Grants

Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Program (BFRDP)

Beginning farmer education for adult and young audiences in the United States can be generally traced back to the advent of the 1862 and the 1890 Morrill Land Grant Acts. But for the first time, the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Pub.L. No. 110-234, Section 7410), appropriated $75 million for FY 2009 to FY 2012 to develop and offer education, training, outreach and mentoring programs to enhance the sustainability of the next generation of farmers. The Agriculture Act of 2014 provided an additional $20 million per year for 2014 through 2018. The reasons for the renewed interest in beginning farmer and rancher programs are: the rising average age of U.S. farmers, the 8% projected decrease in the number of farmers and ranchers between 2008 and 2018, and the growing recognition that new programs are needed to address the needs of the next generation of beginning farmers and ranchers.

Special Notation

More Beginning Farmer and Rancher Competitive Grants Program Information

Who Is Eligible to Apply

- Other or Additional Information (See below)
- Unrestricted (See Eligibility Description)

More Information on Eligibility

The recipient must be a collaborative, State, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities, which may include: state cooperative extension service; community-based and nongovernmental organization; college or university (including institutions awarding associate degrees); or any other appropriate partner. Others may be eligible to apply. Please refer to Part III of the current BFRDP Request for Applications for complete eligibility requirements.

Request for Application (RFA) | Apply: Electronic | Abstracts of Funded Projects

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Questions? Comments? | Last Updated: April 11, 2014
PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 7405(c) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) (7 U.S.C. 3319f(c)), as amended by section 7410 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246) and section 7409 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Pub. L. 113-333), requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a competitive grants program for the purpose of providing education, outreach, training and technical assistance to benefit beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States, including programs and services (as appropriate) relating to:

A. Basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices;
B. Innovative farm, ranch, and private, nonindustrial forest land transfer strategies;
C. Entrepreneurship and business training;
D. Financial and risk management training (including the acquisition and management of agricultural credit);
E. Natural resource management and planning;
F. Diversification and marketing strategies;
G. Curriculum development;
H. Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
I. Resources and referral;
J. Farm financial benchmarking;
K. Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers;
L. Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veterans;
M. Farm safety and awareness; and
N. Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.

Section 7405(d) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(d)) requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish beginning farmer and rancher education teams to develop curricula and conduct educational programs and workshops for beginning farmers or ranchers in diverse geographical areas of the United States.

Section 7405(e) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(e)) requires the Secretary of Agriculture to establish an online clearinghouse that makes available to beginning farmers or ranchers education curricula, training materials and programs, which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.

A stakeholder input meeting was held on October 27, 2008, to develop the BFRDP and the first RFA, which was released in FY 2009. For information regarding the stakeholder meeting, please visit www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/smallfarm_if_bfrdp.html. Stakeholder comments can be found on Regulations.gov. Additional stakeholder input was received by email and was collected during professional meetings and from webinars held in October 2009. The proceedings of the webinars were recorded and are available at: www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/beginning_farmers_ranchers_stakeholder.html. This additional stakeholder input was used to develop the FY 2010 RFA. The stakeholder
comments received on the interim rule for the BFRDP were also considered in the development of the FY 2010 RFA and are available at Regulations.gov. Stakeholder input for developing the FY 2011 RFA was received by emails, as well as comments during professional meetings and from webinars held in August 2010. Not many substantive recommendations for changes in the FY 2011 RFA were received as the program had already addressed stakeholder comments in previous years.

For the FY 2012 RFA, stakeholder input was solicited until April 30, 2011. Stakeholder input was received by emails as well as comments during professional meetings and webinars held in April 2011. The proceedings of these webinars were recorded and are available at: www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp_stakeholder.html. Several stakeholders acknowledged that NIFA has already addressed comments received in previous years. Additional stakeholder input was used in the FY 2012 RFA to: (a) include a new Application Type called ‘Renewal Application’ (Part II – B – 3 of this RFA); (b) clarify Plan for Outcomes Based Reporting (Part IV-B of this RFA); (c) Add new evaluation criteria for educational enhancement team grants (Part V-B); and (d) Add new evaluation criteria for Renewal Applications (Part V-B). Stakeholder input and annual outcomes based reports for FY 2010 were used as a guide to revamp the Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements (Part VI-D of this RFA).

