Facilitating the development of organic agriculture production, breeding, and processing methods;

(2) Evaluating the potential economic benefits to producers and processors who use organic methods;

(3) Exploring international trade opportunities for organically grown and processed agricultural commodities;

(4) Determining desirable traits for organic commodities;

(5) Identifying marketing and policy constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture;

(6) Conducting advanced on-farm research and development that emphasizes observation of, experimentation with, and innovation for working organic farms, including research relating to production and marketing and to socioeconomic conditions;

(7) Examining optimal conservation and environmental outcomes relating to organically produced agricultural products; and

(8) Developing new and improved seed varieties that are particularly suited for organic agriculture.

§ 3430.402 Definitions.

The definitions applicable to the competitive grant programs under this subpart include:

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Integrated project means a project that incorporates the research and extension components of the agricultural knowledge system around a problem or activity.

§ 3430.403 Eligibility.

Unless otherwise specified in the RFA, eligible applicants for the grant program implemented under this subpart include:

(a) State agricultural experiment stations;

(b) Colleges and universities (including junior colleges offering an associate's degree);

(c) University research foundations;

(d) Other research institutions and organizations;

(e) Federal agencies;

(f) National laboratories;

(g) Private organizations or corporations;

(h) Individuals; and

(i) Any group consisting of 2 or more entities identified in paragraphs (a) through (i) of this section.

§ 3430.404 Project types and priorities.

For each RFA, NIFA may develop and include the appropriate project types and priority areas based on stakeholder input and as deemed appropriate by NIFA. Duration and amount of grants may vary depending on the type of project.

§ 3430.405 Funding restrictions.

(a) *Construction.* Funds made available for grants under this subsection shall not be used for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

(b) *Indirect costs.* Subject to § 3430.54, indirect costs are allowable.

(c) *Start-up businesses.* NIFA does not fund start-up businesses under this subpart.

§ 3430.406 Matching requirements.

(a) *In general.* NIFA requires the recipient of a grant under this section to provide funds or in-kind support from non-Federal sources in an amount at least equal to the amount provided by the Federal Government.

(b) *Indirect costs.* Use of indirect costs as in-kind matching contributions is subject to § 3430.52(b).

(c) *Waiver authority.* NIFA may waive the matching requirement specified in paragraph (a) of this section with respect to a grant if NIFA determines that:

(1) The results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or

(2) When all three of the following conditions are present:

(i) The project involves a minor commodity,

(ii) The project deals with scientifically important research, and

(iii) The grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.

§ 3430.407 Program requirements.

Following the completion of a peer review process for grant proposals received under this subpart, the Director may provide a priority for those proposals, found in the peer review process to be scientifically meritorious, that involve the cooperation of multiple entities.

Subpart I—Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program

SOURCE: 75 FR 54761, Sept. 9, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3430.500 Applicability of regulations.

The regulations in this subpart apply to the program authorized under section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA), 7 U.S.C. 7626, as amended by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA), Public Law 110-246.

§ 3430.501 Purpose.

The purpose of this subpart is to make competitive grants for integrated, multifunctional agricultural research, extension, and education activities.

§ 3430.502 Definitions.

The definitions applicable to the competitive grant programs under this subpart include:

Integrated program means a program that brings the three agricultural knowledge components (*i.e.*, research, extension, and education) together around a problem or activity through the award of integrated projects and single component projects.

Integrated project means a project that brings at least two out of three agricultural knowledge components (*i.e.*, research, extension, and education) together around a problem or activity.

§ 3430.503 Eligibility.

The following entities are eligible to apply for and receive a grant under this subpart:

(a) Colleges and universities;

(b) 1994 Institutions; and

(c) Hispanic-serving agricultural colleges and universities (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103), and in the RFA).

§ 3430.504 Project types and priorities.

For each RFA, NIFA may develop and include the appropriate project types and priority areas based on stakeholder input and as deemed appropriate by NIFA, in consultation with the Advisory Board, and that involve integrated research, extension, and education activities. Duration and amount of grants may vary depending on the type of project.

§ 3430.505 Funding restrictions.

(a) *Construction.* Funds made available for grants under this subsection shall not be used for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

(b) *Indirect Costs.* Subject to § 3430.54, indirect costs are allowable.

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§ 3430.506 Matching requirements.

(a) *General requirement.* If a grant under this subpart provides a particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, the recipient of the grant is required to provide funds or in-kind support to match the amount of funds provided by NIFA.

(b) *Indirect costs.* Use of indirect costs as in-kind matching contributions is subject to §3430.52(b).

(c) *Waiver authority.* NIFA may waive the matching requirement specified in paragraph (a) of this section with respect to a grant if NIFA determines that:

(1) The results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or

(2) When all three of the following conditions are present:

(i) The project involves a minor commodity,

(ii) The project deals with scientifically important research, and

(iii) The grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.

§ 3430.507 Program requirements.

(a) *General.* Grants under this subpart shall address priorities in the United States agriculture that involve integrated research, extension, and education activities as determined by the Secretary through Agency stakeholder input processes and in consultation with the Advisory Board.

(b) *Duration of awards.* The term of a grant under this subpart may not exceed 5 years.

Subpart J—Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

SOURCE: 74 FR 45970, Sept. 4, 2009, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3430.600 Applicability of regulations.

The regulations in this subpart apply to the program authorized under section 7405 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f).

§ 3430.601 Purpose.

The purpose of the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) is to establish a beginning farmer and rancher development program that provides local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers.

