

Common Bean Productivity Research for Global Food Security Competitive Grants Program

Request for Applications

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: May 8, 2012

APPLICATION DEADLINE: June 27, 2012



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

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

**COMMON BEAN PRODUCTIVITY RESEARCH (BPR) FOR GLOBAL FOOD
SECURITY**

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.327.

DATES: Letter of Intent (LOI) deadline is by close of business (COB) on **May 8, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**. Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **June 27, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**. Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: NIFA announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Common Bean Productivity Research (BPR) for Global Food Security program for fiscal year (FY) 2012 to develop approaches and/or methods that can address challenges to common bean production among small holder producers in food insecure countries. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2012 is approximately \$4,500,000.

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

PLEASE READ

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING NIFA POLICIES and PROCEDURES

Common Bean Productivity Research for Global Food Security Competitive Program requires a letter of Intent (LOI) for full proposal submission. The LOI must be received by close of business (COB) on **May 8, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**. For instructions on how to prepare a LOI, please see Part IV A. The deadline for submission of a full proposal submission is by close of business (COB) on **June 27, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

In accordance with the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriation Act of 2012 (P.L. 112-55), Economy Act of 1932, as amended, (31 U.S.C. 1535) and Section 632(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (22 U.S.C. 2392(b)), the U.S. Agency for International Development in order to utilize the unique resources of USDA and its land-grant institution partners has provided the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) with funds to support the Common Bean Productivity Research (BPR) for Global Food Security Competitive Grants Program.

B. Purpose and Priorities

Common bean, *Phaseolus vulgaris*, is widely produced throughout food insecure areas of the world including many Feed the Future (www.feedthefuture.gov) countries such as East and Southern Africa. In collaboration with and using funding provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development, NIFA is seeking research proposals to develop approaches and/or methods to address challenges to common bean production among smallholder producers.

Applications are being solicited for the BPR under the following areas:

- **Reducing Production Constraints from Soil Borne Pathogens:** Soil borne pathogen pressure on common bean is a significant constraint to production. Such pathogens and associated root rots already reduce production in areas with high rainfall. As rainfall increases, as is expected around the equatorial zone in Africa, in particular East Africa, pathogen-related production constraints may become even more limiting.
- **Improving Transformation Technologies in Common Bean:** Although success in transforming common bean has been limited to date, it is a promising strategy to address key production constraints. Developing and/or improving the methodologies and approaches necessary to efficiently transform this recalcitrant species is necessary to removing roadblocks to transformation.

Association with ongoing projects: BPR encourages connections between proposals and ongoing relevant projects such as USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Common Bean Coordinated Agricultural Project (<http://www.beancap.org/>), and USAID's Dry Grain Pulses CRSP (<http://roots.psu.edu>) to increase the relevance of multiple initiatives to Feed the Future country needs. Furthermore, applicants are encouraged to, as appropriate and relevant, consider and propose ways to link collaborating Feed the Future country scientists to the networks of established research efforts through the BPR.

BPR encourages projects that develop content and programs suitable for delivery through the existing eXtension Plant Breeding and Genomics Community of Practice (http://www.extension.org/plant_breeding_genomics) to amplify outreach and education efforts to plant breeders, seed industry professionals, and practitioners. Applicants must plan ahead and allow additional time to develop this. BPR encourages projects that create networks of Common

Bean pathology specialists, including partner Feed the Future country scientists in information platforms such as the Legume Pest Information Platform for Extension and Education (Legume PIPE (<http://legume.ipmpipe.org>)).

Projects must align with the vision, mission, and values of existing programs. A letter of acknowledgement from eXtension and or the Legume ipmPIPE is required and a letter of support may be required from the Community of Practice. For detailed guidance on how to enhance an existing community of practice, go to <http://create.extension.org/node/2057> and <http://pbgworks.org/node/1066>.

C. Program Area Description

Soil Borne Pathogens: Applicants are invited to propose innovative ideas or combinations of approaches to address soil borne pathogens to improve common bean production for smallholder producers in Africa. Proposals will target these issues through research in any appropriate area of science including breeding, genetics, soil microbiology, plant pathology, social sciences, etc. By the end of the program period a package of approaches such as new seed varieties coupled with culturally and economically relevant crop and soil management methods should be available to smallholder common bean producers in Africa.

Transformation: Applicants are invited to propose new methodologies and/or innovative combinations of existing approaches to achieve breakthroughs or improvements in common bean transformation. The goal of this effort is to improve common bean transformation so productivity and quality alleles that cannot be efficiently introgressed using classical plant breeding can be more easily integrated into the genome.

