



FAQs: "Nourishing Next Generation Agrifood Breakthroughs" Innovation Challenge

1. What is the total amount of funding available for this opportunity?
We anticipate awarding between \$1M and \$2M total.
2. How many awards will be granted and what are the award amounts?
Up to four awards will be granted in the range of \$350,000 - \$500,000 each.
3. Who is eligible to apply as the principal investigator/team lead (i.e., primary recipient of award)?
The principal investigator/team lead must be an early-career scientist, defined as having received their PhD within the last 10 years. In other words, the principal investigator/team lead must have been awarded their PhD on or after July 29, 2014.
4. Does the principal investigator/team lead have to have a Ph.D.?
Yes, The Principal Investigator must have a Ph.D. but is not required to have a tenure track position. The official academic transcript of the Principal Investigator must show that their Ph.D. was officially conferred before the funding award date (i.e., ~9/30/2024). There are no additional degree requirements for collaborators.
5. I am defending my Ph.D. dissertation this summer. Am I eligible to apply as the Principal Investigator/Team lead of this project?
The Principal Investigator/Team Lead must have been officially awarded their Ph.D. within the past 10 years to be eligible for funding. We anticipate selecting awardees by the end of September 2024. If your university grants a Ph.D. to you before the end of September, you would be eligible to apply as a principal investigator. In other words, to be eligible, your official academic transcript would need to show that your Ph.D. was officially conferred before the funding award date (i.e., ~9/30/2024).



6. Can the principal investigator/team lead be a post-doctoral researcher (i.e., postdoc)?
Yes. Postdocs are welcome to apply as principal investigators/team leads.
7. Can a portion of a project's budget be used to support a postdoc?
Yes. Postdoc support would be an acceptable use of these funds.
8. Can the principal investigator/team lead be employed by USDA or another federal agency?
Yes, USDA scientists and scientists from other federal agencies are eligible to apply as the principal investigator/team lead for this funding opportunity, as long as they meet the other eligibility criteria (see Questions 3 & 4).
9. Are international institutions eligible to apply?
Yes, applications are welcome from international higher education institutions, non-profits, for-profits, and government research agencies. All proposed projects must demonstrate clear potential benefits to U.S. agriculture and food systems.
10. Is the principal investigator/team lead required to be a U.S. citizen?
The principal investigator/team lead is not required to be a U.S. citizen. Successful proposals will present a compelling case for how the proposed project will directly benefit food and nutrition security in the United States.
11. Do teams need to include at least one U.S. citizen?
There is no minimum number of U.S. citizens that must be included on a team. Successful proposals will present a compelling case for how the proposed project will directly benefit food and nutrition security in the United States.
12. What are the major goals of this funding opportunity?
The major goals are to identify and support disruptive, innovative research, technologies and applications to advance food and nutrition security in the United States. Successful projects will integrate and simultaneously address human health and nutrition, climate-smart agricultural solutions, and social equity. The funding opportunity also aims to foster new interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaborations and leverage currently unconnected resources in novel ways.



13. How does this opportunity align with USDA priorities?

It aligns with the [2023-2026 USDA Science and Research Strategy](#) by driving innovations in sustainable, resilient and healthy food systems that simultaneously address nutrition, climate change and social equity.

14. What are the three required themes that proposals must simultaneously integrate?

The three required themes are: 1) Driving Climate-Smart Agricultural Solutions, 2) Bolstering Nutrition Security & Human Health, and 3) Advancing Racial Justice, Equity & Opportunity.

15. What disciplines or subject areas are relevant?

A wide range of disciplines are relevant to address these complex challenges including plant and animal science, precision agriculture, nutrition, climate science, social and behavioral sciences, data science, and more.

16. What are some examples of appropriate project topics?

Some example topics are innovations in optimizing nutrition through food production and distribution, novel nutrient-dense food sources, stabilizing nutrient access during disruptions and providing real-time nutrition and agriculture data.

17. Is there a limit on the number of personnel or institutions involved in the project team?

There is no explicit limit. Applications should describe the full proposed team and their individual roles and include letters of support from key personnel.

18. Are certain institution types specifically encouraged to apply?

Hispanic-serving institutions, 1890s and other Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal colleges, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions are highly encouraged to apply.



19. How do you define the minority-serving institutions of higher education that the Request for Applications states are highly encouraged to apply?