§ 3430.602 Definitions.

The definitions applicable to the program under this subpart include:

Beginning farmer or rancher means a person that has not operated a farm or ranch or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years, and meets such other criteria as the Secretary may establish.

Clearinghouse means an online repository that will make available to beginning farmers or ranchers education curricula and training materials and programs, and which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.

Limited resource beginning farmers or ranchers means beginning farmers or ranchers who have: (1) direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the sales amount established by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in each of the previous two years (in current dollars, adjusted for inflation each year, based on the October 2002 Prices Paid by Farmer Index compiled and updated annually by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), and (2) a total household income at or below the National Poverty Level for a family of four or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous 2 years as determined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), using the Census Poverty Data.

Outcome-based reporting means reporting that includes an outcome statement with performance targets, necessary milestones, beneficiary engagement, key individuals, and verification.

[74 FR 45970, Sept. 4, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 35323, June 17, 2011]

§ 3430.603 Eligibility.

To be eligible to receive an award under this subpart, the recipient shall be a collaborative State, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities, including:

- (a) A State cooperative extension service;
- (b) A Federal, State, or tribal agency;
- (c) A community-based and non-governmental organization;
- (d) A college or university (including a junior college offering an associate's degree) or foundation maintained by a college or university;
- (e) A private for-profit organization;
- or
- (f) Any other appropriate partner, as determined by the Secretary.

§ 3430.604 Project types and priorities.

(a) *Standard BFRDP projects.* For standard BFRDP projects, competitive grants will be awarded to support programs and services, as appropriate, relating to the following focus areas and activities:

- (1) Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships.
- (2) Resources and referral.
- (3) Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers.
- (4) Innovative farm and ranch transfer strategies.
- (5) Entrepreneurship and business training.
- (6) Model land leasing contracts.
- (7) Financial management training.
- (8) Whole farm planning.
- (9) New and emerging issues, facing farmers and ranchers, including climate change and changing world markets.
- (10) Conservation assistance.
- (11) Risk management education.
- (12) Diversification and marketing strategies.
- (13) Curriculum development.
- (14) Understanding the impact of concentration and globalization.
- (15) Basic livestock and crop farming practices, forestry and range management.
- (16) Acquisition and management of agricultural credit.
- (17) Environmental compliance.
- (18) Information processing.

(19) Tax management, including record keeping and tax form preparation.

(20) Basic agricultural law.

(21) Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.

NIFA may include additional activities or focus areas that further address the critical needs of beginning farmers and ranchers as defined in this subpart. Some of these activities or focus areas may be identified by stakeholder groups or by NIFA in response to emerging critical needs of the Nation's farmers and ranchers.

(b) *Other BFRDP Projects.* In addition to the competitive grants made under paragraph (a) of this section, competitive awards (grants or cooperative agreements) will be made:

(1) to establish beginner farmer and rancher educational enhancement projects that develop curricula and conduct educational programs and workshops for beginning farmers or ranchers in diverse geographical areas of the United States; and

(2) to establish and maintain an online clearinghouse.

[74 FR 45970, Sept. 4, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 35323, June 17, 2011]

§ 3430.605 Funding restrictions.

(a) *Facility costs.* Funds made available under this subpart shall not be used for the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility.

(b) *Indirect costs.* Subject to § 3430.5460, indirect costs are allowable.

(c) *Participation by other farmers and ranchers.* Projects may allow farmers and ranchers who are not beginning farmers and ranchers to participate in the programs funded under this subpart if their participation is appropriate and will not detract from the primary purpose of educating beginning farmers and ranchers as defined under this subpart.

§ 3430.606 Matching requirements.

(a) *Requirement.* Awardees are required to provide a match in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to 25 percent of the Federal funds provided by the award. The matching funds must be from non-Federal sources except when

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authorized by statute. The matching requirements under this subpart cannot be waived.

(b) *Indirect costs.* Use of indirect costs as in-kind matching contributions is subject to § 3430.52.

§ 3430.607 Stakeholder input.

NIFA shall seek and obtain stakeholder input through a variety of forums (e.g., public meetings, request for input and/or via Web site), as well as through a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER, from the following entities:

(a) Beginning farmers and ranchers.

(b) National, State, tribal, and local organizations, community-based organizations, and other persons with expertise in operating beginning farmer and rancher programs.

(c) The Advisory Committee on Beginning Farmers and Ranchers established under section 5 of the Agricultural Credit Improvement Act of 1992 (7 U.S.C. 1929 note; Pub. L. 102-554).

§ 3430.608 Review criteria.

(a) *Evaluation criteria.* NIFA shall evaluate project proposals according to the following factors:

(1) Relevancy.

(2) Technical merit.

(3) Achievability.

(4) The expertise and track record of one or more applicants.

(5) The adequacy of plans for the participatory evaluation process, outcome-based reporting, and the communication of findings and results beyond the immediate target audience.

(6) Other appropriate factors, as determined by the Secretary.

(b) *Partnership and collaboration.* In making awards under this subpart, NIFA shall give priority to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental and community-based organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach.

(c) *Regional balance.* In making awards under this subpart, NIFA shall, to the maximum extent practicable, ensure geographical diversity.

§ 3430.609 Other considerations.

(a) *Set aside.* Each fiscal year, NIFA shall set aside at least 25 percent of the funds used to support the standard

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BFRDP projects under this subpart to support programs and services that address the needs of the following groups:

(1) Limited resource beginning farmers or ranchers (as defined in § 3430.602).