Applicants must review the terms and conditions that govern USDA/NIFA funded projects as applicable in the areas of plant genetic resources, germplasm and data management. Those terms and conditions can be found at: <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html>. As appropriate, applicants must demonstrate in their budgets and budget narratives how these terms and conditions will be met.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. Approximately \$4,500,000 is available to fund applications in FY 2012.

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

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2012, applications may be submitted to the BPR Program as NEW applications only. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

C. Project Types

Standard Research Projects.

Research on Soil Borne Pathogens: Funding will be for no more than \$2,000,000 for each project (including all indirect costs) for project periods of up to four years. Applications must be submitted through eligible U.S. institutions with appropriate and applicable subcontracts to Feed the Future country scientist institutions. U.S. Principal Investigators should target their work to address issues with common bean production among smallholder producers in areas affected by soil borne pathogens, and where possible and appropriate, in East or/or Southern Africa.

Multidisciplinary projects are encouraged and are those in which investigators from two or more disciplines collaborate closely to address the problem. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences (e.g. breeding, genetics, soil microbiology, plant pathology, social sciences, etc.) In addition, applied research is encouraged, meaning 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.

Research on Transformation: Funding will be for no more than \$250,000 for each project (including all indirect costs) for project periods of up to four years. Applications must be submitted through eligible U.S. institutions. There is no geographic focus for this program, as the objective is to develop and/or improve methods and approaches for common bean transformation. *Fundamental research is encouraged, meaning research that increases knowledge or understanding of the fundamental aspects of transformation methods and has the potential for broad application.*

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by eligible U.S. public or private research or educational institutions or organizations. Award recipients may subcontract to U.S. organizations or organizations in Feed the Future countries not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

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

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Letter of Intent Submission Instructions

Letter of Intent must be submitted by May 8, 2012.

Failure to follow the guidelines below may result in the Letter of Intent being removed from consideration.

1. The Letter of Intent must adhere to the following formatting guidelines:
 - a. Font size must be at least 12 point
 - b. Margins must be at least one inch in all directions
 - c. Line spacing must not exceed six lines of text per vertical inch
2. The Letter of Intent is limited to **two pages** for all project and grant types.
 - a. On Page 1, provide **only** the following information:
 - i. the name, professional title, department, institution and *e*-mail address of the lead project director (PD) and name, professional title, department, and institution of all collaborating investigators
 - ii. the Program Area and the Priority area within that Program Area most closely addressed in the application
 - b. On Page 2, include:
 - i. a descriptive title
 - ii. rationale
 - iii. overall hypothesis or goal
 - iv. specific objectives
 - v. approach
 - vi. potential impact and expected outcomes
3. NIFA will only accept Letters of Intent in the portable document format (PDF). Attach the PDF Letter of Intent to an *e*-mail addressed to Dr, Kitty Caldwell at kcaldwell@nifa.usda.gov. In the e-mail subject line write: Letter of Intent [BPR Program] - [PDs Last Name].
4. Submission of more than one Letter of Intent is discouraged.
5. An acknowledgement receipt will be sent by replying to the sender within 5 business days.
6. Letters of Intent will be reviewed by scientific program staff in order to plan for appropriate expertise for the peer review panel and ensure that the proposed project fits appropriately within the priorities.
7. Within two weeks after the Letter of Intent deadline, the PD will receive a response from the Program Contact.
8. Applications submitted without a prior Letter of Intent submission will not be reviewed.

9. Applicants must notify the appropriate Program Contact of any changes to project key personnel, title, or objectives from the Letter of Intent to the submission of a full application.

B. Electronic Application Package

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

New Users of Grants.gov

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

<http://www.grants.gov/assets/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>.

Item 2. below mentions the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.” Part II.1. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide contains additional explanatory language regarding the registration process.

Steps to Obtain Application Package Materials

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for NIFA Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on “**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions,**” enter the funding opportunity number **USDA-NIFA-CBPR-003745** in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about

how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

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

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

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

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

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

See http://grants.gov/applicants/app_help_reso.jsp or <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

C. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Parts V and VI of the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of NIFA Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

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

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

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

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

a. Field 12. Proposed Project - For the start date of the project, select September 1, 2012. Choose the end date to correspond to the correct duration of the project.

b. Field 20. Pre-application - Do not fill out this portion of the form. BPR is not accepting pre-applications in FY 2012 in any of the programs. The Programs under this RFA require a Letter of Intent. See the Program Area Descriptions in Part I, B and Part IV, A for more details.

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

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

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

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

a. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract - PDF Attachment.

The Project Summary is limited to **250 words**. Title the attachment as ‘Project Summary’ in the document header and save file as ‘ProjectSummary’. A recommended template for the Project Summary/Abstract can be found at:

http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/templates/project_summary.doc.

