



May 19, 2014

Dear Colleagues,

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recognizes there are many outstanding contributions that our partners in the Land-grant Universities and other cooperating institutions and organizations have achieved. To recognize these achievements, the Partnership Awards Program was established in 2007.

NIFA invites all Land-grant Universities and cooperating institutions and organizations supported by NIFA to submit nominations for the 2013 NIFA Partnership Awards Program. This program recognizes outstanding contributions, aligned with NIFA strategic goals, in support of the USDA mission. Awards for this year will recognize excellence in:

- Mission Integration of Research, Education, and Extension
- Multistate Efforts
- Innovative Programs and Projects
- Effective and Efficient Use of Resources
- Program Improvement through Global Engagement

Nominations can be submitted for individuals or teams of up to 20 members. Each institution may submit up to two nominations (combined total across all categories), meaning the entire institution including research, education, and extension functions.

Specific instructions and other information regarding this awards program are attached (2014 NIFA Partnership Awards criteria.doc). Nominations must be submitted via the NIFA Partnership Awards Nomination Form, also attached. All signed nomination forms must be submitted by **July 15, 2014**, via email using scanned files that have been saved as .pdf or .jpg files to performance@ars.usda.gov according to instructions in the attached guidelines.

Winning nominations will be recognized at the NIFA Day of Appreciation tentatively scheduled for October 16, 2014. NIFA will pay travel expenses for one person from each winning nomination, whether it is an individual or team award.

Nominations should include only individuals or teams who have performed truly distinguished service. We ask that Deans, Directors, and Administrators thoroughly review each submission for validity of accomplishments before signing his or her approval on the nomination form.

We have many excellent examples of success in these categories across our partnership, and NIFA looks forward to recognizing great accomplishments.

Sonny Ramaswamy
Director

Attachments (2)



PURPOSE

To annually recognize exemplary work from a team or individual at a Land-grant University or other cooperating institution or organization supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). This program will allow recognition of outstanding contributions in support of the NIFA mission that provide an outcome that positively impacts agriculture, the environment, communities, or people.

CATEGORIES

This awards program recognizes outstanding outcomes in the following five categories:

Category I – *Mission Integration of Research, Education, or Extension*

This involves implementation of a program or project which incorporates, in a meaningful way, full integration of research, education, or extension and results in a positive outcome that impacts agriculture, the environment, communities or people.

Category II – *Multistate Efforts*

The program or project must show a partnership with two or more states that responds to critical needs important to each state. It must show how the states contributed by providing enhancement in breadth or depth of resources to the program. The fiscal relationships should represent equity in access and distribution of resources and the individuals or team must show a commitment to evaluation of the impact in all states participating.

Category III – *Innovative Programs and Projects*

The program or project should impress the reviewers with response to an issue or need that combines resources (including disciplines) in innovative ways and/or develops an unusual response to a common problem. The program or project should include response to adverse or critical/emerging regional or national issues, or engagement of stakeholders or customers in program planning or implementation. A positive outcome that impacts agriculture, the environment, communities or people in solving a problem or issue should be evident.

Category IV – *Effective and Efficient Use of Resources*

This would include projects or programs that improved efficiency and effectiveness and resulted in a positive outcome that will have a lasting impact by using:

- Partnerships
- Technologies
- Prioritization of programs / budget allocation
- Reduction of obsolete, or less used, programs
- Innovation
- Risk-taking

Category V – *Program Improvement through Global Engagement*

The program or project should strengthen U.S. agriculture through effective international engagement in research, education, and/or extension. Qualifying international activities could address needs overseas, engender international partnerships and information exchange, develop international markets, promote outreach to American youth, families, and communities, enrich U.S. classroom experiences, and/or hasten research breakthroughs that benefit American agriculture.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for these awards, nominees must be from a Land-grant University or other cooperating institution or organization supported by NIFA.

For team awards, all members of the team must have played a substantial or significant role or made a significant contribution to the work of the project or program. Nominations must include brief but specific documentation of the substantial or significant role of each team member. **Team award nominations are limited to a maximum of 20 members including the team lead. Nominations listing more than 20 members will be disqualified.**

All nominations must be related to programs or projects that have been in place for **at least three of the last five calendar years.**

Each nomination must include a synopsis of the following:

1. Situation to which the program or project responded.
2. Objectives/goals (including expected outcomes).
3. Research, education, or extension project or program developed.
4. What was done (brief).
5. Method(s) for evaluating impact.
6. Measurable outcomes realized to date.