(2) Socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers (as defined in section 355(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 2003(e)).

(3) Farm workers (including immigrant farm workers) desiring to become farmers or ranchers.

(b) *Consecutive awards.* An eligible recipient may receive a consecutive grant for a standard BFRDP project under this subpart.

(c) *Duration of awards.* The term of a grant for a standard BFRDP project and an award for an educational enhancement team project under this subpart shall not exceed 3 years. Awards for all other projects under this subpart shall not exceed 5 years. No-cost extensions of time beyond the maximum award terms will not be considered or granted.

(d) *Amount of grants.* A grant for a standard BFRDP project and an award for an educational enhancement team project under this subpart shall not be in an amount that is more than \$250,000 for each year.

[74 FR 45970, Sept. 4, 2009, as amended at 76 FR 35323, June 17, 2011]

Subpart K—Biomass Research and Development Initiative

SOURCE: 75 FR 33498, June 14, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3430.700 Applicability of regulations.

The regulations in this subpart apply to the Federal assistance awards made under the program authorized under section 9008 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8108), as amended by section 9001 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub. L. 110-246).

[76 FR 38549, July 1, 2011]

§ 3430.701 Purpose.

In carrying out the program, NIFA, in cooperation with the Department of

Energy, is authorized to make competitive awards under section 9008(e) of FSRIA (7 U.S.C. 8108(e)) to develop:

(a) Technologies and processes necessary for abundant commercial production of biofuels at prices competitive with fossil fuels;

(b) High-value biobased products—

(1) To enhance the economic viability of biofuels and power,

(2) To serve as substitutes for petroleum-based feedstocks and products, and

(3) To enhance the value of coproducts produced using the technologies and processes; and

(c) A diversity of economically and environmentally sustainable domestic sources of renewable biomass for conversion to biofuels, bioenergy, and biobased products.

[75 FR 33498, June 14, 2010, as amended at 76 FR 38549, July 1, 2011]

§ 3430.702 Definitions.

The definitions specific to BRDI are from the authorizing legislation, the National Program Leadership of NIFA, and the Department of Energy. The definitions applicable to the program under this subpart include:

Advanced Biofuel means fuel derived from renewable biomass other than corn kernel starch, including:

(1) Biofuel derived from cellulose, hemicellulose, or lignin;

(2) Biofuel derived from sugar and starch (other than ethanol derived from corn kernel starch);

(3) Biofuel derived from waste material, including crop residue, other vegetative waste material, animal waste, food waste, and yard waste;

(4) Diesel-equivalent fuel derived from renewable biomass, including algal oils, oil seed crops, re-claimed vegetable oils and animal fat;

(5) Biogas (including landfill gas and sewage waste treatment gas) produced through the conversion of organic matter from renewable biomass;

(6) Butanol or other alcohols produced through the conversion of organic matter from renewable biomass; and

(7) Other fuel derived from cellulosic biomass.

Advisory Committee means the Biomass Research and Development Tech-

nical Advisory Committee established by section 9008(d) of FSRIA (7 U.S.C. 8108(d)).

Biobased Product means:

(1) An industrial product (including chemicals, materials, and polymers) produced from biomass; or

(2) A commercial or industrial product (including animal feed and electric power) derived in connection with the conversion of biomass to fuel.

Bioenergy means power generated in the form of electricity or heat using biomass as a feedstock.

Biofuel means a fuel derived from renewable biomass.

Biomass Conversion Facility means a facility that converts or proposes to convert renewable biomass into:

(1) Heat;

(2) Power;

(3) Biobased products; or

(4) Advanced biofuels.

Biorefinery means a facility (including equipment and processes) that—

(1) Converts renewable biomass into biofuels and biobased products; and

(2) May produce electricity.

Board means the Biomass Research and Development Board established by section 9008(c) of the FSRIA of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8108(c)).

BRDI means the Biomass Research and Development Initiative.

Cellulosic Biofuel means renewable fuel derived from any cellulose, hemicellulose, or lignin that is derived from renewable biomass and that has lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions, as determined by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, that are at least 60 percent less than the baseline lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions.

Demonstration means demonstration of technology in a pilot plant or semi-works scale facility, including a plant or facility located on a farm. A biorefinery demonstration is a system capable of processing a minimum of 50 tons/day of biomass feedstock.

DOE means the Department of Energy.

Institutions of higher education has the meaning given the term in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(a)).

Intermediate Ingredient or Feedstock means a material or compound made in

whole or in significant part from biological products, including renewable agricultural materials (including plant, animal, and marine materials) or forestry materials, that are subsequently used to make a more complex compound or product.

Life cycle assessment means the comprehensive examination of a product's environmental and economic aspects and potential impacts throughout its lifetime, including raw material extraction, transportation, manufacturing, use, and disposal.

Life cycle cost means the amortized annual cost of a product, including capital costs, installation costs, operating costs, maintenance costs, and disposal costs discounted over the lifetime of the product.

Pilot Plant is an integrated chemical processing system that includes the processing units necessary to convert biomass feedstock into biofuels/bioenergy/biobased products at a minimum feed rate of 1 ton/day of biomass feedstock.

Private sector entities include companies, corporations, farms, ranches, cooperatives, and others that compete in the marketplace.

Recovered materials means waste materials and by-products that have been recovered or diverted from solid waste, but such term does not include those materials and by-products generated from, and commonly reused within, an original manufacturing process (42 U.S.C. 6903 (19)).