The summary should include the relevance of the project to the goals of BPR. The Project Summary must list the names and institutions of the PD and Co-PDs and **indicate which specific BPR Program Area the proposed project addresses**. Program Areas are stated within Program Description (see Part I, C). Applications that do not address at least one Program Area will not be reviewed.

b. Field 8. Project Narrative - PDF Attachment

Title the attachment as “Project Narrative in the document header and save the file as ‘ProjectNarrative’. The Project Narrative shall not exceed 18 pages with 12 point font and line spacing not exceeding 6 lines per vertical inch including all figures and tables. This maximum page limit (**18 pages**) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Applications exceeding the applicable page limitation will be returned without review.

Each Project Narrative is expected to be complete; however, preprints (see Part IV, C. 4. f) related to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Information may not be appended to an application to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the Project Narrative. **Extraneous materials will not be used during the peer review process.** The Project Narrative must include all of the following:

1. Introduction

Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed activities should be included. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities which substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project should be included. All works cited should be referenced (see Bibliography and References Cited in Part IV, c). In addition, this section should include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

- Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders and to ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research, education and extension programs.
- Role of the stakeholders in problem identification, planning, and implementation and evaluation as appropriate.
- Reasons for having the work performed at the proposing institution.

2. Objectives: Clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort must be included in all proposals.

3. Methods: The procedures or methodology to be applied to the proposed effort should be explicitly stated. This section should include but not necessarily be limited to:

- A description of stakeholder involvement in problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation;
- A description of the proposed project activities in the sequence in which it is planned to carry them out;
- Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project;
- Kinds of results expected;
- Means by which data will be analyzed or interpreted;
- Details of plans to communicate results to stakeholders and the public;
- Pitfalls that might be encountered; and
- Limitations to proposed procedures.

4. Project Timetable: The proposal should outline all important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant funding period.

c. Field 9. Bibliography & References Cited – PDF Attachment.

No Page Limit. Title the attachment as ‘Bibliography & References Cited’ in the document header and save file as ‘BibliographyReferencesCited’.

All work cited in the text should be referenced in this section of the application. All references must be complete; include titles and all co-authors; conform to an acceptable journal format; and

be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.

d. Field 10. Facilities & Other Resources – PDF Attachment.

No Page Limit. Title the attachment as ‘Facilities & Other Resources’ in the document header and save file as ‘FacilitiesOtherResources’.

e. Field 11. Equipment – PDF Attachment.

No Page Limit. Title the attachment as ‘Equipment’ in the document header and save file as ‘Equipment’.

In addition to describing available equipment, items of nonexpendable equipment necessary to conduct and successfully complete the proposed project should be listed in Field C. of the R&R Budget and described in the Budget Justification (Field K. of the R&R Budget).

f. Field 12. Other Attachments

1. Key Personnel Roles – PDF Attachment.

Two page limit. Title the attachment as ‘Key Personnel’ and save file as ‘KeyPersonnel’.

Clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of the PD, Co-PD(s), collaborator(s), and other key personnel. Biographical sketches for key personnel should be attached in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile described in Part IV, C. 4. If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, a biographical sketch should be provided in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile. Collaborators simply providing services or materials should not be listed in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile and a biographical sketch is not required. Evidence (letters of support) for this type of collaboration should be provided in the ‘Documentation of Collaboration’ (see below). These signed letters should provide evidence that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services.

2. Project Management – PDF Attachment.

Two page limit. Title the attachment as ‘Project Management’ and save file as ‘ProjectManagement’.

Soil borne pathogen applications must contain a clearly articulated project management plan to ensure efficient functioning of the team that includes an organizational chart, administrative timeline, and a description of how the project will be governed, as well as a strategy to enhance coordination, collaboration, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the project team

and stakeholder groups. Applications must include a plan for sustaining the program beyond the termination of the project. The management plan should also include an advisory group of principal stakeholders, partners, and professionals to assess and evaluate the quality, expected measurable outcomes, and potential impacts for the proposed research. Please include letters of commitment for each advisory committee member, rationale for their role, and how they will function effectively to support the goals and objectives of the project. Attach the letters of support under ‘Documentation of Collaboration’ (see below). The plan must demonstrate how partners and stakeholders contribute to project assessment on an annual basis.

3. Intellectual Property – **PDF Attachment.**

Two page limit. Title the attachment as ‘Intellectual Property’ and save file as ‘IntellectualProperty’.