All nominations must be approved and endorsed by the Dean, Director, or Administrator for the lead institution(s). Team awards do not need the signature of the Dean, Director, or Administrator of every person on the team, but at least one Dean or Director must vouch for all team members and must sign the nomination form signifying approval of the nomination of all team members involved.

NIFA employees are not eligible to submit nominations but can be a part of a nomination submitted by a partner institution.

There can be a maximum of two nominations total (combined total across all categories) from any one institution, meaning the entire institution – including research, education, and extension as part of one entire institution.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Nominations must demonstrate how an individual or group pro-actively excelled in one of the five categories listed above.

Nominations must clearly and succinctly be written to demonstrate the following characteristics:

1. Exemplary program impact, including appropriate evaluation of outcomes. Include critical or unique impacts in particular.
2. National or international recognition.
3. Ongoing efforts; the program or project must have been in place for at least 3 of the last 5 calendar years.

NOMINATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURES

Nominations must be submitted using the NIFA Partnership Awards Nomination Form. Justifications must clearly and concisely address the selection criteria shown above.

All signed nomination forms must be submitted by July 15, 2014, via email using scanned files that have been saved as .pdf or .jpg files to performance@ars.usda.gov.

A selection panel will evaluate the nominations and rank nominees in each respective category. The selection panel will focus on the significance, impact, and outcome of the accomplishments and achievements of those nominated. The panel's recommendations will be forwarded to the NIFA Director for final review and approval. Nominators and nominees cannot be a part of the selection process.

NATURE OF RECOGNITION

All awardees will be recognized at the annual NIFA Day of Appreciation tentatively scheduled for October in Washington, DC.

POINT OF CONTACT

Questions regarding this program may be directed to Chevon Gibson (Human Resources Division) at (301) 504-1552 or Kimberly Whittet (NIFA Management and Policy Specialist) at (202) 720-8291.

NIFA Partnership Awards Nomination Form

AWARD CATEGORY (please mark "X" in appropriate box; only one category may be marked)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I. Mission Integration of Research, Education, or Extension
<input type="checkbox"/> II. Multistate Efforts
<input type="checkbox"/> III. Innovative Programs and Projects | <input type="checkbox"/> IV. Effective and Efficient Use of Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> V. Program Improvement through Global Engagement |
|---|--|

NOMINEE (please mark "X" in appropriate box) Individual Team (limit of 20 members)

NAME OF NOMINEE OR TEAM Be sure to include the exact name to be shown on the award.
 (If a team, provide a team name and include each team member's name in the justification below.)

TITLE & INSTITUTION (If a team, provide a title and institution for the lead team member.)

TELEPHONE (include area code)

FAX

E-MAIL

NAME OF NIFA NATIONAL PROGRAM LEADER AFFILIATED WITH PROGRAM OR PROJECT

CITATION (not more than 25 words)

JUSTIFICATION: Using the selection criteria, justify and document the nomination for Category I, II, III, IV, or V. For team nominations, include a brief but specific description for each team member (limit of 20 team members) of their particular substantial or significant role. **DO NOT ATTACH MORE THAN ONE ADDITIONAL 8" x 11" PAGE (ONE-SIDED) FOR INDIVIDUAL NOMINATIONS OR TWO ADDITIONAL 8" X 11" PAGES (ONE SIDED) FOR TEAM NOMINATIONS. USE FONT SIZE AND TYPE NO SMALLER THAN TIMES NEW ROMAN, ARIAL, OR COURIER, 12 POINT. NOMINATIONS EXCEEDING THESE REQUIREMENTS WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.**

NOMINATOR NAME (printed)

NOMINATOR TITLE & INSTITUTION

SIGNATURE OF NOMINATOR

DATE

TELEPHONE (include area code)

FAX

E-MAIL

NAME & TITLE OF DEAN OR DIRECTOR (if not the nominator), **PRINTED**

SIGNATURE OF DEAN OR DIRECTOR