Recycling means the series of activities, including collection, separation, and processing, by which products or other materials are recovered from the solid waste stream for use in the form of raw materials in the manufacture of new products other than fuel for producing heat or power by combustion.

Renewable Biomass means:

(1) Materials, pre-commercial thinnings, or invasive species from National Forest System land (as defined in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)) and public lands (as defined in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702)) that—

(i) Are byproducts of preventive treatments that are removed to reduce hazardous fuels; to reduce or contain disease or insect infestation; or to restore ecosystem health;

(ii) Would not otherwise be used for higher-value products; and

(iii) Are harvested in accordance with applicable law and land management plans; and the requirements for—

(A) Old-growth maintenance, restoration, and management direction of paragraphs (2), (3), and (4) of subsection (e) of section 102 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6512); and

(B) Large-tree retention of subsection (f) of section 102 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6512); or

(2) Any organic matter that is available on a renewable or recurring basis from non-Federal land or land belonging to an Indian or Indian tribe that is held in trust by the United States or subject to a restriction against alienation imposed by the United States, including—

(i) Renewable plant material, including feed grains; other agricultural commodities; other plants and trees; and algae; and

(ii) Waste material, including crop residue; other vegetative waste material (including wood waste and wood residues); animal waste and byproducts (including fats, oils, greases, and manure); and food waste and yard waste.

Research and development (R&D) projects means a research project only, a development project only, or a combination of research and development project; however, an R&D project may not be submitted including a demonstration project or vice versa.

Semi-works is a combination of chemical processing units that constitute a subset of the fully integrated system and are used to develop process flow diagrams and mass and energy balances for the purposes of scaling up to a demonstration scale facility.

Transportation fuel means fuel for use in motor vehicles, motor vehicle engines, non-road vehicles, or non-road engines (except for ocean-going vessels).

[75 FR 33498, June 14, 2010, as amended at 76 FR 38549, July 1, 2011]

§ 3430.703 Eligibility.

To be eligible to receive an award under this subpart, the recipient shall be—

- (a) An institution of higher education (as defined in § 3430.702);
- (b) A National Laboratory;
- (c) A Federal research agency;
- (d) A State research agency;
- (e) A private sector entity (as defined in § 3430.702 of this part);
- (f) A nonprofit organization; or
- (g) A consortium of two or more entities listed in paragraphs (a) through (f) of this section.

§ 3430.704 Project types and priorities.

(a) *Technical Topic Areas.* Biomass Research and Development Initiative (BRDI) awards shall be directed (in consultation with the Biomass Research and Development Board, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and heads of other appropriate departments and agencies) in the following three primary technical topic areas:

(1) *Feedstocks Development.* Research, development, and demonstration activities regarding feedstocks and feedstock logistics (including the harvest, handling, transport, preprocessing, and storage) relevant to production of raw materials for conversion to biofuels and biobased products.

(2) *Biofuels and Biobased Products Development.* Research, development, and demonstration activities to support—

(i) The development of diverse cost-effective technologies for the use of cellulosic biomass in the production of biofuels and biobased products; and

(ii) Product diversification through technologies relevant to production of a range of biobased products (including chemicals, animal feeds, and cogenerated power) that potentially can increase the feasibility of fuel production in a biorefinery.

(3) *Biofuels Development Analysis—(i) Strategic Guidance.* The development of analysis that provides strategic guidance for the application of renewable biomass technologies to improve sustainability and environmental quality, cost effectiveness, security, and rural economic development.

(ii) *Energy and Environmental Impact.* Development of systematic evaluations

of the impact of expanded biofuel production on the environment (including forest land) and on the food supply for humans and animals, including the improvement and development of tools for life cycle analysis of current and potential biofuels.

(iii) *Assessment of Federal Land.* Assessments of the potential of Federal land resources to increase the production of feedstocks for biofuels and biobased products, consistent with the integrity of soil and water resources and with other environmental considerations.

(b) *Additional considerations.* Within the technical topic areas described in paragraph (a) of this section, NIFA, in cooperation with DOE, shall support research and development to—

(1) Create continuously expanding opportunities for participants in existing biofuels production by seeking synergies and continuity with current technologies and practices;

(2) Maximize the environmental, economic, and social benefits of production of biofuels and derived biobased products on a large scale; and

(3) Facilitate small-scale production and local and on-farm use of biofuels, including the development of smallscale gasification technologies for production of biofuel from cellulosic feedstocks.

[75 FR 33498, June 14, 2010, as amended at 76 FR 38549, July 1, 2011]

§ 3430.705 Funding restrictions.

(a) *Facility costs.* Funds made available under this subpart shall not be used for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

(b) *Indirect costs.* Subject to § 3430.54, indirect costs are allowable for Federal assistance awards made by NIFA.

(c) *Minimum allocations.* After consultation with the Board, NIFA in cooperation with DOE, shall require that each of the three technical topic areas described in § 3430.704(a) receives not less than 15 percent of funds made available to carry out BRDI.

[76 FR 38549, July 1, 2011]

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§ 3430.706 Matching requirements.

(a) *Requirement for Research and/or Development Projects.* The non-Federal share of the cost of a research or development project under BRDI shall be not less than 20 percent. NIFA may reduce the non-Federal share of a research or development project if the reduction is determined to be necessary and appropriate.

(b) *Requirement for Demonstration and Commercial Projects.* The non-Federal share of the cost of a demonstration or commercial project under BRDI shall be not less than 50 percent.