The definitions of minority-serving institutions used for this opportunity follow those used by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture:

- Hispanic-Serving Institutions
- 1890s Land Grant Institutions and other Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- Tribal Colleges and Universities
- Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Serving Institutions
- Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions

20. Can the project teams include non-academics?

Yes, the program encourages collaboration with all eligible entities, which includes non-profit organizations, for-profit companies, and government research agencies in addition to academic institutions.

21. Do the project teams need to already be established or can new teams form?

New interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teams may be formed for this opportunity. Fostering new collaborations is our goal.

22. What are you looking for in terms of team composition and expertise?

Successful applications will propose interdisciplinary and/or transdisciplinary teams that leverage diverse backgrounds, expertise, and skill sets. Confirmed team membership and roles should be described in the application.

23. Do you need to have preliminary data to apply?

No, there is no requirement stated for preliminary data since the focus is on innovative, high-risk ideas from early-career researchers.

24. Are matching funds required or just encouraged?

Matching funds are encouraged but not required for this opportunity.

25. How will preference be given to proposals that include matching funds?

If two or more projects are ranked equally in all other respects, and if a decision is required about which of these projects will advance for further consideration or selection, the project with the most substantial matching funds will be chosen for advancement.



26. Can I apply for this funding opportunity if I have already received funding from FFAR and/or USDA?

Yes. Any projects proposed for funding through this opportunity must not be duplicative of work currently or previously funded by FFAR and/or USDA. This funding may be used to accelerate and develop new dimensions of ongoing projects consistent with the aims of this funding opportunity.

27. What is the project performance period?

The project performance period is 2 years.

28. What are the key components required in the full application?

Key components include project description, data management plan, budget, bio sketches, narrated pre-recorded slide presentation, and letters of support.

29. What is the difference between the Project Description and Approach section (up to 1,000 words) of the application and the Proposal Project Description (up to 2,000)?

The Project Description and Approach section should provide a relatively high-level overview of what you seek to accomplish and how you intend to do it. The Proposal Project Description provides an opportunity to elaborate on the key details of your project by addressing the questions listed under that heading in the Request for Applications. Use the space allotted in these two sections to provide as complete a description as possible of the proposed work and its likely outcomes.

30. Is a narrated pre-recorded slide presentation (i.e., video abstract) required as part of the application?

Yes, a pre-recorded 3-minute narrated pre-recorded 3-slide presentation is required.

31. What is the purpose of the narrated pre-recorded slide presentation component?

The narrated 3-minute, 3-slide presentation allows applicants to concisely pitch their project's challenges, solutions and potential impacts.

32. What are the acceptable file types and maximum file size for the narrated pre-recorded slide presentation that must be uploaded with my application?

The acceptable file types are .ppt and .pptx. The maximum file size is 200MB. Contact the FFAR Grants Team (grants@foundationfar.org) if you encounter difficulties uploading your presentation.



33. How will applications be evaluated and by whom?
Applications go through a technical peer review, then top-ranked proposals go to an executive selection committee for further review and final selection.
34. What are the key dates and deadlines for this opportunity?
Complete applications must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on July 29, 2024.
35. Where should applications be submitted?
Applications must be submitted through FFAR's online Grant Management System, accessible by clicking "Start New Application" or "Access Saved Application" on [FFAR's website here](#).
36. What reporting requirements will awarded projects have?
Awarded projects must provide 6-month interim updates, annual scientific and financial reports, and a final report within 90 days of project completion.
37. Who should I contact if I have questions about the application process?
Contact grants@foundationfar.org for questions about the application process.
38. Who should I contact if I have questions about the scientific program priorities?
Contact lodom@foundationfar.org or john.rothlisberger@usda.gov for scientific program questions.
39. Will there be an informational webinar about this opportunity?
Yes, an informational webinar was held on June 13, 2024. A recording of the webinar is available on [FFAR's website](#). A follow-up webinar to discuss Frequently Asked Questions from potential applicants will be held on July 10, 2024. [Register here](#) for more information.
40. What opportunities will there be for networking and collaboration as part of the award?
Awardees will gain access to collaboration and networking opportunities with USDA and FFAR scientists and leaders.
41. Are there any special requirements around stakeholder engagement?
Yes, applications must describe plans for one or more convenings or other stakeholder engagement activities.