The program was not offered in FY2013 due to lack of funding, but a stakeholder webinar was held on July 24, 2012. The proceedings of this webinar were recorded and are available at: www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/bfrdp/bfrdp.html. Many stakeholders stated that they were happy with the program’s direction and recommended continuing focus on diversity including small-scale, urban and specialty crop producers; farmer-to-farmer teaching, mentoring, and networking; include funding for evaluation; value farmer-to-farmer networking and case studies as outcomes; give consideration to states with few community-based or nongovernmental organizations; and encourage Natural Resources Conservation Service involvement. Some commented that the review process should strive to provide clearer feedback, continue to include diverse reviewers, and consider the difficulty of working with certain audiences. Some recommended that the clearinghouse be continued and, in particular, share written guides; and that it might connect better with eXtension, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, and other related programs. These recommendations have been taken into account in this RFA by continuing the directions noted, while conforming to the 2014 Agricultural Act; adding language encouraging the indicated partnerships; and adapting the clearinghouse language from the 2009 RFA’s “start-up” phase to the needs of the program for the next five years.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The primary goal of BFRDP is to enhance food security, community development and sustainability by providing beginning farmer and ranchers (includes beginning managers of private, nonindustrial forest land, hereafter) and their families in the United States and its territories with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations, and enhance their sustainability. The term “farmer” is used in the broadest sense and should be interpreted to include agricultural farmers, ranchers, and non-industrial private forest owners and managers. Applications from partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs),
and school-based agricultural educational organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach will be given priority in funding.

The expected short-term (five year) outcomes of BFRDP are the training and development of more than 60,000 beginning farmers and ranchers through: the operation of an electronic clearinghouse for all beginning farmer and rancher training materials and programs ("clearinghouse"); the development and use of beginning farmer and rancher education curricula and support for programs that address the various needs of different audiences and geographical areas ("educational enhancement" projects); and projects that support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers on topics described further in this RFA ("standard" projects).

1. Target Audience:

The target audience for BFRDP is farmers and ranchers who have not operated a farm or ranch, or have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years. In addition, a portion of BFRDP funding is set aside for projects that address the needs of two subsets of beginning farmers and ranchers:

- Not less than 5 percent (5%) of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and/or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers.

- Not less than 5 percent (5%) of the program funds available for standard BFRDP projects will be allocated to address the needs of beginning farmers and ranchers who are military veterans. A recipient of such a grant may coordinate with a recipient of a grant from the AgrAbility program (http://www.agrability.org/) in addressing the needs of veteran farmers and ranchers with disabilities.

Please note: Not all applications need to address the needs of these two set-aside categories.

For your application to be considered under either set-aside audience category, you must:

a. Identify the target audience of any of the groups identified above and state what percentage of your project will be allocated to serving these group(s);

b. Explain how the beginning farmers and ranchers in the identified target audience will be recruited and provided with appropriate training, education, outreach and/or mentoring; and

c. Provide evidence of your ability to serve the needs of the identified audience, e.g., a strong track record of having previously done so.

2. Priority Topics for FY 2014:

To achieve program goals, BFRDP projects will be expected to conduct training and assistance for beginning farmers and ranchers on one or more of the topics listed below, making use of
existing curriculum (whether USDA funded or not) or developing new curriculum where needed. Applicants should carefully consider the topics that will be addressed by the proposed project and clearly identify the topics that will be addressed in the project narrative, and why those topics are the most appropriate for the project’s audience. The priority topics are:

A. Basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices;
B. Innovative farm, ranch, and private, nonindustrial forest land transfer strategies;
C. Entrepreneurship and business training;
D. Financial and risk management training (including the acquisition and management of agricultural credit);
E. Natural resource management and planning;
F. Diversification and marketing strategies;
G. Curriculum development;
H. Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
I. Resources and referral;
J. Farm financial benchmarking;
K. Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers;
L. Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veterans;
M. Farm safety and awareness; and
N. Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.

NIFA is soliciting applications for the BFRDP under the following areas:

(1) Standard Grants
(2) Educational Enhancement Teams
(3) Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse

C. Program Area Description

(1) Standard Grant

Program Code: BFRDA
Program Code Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program,
Standard
Maximum Award: $250,000 per year for up to three (3) years

Standard BFRDP projects support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers, on the priority topics listed above. Most of the funding in the BFRDP goes to Standard Grants. The primary goal of Standard Grants is to increase the number of beginning farmers and ranchers and enhance their sustainability by providing them and their families the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to make informed decisions. Priority is given to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), or school-based agricultural educational organizations (SAEOs) with expertise in beginning agricultural producer training and outreach. Standard Grant applications are expected to identify the audience of beginning
farmers and ranchers that they aim to serve, describe their characteristics and needs, demonstrate knowledge and experience in educational and assistance methods that are appropriate and effective in engaging the audience and meeting their needs, and propose an ambitious yet achievable plan of work that will accomplish meaningful and measurable success in enhancing the number and success of beginning farmers and ranchers. Most successful standard grants provide training and assistance on a range of topics, including financial, production and marketing topics from the priority list above.