(c) *Indirect costs.* Use of indirect costs as in-kind matching contributions is subject to § 3430.52 of this part.

[75 FR 33498, June 14, 2010, as amended at 76 FR 38549, July 1, 2011]

§ 3430.707 Administrative duties.

(a) After consultation with the Board, NIFA, in cooperation with DOE, shall:

(1) Publish annually one or more joint requests for proposals for Federal assistance under BRDI; and

(2) Require that Federal assistance under BRDI be awarded based on a scientific peer review by an independent panel of scientific and technical peers.

(b) NIFA, in cooperation with DOE, shall ensure that applicable research results and technologies from the BRDI are:

(1) Adapted, made available, and disseminated, as appropriate; and

(2) Included in the best practices database established under section 1672C(e) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925e(e)).

[75 FR 33498, June 14, 2010, as amended at 76 FR 38549, July 1, 2011]

§ 3430.708 Review criteria.

(a) *General.* BRDI peer reviews of applications are conducted in accordance with requirements found in section 9008 of FSRIA (7 U.S.C. 8108); section 103 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613); and regulations found in title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, sections 3430.31 through 3430.37.

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(b) *Additional Considerations.* Special consideration will be given to applications that—

(1) Involve a consortium of experts from multiple institutions;

(2) Encourage the integration of disciplines and application of the best technical resources; and

(3) Increase the geographic diversity of demonstration projects.

[75 FR 33498, June 14, 2010, as amended at 76 FR 38549, July 1, 2011]

§ 3430.709 Duration of awards.

The term of a Federal assistance award made for a BRDI project shall not exceed 5 years. No-cost extensions of time beyond the maximum award terms will not be considered or granted.

Subpart L [Reserved]

Subpart M—New Era Rural Technology Competitive Grants Program

SOURCE: 74 FR 45973, Sept. 4, 2009, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3430.900 Applicability of regulations.

The regulations in this subpart apply to the program authorized under section 1473E of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3319e), as amended.

§ 3430.901 Purpose.

The purpose of this program is to make grants available for technology development, applied research, and training, with a focus on rural communities, to aid in the development of workforces for bioenergy, pulp and paper manufacturing, and agriculture-based renewable energy workforce.

§ 3430.902 Definitions.

The definitions applicable to the program under this subpart include:

Advanced Technological Center refers to a post-secondary, degree-granting institution that provides students with technology-based education and training, preparing them to work as technicians or at the semi-professional level,

and aiding in the development of an agriculture-based renewable energy workforce. For this program, such Centers must be located within a rural area.

Bioenergy means biomass used in the production of energy (electricity; liquid, solid, and gaseous fuels; and heat).

Biomass means any organic matter that is available on a renewable or recurring basis, including agricultural crops and trees, wood and wood wastes and residues, plants (including aquatic plants), grasses, residues, fibers, and animal wastes, municipal wastes, and other waste materials.

Community College means

(1) An institution of higher education that:

(i) Admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located and who have the ability to benefit from the training offered by the institution;

(ii) Does not provide an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree (or an equivalent degree); and

(iii) (A) Provides an educational program of not less than 2 years in duration that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; or

(B) Offers a 2-year program in engineering, mathematics, or the physical or biological sciences, designed to prepare a student to work as a technician or at the semi-professional level in engineering, scientific, or other technological fields requiring the understanding and application of basic engineering, scientific, or mathematical principles of knowledge (20 U.S.C. 1101a(a)(6)).

(2) For this grants program, such Community Colleges must be located within a rural area.

Conference/Planning Grants means the limited number of RTP grants that will fund strategic planning meetings necessary to establish and organize proposed technology development, applied research and/or training projects.

Eligible institution/organization means a community college, or an advanced technological center, that meets eligibility criteria of this program, and is located in a rural area.

Eligible participant means an individual who is a citizen or non-citizen national of the United States, as defined in 7 CFR 3430.2, or lawful permanent resident of the United States.

Fiscal agent means a third party designated by an authorized representative of an eligible institution/organization which would receive and assume financial stewardship of Federal grant funds and perform other activities as specified in the agreement between it and the eligible institution/organization.

Joint project proposal means

(1) An application for a project:

(i) Which will involve the applicant institution/organization working in cooperation with one or more other entities not legally affiliated with the applicant institution/organization, including other schools, colleges, universities, community colleges, units of State government, private sector organizations, or a consortium of institutions; and

(ii) Where the applicant institution/organization and each cooperating entity will assume a significant role in the conduct of the proposed project.

(2) To demonstrate a substantial involvement with the project, the applicant institution/organization submitting a joint project proposal must retain at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the awarded funds, and no cooperating entity may receive less than 10 percent of awarded funds. Only the applicant institution/organization must meet the definition of an eligible institution/organization as specified in this RFA; other entities participating in a joint project proposal are not required to meet the definition of an eligible institution/organization.

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

Plan of Operation means a detailed, step-by-step description of how the applicant intends to accomplish the project's outcomes. At a minimum, the plan should include a timetable indicating how outcomes are achieved, a description of resources to be used or

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acquired, and the responsibilities expected of all project personnel.

Regular project proposal means an application for a project:

(1) Where the applicant institution/organization will be the sole entity involved in the execution of the project; or

(2) Which will involve the applicant institution/organization and one or more other entities, but where the involvement of the other entity(ies) does not meet the requirements for a joint proposal as defined in this section.

