

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.