(2) Educational Enhancement Team
Program Code: BFRDB
Program Code Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Enhancement
Maximum Award: $250,000 per year for up to three (3) years

The purpose of an Educational Enhancement Team (EET) grant is to assemble a team of experts to review beginning farmer and rancher curricula and programs (including review and evaluation of previously-funded BFRDP projects), identify gaps, and develop, disseminate and facilitate the use of materials and tools to address these gaps. Educational Enhancement Teams are not designed to train beginning farmers and ranchers directly, but rather to train-the-trainers and help enhance funded and non-funded beginning farmer and rancher education programs in the nation. Applicants interested in applying for an EET grant are strongly encouraged to contact the programmatic contacts listed in Part VII to discuss the suitability of the topic prior to submitting an application. We are particularly interested in EETs that evaluate clusters of related projects previously funded by BFRDP, in order to determine lessons learned and best practices, along with curriculum and tools for future use. We are also interested in EETs that complement or leverage rather than duplicate work completed by previously-funded EETs, which have addressed environmental management and leadership, regional networks, farmer-to-farmer curricula, financial management, individual development accounts, and farm safety.

To achieve program goals, EET proposals will be expected to demonstrate the ability to complete all of the following:

1) Assess and Identify Existing Curricula and Gaps in the Education, Training and Mentoring of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers:

a) Establish educational teams that encompass broad geographic, product, topic and/or other appropriate scale. Educational teams should include, if possible, specialists (including Extension, Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO), Community-based Organizations (CBO), School-based Agricultural Education organizations (SAEO), and Federal and State Government employees and other eligible partners) with knowledge and expertise in relevant subjects and programs serving beginning farmers or ranchers. The team should, if possible, use the expertise of officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture (excluding NIFA) with direct experience in programs of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that may be taught as part of the curriculum for the program or workshop, including (but not limited to) Farm Service Agency, Rural Development, and Natural Resources Conservation Service. Employees of other
federal agencies may also be appropriate for inclusion on Educational Enhancement Teams. Applicants are also encouraged to coordinate with their StrikeForce area coordinators and/or partnering entities. USDA’s StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity Initiative is part of our commitment to growing economies, increasing investments and creating opportunities in poverty-stricken rural communities. See www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=STRIKE_FORCE for more information.

b) Collect and synthesize information about the available beginning farmer and rancher education, training, outreach and mentoring curricula (including but not exclusive of curricula funded by USDA) and different audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers based on crop/livestock/product or regional diversity; including access to and suitability of programs to veterans and to limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers, and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. Identify gaps in the existing education, training, outreach and mentoring curricula to address the needs of the different audiences.

c) Evaluate the beginning farmer and rancher education, training, outreach and mentoring programs (including but not exclusively USDA funded) nationwide to identify what is and what is not successful regarding programs and services offered. Depending on the project, success can be measured in different ways, including numbers of participants who completed training, began to farm, continued to farm, adopted different production, marketing and/or business practices, etc. Incorporate these findings to guide curriculum and program development in future years.

2) Develop Curricula and Train-the-Trainer Programs to Fill Identified Gaps:

a) Develop curriculum to address the gaps in existing education, training, outreach and mentoring programs. The Educational Enhancement Teams should ensure that the new curriculum includes modules designed for specific audiences of beginning farmers or ranchers based on their crop/livestock/product (or potential crop/livestock/product/market), regional diversity, or other characteristics (e.g., military veterans, limited-resource or socially-disadvantaged, or farmworkers).

b) Support special projects to incorporate the lessons learned from beginning farmer and rancher program evaluation and to address the gaps identified in curriculum evaluation.

c) Develop and implement train-the-trainer meetings and workshops, both in-person and online, based on the EET-identified and EET-developed curricula, for education, training, outreach and mentoring programs.

Note: The development of both curriculum and train-the-trainer programs should include collaboration with intended audiences (including education/training programs and the ultimate audiences for those programs, that is, beginning farmers and ranchers), pilot testing and formative evaluation, and refinement based on the results of the evaluation.
3) Assist Beginning Farmer and Rancher Training Programs by Collaborating with the Clearinghouse and Beginning Farmer and Rancher Education Providers:

a) Collaborate with the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse to incorporate curricula identified and/or developed by the EET into the Clearinghouse and to facilitate its sharing with education, training, outreach and mentoring programs.

b) Facilitate communication and collaboration among all of the beginning farmer and rancher training, education, mentoring and outreach programs, and with the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse, to enhance successful use of the EET curricula and training in education, training, outreach and mentoring programs.