Rural Area means any area other than a city or town that has a population of 50,000 inhabitants and the urbanized area contiguous and adjacent to such a city or town.

Technology Development means the practical application of knowledge to address specific State, regional, or community opportunities in the bioenergy, pulp and paper manufacturing, or agriculture-based renewable energy occupations. NOTE: In general, technology is more than the development of a single product, but is instead a system of related products, procedures and services to ensure a systems approach to address a specific issue.

Training means the planned and systematic acquisition of practical knowledge, skills or competencies required for a trade, occupation or profession delivered by formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, or practicum experience.

[74 FR 45973, Sept. 4, 2009, as amended at 75 FR 59060, Sept. 27, 2010]

§ 3430.903 Eligibility.

Applications may be submitted by either:

(a) Public or private nonprofit community colleges, or

(b) Advanced technological centers, *either of which must:*

(1) Be located in a *rural area* (see definition in § 3430.902);

(2) Have been in existence as of June 18, 2008;

(3) Participate in agricultural or bioenergy research and applied research;

(4) Have a proven record of development and implementation of programs to meet the needs of students, educators, and business and industry to supply the agriculture-based, renew-

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able energy or pulp and paper manufacturing fields with certified technicians, as determined by the Secretary; and

(5) Have the ability to leverage existing partnerships and occupational outreach and training programs for secondary schools, 4-year institutions, and relevant nonprofit organizations.

§ 3430.904 Project types and priorities.

For each RFA, NIFA may develop and include the appropriate project types and focus areas based on the critical needs identified through stakeholder input and deemed appropriate by NIFA.

(a) In addition, priority in funding shall be given to eligible entities working in partnerships to:

(1) Improve information-sharing capacity;

(2) Maximize the ability to meet the requirements of the RFA; and

(3) To address the following two RTP goals:

(i) To increase the number of students encouraged to pursue and complete a 2-year postsecondary degree, or a certificate of completion, within an occupational focus of this grant program; and

(ii) To assist rural communities by helping students achieve their career goals to develop a viable workforce for bioenergy, pulp and paper manufacturing, or agriculture-based renewable energy.

(b) Applicants may submit applications for one of the three project types:

(1) Regular project proposal (the applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners);

(2) Joint project proposal (the applicant executes the project with assistance from at least one additional partner and must share grant funds with the additional partner(s)); and

(3) Conference/planning grant to facilitate strategic planning session(s).

§ 3430.905 Funding restrictions.

(a) *Prohibition against construction.* Grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation

or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

(b) *Prohibition on tuition remission.* Tuition remission (e.g., scholarships, fellowships) is not allowed.

(c) *Indirect costs.* Subject to §3430.54, indirect costs are allowable with the exception of indirect costs for Conference/Planning grants, which are not allowed.

§ 3430.906 Matching requirements.

There are no matching requirements for grants under this subpart.

§ 3430.907 Stakeholder input.

NIFA shall seek and obtain stakeholder input through a variety of forums (e.g., public meetings, requests for input and/or Web site), as well as through a notice in the FEDERAL REGISTER, from the following entities:

(a) Community college(s).

(b) Advanced technological center(s), located in rural area, for technology development, applied research, and/or training.

§ 3430.908 Review criteria.

Evaluation criteria. NIFA shall evaluate project proposals according to the following factors:

(a) Potential for Advancing Quality of Technology Development, Applied Research, and/or Training/Significance of the Program.

(b) Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages.

(c) Institution Organization Capability and Capacity Building.

(d) Key Personnel.

(e) Budget and Cost-Effectiveness.

§ 3430.909 Other considerations.

(a) *Amount of grants.* An applicant for a regular project proposal (single institution/organization) under this subpart may request up to \$125,000 (total project, not per year). An applicant for a joint project proposal (applicant plus one or more partners) under this subpart may request up to \$300,000 (total project, not per year). A conference/planning grant applicant may request

up to \$10,000 (total project/not per year).

(b) *Duration of grants.* The term of a grant for a standard RTP project under this subpart shall not exceed 5 years. No-cost extensions of time beyond the maximum award terms will not be considered or granted.

Subpart N [Reserved]

Subpart O—Sun Grant Program

SOURCE: 75 FR 70580, Nov. 18, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

§ 3430.1000 Applicability of regulations.

The regulations in this subpart apply to the Federal assistance awards made under the program authorized under section 7526 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA), Pub. L. 110-246 (7 U.S.C. 8114).

§ 3430.1001 Purpose.

In carrying out the program, NIFA is authorized to make awards under section 7526 of the FCEA to eligible entities (as designated in section 7526(b)(1)(A)–(F) of the FCEA) to fund subgrants and activities that:

(a) Enhance national energy security through the development, distribution, and implementation of biobased energy technologies;

(b) Promote diversification in, and the environmental sustainability of, agricultural production in the United States through biobased energy and product technologies;

(c) Promote economic diversification in rural areas of the United States through biobased energy and product technologies; and

(d) Enhance the efficiency of bio-energy and biomass research and development programs through improved coordination and collaboration among the Department, the Department of Energy, and land-grant colleges and universities.

§ 3430.1002 Definitions.

The definitions specific to the Sun Grant Program are from the authorizing legislation, the National Program

§ 3430.1003

Leadership of NIFA, and the Department of Energy. The definitions applicable to the program under this subpart include:

Biobased product means:

(1) An industrial product (including chemicals, materials, and polymers) produced from biomass; or

(2) A commercial or industrial product (including animal feed and electric power) derived in connection with the conversion of biomass to fuel.