This research program is intended to contribute to long-term food security in Feed the Future focus countries, and to provide additional benefits to other developing countries in the region with similar food security constraints. This research may result in technologies, innovations and knowledge to advance those goals that could be subject to intellectual property rights that limit access of these innovations and technologies to the target beneficiaries. Applicants should provide a description of how the research outputs will be made available for application in developing countries for use by target beneficiaries.

4. Documentation of Collaboration – **PDF Attachment.**

No page limit. Title the attachment as ‘Documentation of Collaboration’ in the document header and save file as ‘Collaboration’.

Evidence, e.g., letter(s) of support, should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.

5. Preprints – **PDF Attachment.**

Limited to two preprints. Title the attachment as ‘Preprints’ in the document header and save file as ‘Preprints’.

Preprints related to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Information may not be appended to an application to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the Project Narrative. Extraneous materials will not be used during the peer review process. Only manuscripts in press for a peer-reviewed journal will be accepted and must be accompanied by letters of acceptance from the publishing journals). Preprints attached in support of the application should be single-spaced. Each preprint must be identified with the name of the submitting organization, the name(s) of the PD(s), and the title of the application.

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

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

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

6. R&R Budget

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

- a. The applicant should use the current negotiated indirect cost rate established (i.e., approved) by its cognizant Federal agency. If the applicant does not have a current negotiated rate, the applicant should request a rate from the Federal agency from which the applicant receives the most funding.
- b. The project director will be required to attend annual investigator meetings. Reasonable travel expenses should be included as part of the budget.

7. Supplemental Information Form

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

a. Field 2. Program to which you are applying. Enter the program code name “**Common Bean Productivity Research (BPR) for Global Food Security**” and the program code “**CBPR**”.

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

C. Submission Dates and Times

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

Electronic applications must be received by Grants.gov by **COB on June 27, 2012 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time)**. Applications received after the applicable deadline will not be reviewed.

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

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

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

D. Funding Restrictions

Funds awarded under this program 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.

The statutory limitation on funding for this program is five (5) years.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in Part IV, section 1.9 in the document entitled “NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.”

For information about the **status of a submitted application**, see Part III., section 6. of the NIFA Grants.gov Application Guide.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Research Project Applications

These evaluation criteria will be used for the review:

- a. Scientific Merit of the Application for Research
 - 1) Novelty, innovation, uniqueness, and originality;
 - 2) Where model systems are used, ability to transfer knowledge gained from these systems to organisms of importance to U.S. agriculture;
 - 3) Conceptual adequacy of the research and suitability of the hypothesis, as applicable;
 - 4) Clarity and delineation of objectives;
 - 5) Adequacy of the description of the undertaking and suitability and feasibility of methodology;
 - 6) Demonstration of feasibility through preliminary data; and
 - 7) Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of scientific originality, and risk-reward balance.
- b. Qualifications of Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities, and Project Management
 - 1) Qualifications of applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project, including performance record and potential for future accomplishments;
 - 2) Demonstrated awareness of previous and alternative approaches to the problem identified in the application;

- 3) Institutional experience and competence in subject area;
- 4) Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation; and
- 5) Planning and administration of the proposed project, including: time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; and planned administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, collaborative efforts, and the planned dissemination of information for multi-institutional projects over the duration of the project.

c. Project Relevance

- 1) Documentation that the research is directed toward specific Program Areas identified in this RFA and is designed to accelerate progress toward the sustainable productivity of common bean in food insecure countries.

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 1801 Robert Fulton Drive, Suite 340, Reston, Virginia 20191. Phone: (888) 349-7715. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

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

D. Organizational Management Information

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

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

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

B. Award Notice

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

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Director has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Director during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view NIFA award terms and conditions);
- (10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and

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

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

2 CFR Part 220 – Cost Principles for Educational Institutions (OMB Circular A-21).

2 CFR Part 225 – Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87).

2 CFR Part 230 – Cost Principles for Non-profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122).

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

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

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

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

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21, A-87, and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225 and 230), and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224)), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

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

Project Directors Conference

During the tenure of a grant, Project Director(s) may be invited to attend at least one national Project Directors meeting, if offered, in Washington, D.C., or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, future directions for education reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in your proposal's travel expenses.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Kitty Caldwell; National Program Leader; Division of Plant Systems – Protection; Institute of Food Production and Sustainability; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-2240; phone: (202) 401-1790, email: kcaldwell@nifa.usda.gov or Dr. Hiram Larew; Division Director, Center for International Programs; National Institute of Food and Agriculture; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-2203; phone: (202) 720-3801, email: hlarew@nifa.usda.gov).

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

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

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

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

2. Changes in Project Plans

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

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

D. Regulatory Information

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

E. Definitions

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