Educational Enhancement Teams should identify the Project Director (PD) or Co-PD who will be responsible for coordination with the Clearinghouse and with the other funded programs. The submitted budget should reflect the required time and resources (e.g., monthly conference calls, annual in-person meetings) for this coordination.

(3) Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse

Program Code: BFRDC
Program Code Name: Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Clearinghouse
Maximum Award: $200,000 per year for up to five (5) years

The general purpose of the online Clearinghouse is to make available to beginning farmers or ranchers educational curricula and training materials and programs, which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers. It does so in large part by collaborating and facilitating coordination and sharing across all BFRDP programs (both standard and EET projects) and other collaborators.

Duties of the Clearinghouse are as follows:

1) Maintain and enhance an online accessible library for beginning Farmer and Rancher education, training, mentoring and outreach materials produced from projects funded through the BFRDP program and through other sources:

Maintain a national “one-stop” source of beginning farmer and rancher education and training materials and information that can be accessed online. The online database needs to provide access or linkages to beginning farmer and rancher education and training materials developed by projects funded by BFRDP and those developed through other funding sources. These materials could have been developed by Extension and land-grant universities, Community Based Organizations, nongovernmental organizations, other Federal and state agencies, and/or Federally funded activities [such as the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Learning Center, National Agricultural Library, Ag Risk & Farm Management Library, and/or eXtension CoP (existing or new Communities of Practice)] containing content useful to beginning farmers and ranchers and organizations that work with them.
2) Facilitate Sharing, Collaboration and Use of Curricula and Information:

a) Collaborate with all funded Educational Enhancement Team projects and Standard projects in identifying content for the Online Clearinghouse, knowledge gaps, needs, and other appropriate issues;

b) Provide training and assistance to funded EET and Standard grantees in providing their curricula, tools, success stories and other information to the Clearinghouse, and in accessing the information and materials provided by others;

c) Provide regular opportunities for sharing and collaborative learning among EET and Standard projects, such as topical webinars (at least monthly); and

d) Enhance communication among BFRDP projects through regular communications such as a monthly e-newsletter.

3) Assist in Enhancing Outcome-Based Reporting:

a) Collaborate with NIFA and all BFRDP grantees to assist in identifying and improving ways to collect data needed to document outcomes of funded projects;

b) Operate the electronic tool that helps grantees organize and document the results of BFRDP projects. This system provides public access to outcome data and accomplishments of BFRDP and helps grantees organize their data for their annual reports to NIFA. The system allows Educational Enhancement Teams, Standard BFRDP projects, and other interested parties to learn from existing projects and build upon successful programs and materials; and

e) Disseminate information on successful BFRDP programs, Educational Enhancement Team activities and other items of interest to the BFRDP national community, working in close coordination with NIFA leadership, all Standard BFRDP projects and Educational Enhancement Team projects.

Other Key Program Information Applicable to Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse:

Proposals should build upon the information and tools available from the Clearinghouse activities funded under the first round of BFRDP grants; this information is available at http://portal.nifa.usda.gov/web/crisprojectpages/0219667-curriculum-and-training-clearinghouse-for-the-beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program.html.
PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The amount available for NIFA support of this program in FY 2014 is approximately $19.2 million. It is anticipated that approximately $18.2 million will be made available to fund Standard BFRDP Project grants and Educational Enhancement Team Projects and approximately $1 million for the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse.

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

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 2014, you may submit applications to the BFRDP Program as one of the following types of requests:

1. **New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the BFRDP Program. We will review all new applications competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

2. **Renewal application.** This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications; they also must contain a Progress Report (see Project Narrative, Part IV). Renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

3. **Resubmitted application.** This is an application that had previously been submitted to the BFRDP Program but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

4. **Resubmitted renewal application.** This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in the original award. In addition, this is an application that had previously been submitted for renewal to the BFRDP Program but not funded. Therefore, PDs must provide a Progress Report as required under the Project Narrative,
Part IV, and must respond to the previous review panel summary as required under Response to Previous Review, Part IV. Resubmitted renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the areas to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

Applications will be accepted for three (3) project types: (1) Standard BFRDP Projects; (2) Educational Enhancement Team Projects; and (3) Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse.

For Standard BFRDP Projects and Educational Enhancement Team Proposals, applicants must not request more than $250,000 per year for a maximum grant period of three (3) years. Requests exceeding these budgetary guidelines will not be accepted for review.