Bioenergy means power generated in the form of electricity or heat using biomass as a feedstock.

Center means a Sun Grant Center identified in § 3430.1003(a)(1) through (5).

Gasification means a process that converts carbonaceous materials, such as biomass, into carbon monoxide and hydrogen by reacting the raw material, high temperatures with a controlled amount of oxygen and/or steam.

Subcenter means the Sun Grant Subcenter identified in § 3430.1003(a)(6).

Technology development means the process of research and development of technology.

Technology implementation means the introduction of new technologies to either an existing organization, or to a larger community, such as a type of business.

§ 3430.1003 Eligibility.

(a) *Sun Grant Centers and Subcenter.* NIFA will use amounts appropriated for the Sun Grant Program to provide grants to the following five Centers and one Subcenter:

(1) A North-Central Center at South Dakota State University for the region composed of the States of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming;

(2) A Southeastern Center at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville for the region composed of the States of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the United States Virgin Islands;

(3) A South-Central Center at Oklahoma State University for the region composed of the States of Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas;

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(4) A Northeastern Center at Cornell University for the region composed of the States of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia;

(5) A Western Center at Oregon State University for the region composed of the States of Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, and insular areas (other than the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands); and

(6) A Western Insular Pacific Subcenter at the University of Hawaii (that receives Federal funds through the Western Center rather than directly from NIFA, in accordance with § 3430.1004(b)) for the region of Alaska, Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

(b) *Subawardees of the Centers and Subcenter.* To be eligible for a subaward from a Center or Subcenter pursuant to § 3430.1004(a)(1), an applicant:

(1) Must be located in the region covered by the applicable Center or Subcenter; and

(2) Must be one of the following:

(i) State agricultural experiment station;

(ii) College or university;

(iii) University research foundation;

(iv) Other research institution or organization;

(v) Federal agency;

(vi) National laboratory;

(vii) Private organization or corporation;

(viii) Individual; or

(ix) Any group consisting of 2 or more entities described in paragraphs (b)(2)(i) through (viii) of this section.

(c) *Ineligibility.* A Center or Subcenter will be ineligible for funding under the Sun Grant Program if NIFA determines on the basis of an audit or a review of a report submitted under § 3430.1009 that the Center or Subcenter has not complied with the requirements of section 7526 of the FCEA (7 U.S.C. 8114). A Center or Subcenter determined to be ineligible pursuant to

this paragraph will remain ineligible for such period of time as deemed appropriate by NIFA. This ineligibility requirement is in addition to the enforcement actions that NIFA may take pursuant to § 3430.60.

§ 3430.1004 Project types and priorities.

(a) *Project types.* The Sun Grant Program provides funds for two distinct project types. Subject to paragraph (b), of the funds provided by NIFA to the Centers and Subcenter, the required use of funds by each of the Centers and the Subcenter is as follows:

(1) *Regional competitive research, extension, and education grant programs.* Seventy-five percent must be used for regional competitively awarded research, extension, and education subgrants to eligible entities (described in § 3430.1003(b)) to conduct, in a manner consistent with the purposes described in § 3430.1001, multi-institutional and multistate research, extension, and education programs on technology development and multi-institutional and multistate integrated research, extension, and education programs on technology implementation. Regional competitive grants programs will target specific elements of the purposes described in § 3430.1001, implementing national priorities in the context of regional scale biogeographic and climatic conditions.

(i) *Requests for applications.* The Centers and Subcenter must develop regional requests for applications (RFAs) utilizing guidance from regional advisory panels created and administered by the Centers and Subcenter for purposes of addressing region-specific issues, and which include representation from academia, the national laboratories, Federal and State agencies, the private sector, and public interest groups. Advisory panel members will have appropriate expertise and experience in the areas of biomass and bioenergy.

(ii) *Peer review of proposals.* Each region will announce RFAs and solicit proposals. These proposals must be peer reviewed by panels in a manner similar to the system of peer review required by section 103 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Edu-

cation Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613), and may include representation from Federal and State laboratories, the national laboratories, and private and public interest groups, as appropriate. The Centers and Subcenter may use implementing regulations found in §§ 3430.31 through 3430.37 as a guideline for appropriate peer review standards. Additional guidance may be provided by NIFA. To ensure consistency across the regions, prior to announcing the regional RFAs that will be used to solicit proposals, the Centers and Subcenter must provide NIFA the RFAs for approval by the designated NIFA program contact, as identified in the NIFA program solicitation. The Centers and Subcenter shall award subgrants on the basis of merit, quality, and relevance to advancing the purposes of the Sun Grant Program.

(2) *Research, extension, and education activities conducted at the Centers and Subcenter.* Except for funds available for administrative expenses as provided in § 3430.1005(b), the remainder of the funds must be used for multi-institutional and multistate research, extension, and education programs on technology development and multi-institutional and multistate integrated research, extension, and education programs on technology implementation, in a manner consistent with the purposes described in § 3430.1001.

(b) *Special provisions for the Western Center and Western Insular Pacific Subcenter.* Funds provided by NIFA to the Western Insular Pacific Subcenter shall come from an allocation of a portion of the funds received by the Western Center, as directed by NIFA in the program solicitation, rather than directly from NIFA. For the Center, the phrase “funds provided by NIFA” in paragraph (a) of this section refers to those funds provided by NIFA for the Sun Grant Program that are not allocated to the Subcenter. For the Subcenter, the phrase “funds provided by NIFA” in paragraph (a) of this section refers to those funds that are allocated to the Subcenter.