In addition, all work must be completed within three (3) years. The Statutory time limitation for this project is three (3) years from the project start date on the Award Face Sheet (Form NIFA-2009). Extensions of time beyond the three (3) years will not be permitted.

1. Standard BFRDP Projects:

(a) Standard Grants:
The long-term goals of the Standard BFRDP projects are to enhance the sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers through education, training, mentoring and outreach programs that enhance self-employment in farming, ranching and forestry opportunities. Applications that seek to develop coursework for credit at Colleges and Universities offering four-year degree programs are not appropriate for this program and will not be accepted for review. Applications that seek to educate students for careers in agriculture other than as farmers or ranchers will not be accepted for review. Priority topics are the fourteen topics listed as A. through N. in the Legislative Background (Part I.A of this RFA) and again under Priority Topics for Standard BFRDP Projects (Part I.B.2.a of this RFA).

(b) Development Grants:
Development Grants are intended to assist organizations: (1) to sustain and enhance important collaborations and innovative activities relevant to beginning farmer and rancher programs; and (2) to initiate and develop beginning farmer and rancher project ideas to lead to future program success or success in obtaining other grants for beginning farmer and rancher education. Development grants are only available to organizations that have not previously been successful in obtaining competitive Standard Grants from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture [or its predecessor the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES)].

In FY 2014, a Standard BFRDP Project application that is considered meritorious but ranks below the funding line during the peer review process will be considered for a
Development Grant. **Applicants may not apply directly for Development Grants.** In FY 2014, a limited number of Development Grants will be awarded. Applicants should indicate in the first line of the abstract whether the organization would want the application to also be considered for a Development Grant. If consideration for a Development Grant is desired, the application must include a letter from the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) stating that the organization has never received a competitive award from NIFA (or its predecessor CSREES).

2. **Educational Enhancement Team Projects:**

   The long-term goals of the Educational Enhancement Team projects are to identify gaps in beginning farmer and rancher training by evaluating all existing programs, and to develop and conduct train-the-trainer projects to address these gaps. The Educational Enhancement Teams will periodically collect and analyze information on the impacts of the beginning farmer and rancher programs on specific audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers based on crop or regional diversity, including access and suitability of programs to veteran farmers and ranchers and to limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. The Team also may support special projects for training, coordination, and communication networks, including outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged and/or underserved customers and other clientele groups with particular beginning farmer and rancher education and training needs. To maintain regional balance, priority will be given to applications serving beginning farmer and rancher audiences not served by previously funded Educational Enhancement Teams.

   In addition, all work must be completed within five (5) years. The Statutory time limitation for this project is five (5) years from the project start date on the Award Face Sheet (Form NIFA-2009). Extensions of time beyond the five (5) years will not be permitted.

3. **Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse:**

   The purpose of the Online Clearinghouse is to serve as an online platform and library for curricula, training materials, technical assistance materials and any other appropriate information for beginning farmers and ranchers. The Online Clearinghouse assists NIFA leadership in operating an outcome based results verification system appropriate for use by the BFRDP program, provides archival support for all materials and curricula on beginning farmer education and training, organizes appropriate meetings (in-person, webinars, and conference calls) under the direction of NIFA leadership and collaborates with BFRDP grantees as needed.

   In addition, all work must be completed within five (5) years. The Statutory time limitation for this project is five (5) years from the project start date on the Award Face Sheet (Form NIFA-2009). Extensions of time beyond the five (5) years will not be permitted.
PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may only be submitted by a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of qualified public and/or private entities. These collaborations may include the following entities: State Cooperative Extension Services; Federal, State, or tribal agencies; community based organizations; nongovernmental organizations; junior and four-year colleges or universities or foundations maintained by a college or university; private for-profit organizations; and other appropriate partners. Inclusion of beginning and/or non-beginning farmers and ranchers as part of the collaborative group is strongly encouraged.

Applications submitted by individuals are not eligible for consideration under any category applicable to the BFRDP.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of 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

Pursuant to the authorizing legislation for the BFRDP, NIFA requires that in order to receive an award under this program, the recipient must provide a match in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to 25 percent (25%) of the federal funds provided by the award. The matching funds must be from non-Federal sources except when authorized by statute. An award will not be issued unless all matching funds over the life of the grant are secured with letters of commitment. For third party cash or in-kind support, letters of commitment must be submitted on donor organization letterhead, must include the signature of the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR), must identify the project, by name and purpose, what the funds will support, and must state the exact amount of the matching funds or value of the in-kind support that will be contributed.

There can be no stipulations on the matching amount.