(c) *Priorities.* For the regional competitive grants program under paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the Centers and Subcenter shall use the plan approved by NIFA under § 3430.1007 in

§ 3430.1005

making subawards and shall give a higher priority to proposals that are consistent with the plan.

§ 3430.1005 Funding restrictions.

(a) *Facility costs.* Funds made available under the Sun Grant Program shall not be used for the construction of a new building or facility or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building or facility (including site grading and improvement, and architect fees).

(b) *Indirect cost provisions for regional competitive research, extension, and education grant programs.* Funds provided by NIFA to the Centers and Subcenter for the regional competitive grants program under § 3430.1004(a)(1) may not be used for the indirect costs of awarding the competitive grants. However, up to 4 percent of the total funds provided by NIFA to each of the five Centers and the Subcenter under § 3430.1004 for the Sun Grant Program may be budgeted for administrative costs incurred in awarding the competitive grants.

(c) *Indirect cost provisions for research, extension, and education activities conducted at the Centers and Subcenter.* Subject to § 3430.54, indirect costs are allowable for the funds provided by NIFA to the Centers and the Subcenter for the research, extension, and education programs under § 3430.1004(a)(2).

(d) *Required allocations.* Each Center and Subcenter must fund subgrants in a proportion that is a minimum 30 percent for conducting multi-institutional and multistate research, extension, and education programs on technology development; and a minimum 30 percent for conducting integrated multi-institutional and multistate research, extension, and education programs on technology implementation. Each Sun Grant Center must clearly demonstrate a common procedure for ensuring the required allocations are met, and for maintaining documentation of these required percentages for audit purposes.

§ 3430.1006 Matching requirements.

(a) *Matching provisions for the Centers and Subcenter.* The Centers and the Subcenter are not required to match Federal funds.

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(b) *Matching provisions for subawards.* For subawards made by the Centers or Subcenter through the competitive grants process, not less than 20 percent of the cost of an activity must be matched with funds, including in-kind contributions, from a non-Federal source, by the subawardee.

(1) *Exception for fundamental research.* This matching requirement does not apply to fundamental research (as defined in § 3430.2).

(2) *Special matching provisions for applied research.* With prior approval by the NIFA authorized departmental officer (ADO), the Center or Subcenter may reduce or eliminate the matching requirement for applied research (as defined in § 3430.2) if the Center or Subcenter determines that the reduction is necessary and appropriate pursuant to guidance issued by NIFA.

§ 3430.1007 Planning activities.

(a) *Required plan.* The Centers and Subcenter shall jointly develop and submit to NIFA for approval a plan for addressing the bioenergy, biomass, and gasification research priorities of the Department and the Department of Energy at the State and regional levels. To comply with this requirement, NIFA requires that the proposals from each of the five Centers be of similar format and subject matter and complementary to comprise a national program for purposes of serving as the actual "plan." Each proposal will present a plan that includes a description of what will be done in common and collectively by the Centers and Subcenter, what each will do as a Center and Subcenter, and how each Center and Subcenter will implement its regional competitive grants program. Proposals submitted to the Sun Grant Program must be sufficiently detailed and of high enough quality and demonstrate adequate evidence of collaboration to meet this requirement. Funds available for administrative costs (see § 3430.1005(b)) may be used to meet this requirement.

(b) *Gasification.* With respect to gasification research activities, the Centers and Subcenter shall coordinate planning with land-grant colleges and universities in their respective regions

that have ongoing research activities in that area.

§ 3430.1008 Sun Grant Information Analysis Center.

The Centers and Subcenter shall maintain, at the North-Central Center, a Sun Grant Information Analysis Center to provide the Centers and Subcenter with analysis and data management support. Each Center and Subcenter shall allocate a portion of the funds available for administrative or indirect costs under § 3430.1005 to maintain the Sun Grant Information Analysis Center.

§ 3430.1009 Administrative duties.

In addition to other reporting requirements agreed to in the terms and conditions of each award, not later than 90 days after the end of each Federal fiscal year, each Center and Subcenter shall submit to NIFA a report that describes the policies, priorities, and operations of the program carried out by the Center or Subcenter during the fiscal year, including the results of all peer and merit review procedures conducted as part of administering the regional competitive research, extension, and educational grant programs; and a description of progress made in facilitating the plan described in § 3430.1007.

§ 3430.1010 Review criteria.

Panel reviewers conducting merit reviews on proposals submitted by the Centers will be instructed to ensure that proposals adequately address the plan developed in accordance with § 3430.1007 for consideration of the relevance and merit of proposals.

§ 3430.1011 Duration of awards.

The term of a Federal assistance award made under the Sun Grant Program shall not exceed 5 years. No-cost extensions of time beyond the maximum award terms will not be considered or granted.

PART 3431—VETERINARY MEDICINE LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM

Subpart A—Designation of Veterinarian Shortage Situations

Sec.

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AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 3151a; Pub. L. 106-107 (31 U.S.C. 6101 note).

SOURCE: 75 FR 20243, Apr. 19, 2010, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—Designation of Veterinarian Shortage Situations

§ 3431.1 Applicability of regulations.

This part establishes the process and procedures for designating veterinarian shortage situations as well as the administrative provisions for the Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) authorized by the National Veterinary Medical Service Act (NVMSA), 7 U.S.C. 3151a.

§ 3431.2 Purpose.

The Secretary will follow the processes and procedures established in