

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **NATIVE AMERICAN AGRICULTURE FUND (NAAF) 2019 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

All applicants for 2019 NAAF grant funding are directed to the Request for Applications (RFA) on our website at [NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/grants](http://NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/grants) for more detailed instructions. This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is meant to offer additional guidance for common questions that may arise. If your questions are not addressed within this FAQ, and you need further assistance, please contact NAAF staff at: [grants@NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org](mailto:grants@NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org). All applicants are encouraged to refer frequently to the NAAF Trust Agreement for further guidance: [NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/trust-agreement/](http://NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/trust-agreement/). All applicants are also encouraged to print out the full application and the questions within the online application system, located on the NAAF website [NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/grants/](http://NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/grants/), as a guide for preparation and submittal.

#### Applicant Eligibility

##### **1. Who is eligible to apply for NAAF Awards?**

Organizations must be one of four types of eligible entities as identified in the Trust Agreement:

- Nonprofit organizations with IRS Section 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, or if such status has not yet been achieved, such organizations may apply for funding through a Fiscal Sponsor that has received such 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status;
- Educational organizations described in Section 170(b)(1)(A)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code;
- Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), including Certified Native CDFIs and Emerging Native CDFIs, provided, however, that such CDFI is a tax-exempt organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- An instrumentality of a state or federally recognized Tribe, including a non-profit organization chartered under the tribal law of a state or federally recognized Tribe, that furnishes assistance designed to further Native farming and ranching activities, provided, however, that 1) the use of any grant funds by such grant recipient is restricted exclusively to charitable and educational purposes; 2) the grant recipient is required to annually provide NAAF with audited financial statements and reports as required by NAAF; 3) if the grant recipient is a governmental entity, it is required to provide a limited waiver of sovereign immunity with respect to the NAAF's right to enforce the terms of the grant (i.e. the amount of funding awarded); and 4) if the grant is awarded, the recipient must agree to comply with all expenditure responsibility requirements designed by NAAF. (NOTE: The limited waiver of sovereign immunity will not be required when the application is submitted; instead applicants can wait until successful award notifications have been received. The waivers must be submitted to NAAF prior to any award funding distribution.)

Organizations must have provided and plan to provide business assistance, agricultural education, technical support, or advocacy services to Native farmers and ranchers.

Organizations must base their work in the United States.

Organizations must propose projects that will provide assistance designed to further Native farming and ranching activities that will directly benefit Native farmers and ranchers.

Organizations must use any award made exclusively for charitable and educational purposes described in Section 170(c)(2)(B) of the IRS Code.

## **2. Are any organizations excluded from funding?**

Yes. Entities not meeting one of the nonprofit, educational, CDFI or tribal-specific designation requirements in the answer to FAQ Question #1 are excluded from applying. If your organization is awaiting 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS, you are allowed to apply utilizing a fiscal sponsor.

## **3. I was a Keepseagle Class member. Can I receive an award from NAAF?**

As described in FAQ Question #1 above, only specific nonprofit organizations, educational organizations, CDFIs and designated tribal entities are allowed to receive awards from NAAF. The NAAF Trust Agreement specifically outlines eligible entities. Individuals are not eligible to receive grants directly under NAAF. Loans are also not allowed under the NAAF Trust Agreement. Entities receiving funds will be required to use the funds to provide services to Native farmers and ranchers, or those seeking to become farmers and ranchers.

## **4. Who is included as “Native American” in the eligibility requirements regarding serving Native American farmers and ranchers? Are Alaska Natives included? Are Native Hawaiians included?**

NAAF is following several definitions in response to this question. A Native American includes any person who meets one or more of the requirements listed below:

- Is a member of a tribe, band, nation, or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation (as established in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act) which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians, also known as a “federally recognized tribe,” or
- Is a member of any Indian group that has been formally recognized as an Indian tribe by a State legislature or other similar organization vested with State tribal recognition authority, also known as a “state recognized tribe,” or
- Is a member of any Indian tribe or “Native group” (according to 43 U.S.C. § 1602.(c) and (d)) that asked the United States government for Federal recognition

NOTE: The applicant must meet one of the four types of eligible entities. Applicant has the burden of proof that it is applying as one of the four types of eligible entities.

**5. What is meant by “agriculture”? Is it limited to the specific types of agricultural activities that the USDA will consider funding through the farm loan program?**

NAAF is not bound by USDA’s definition of covered agriculture for purposes of the farm loan program or other programs available through the federal government. NAAF’s preliminary definition of Native agriculture is as follows: Native agriculture reflects ancient subsistence practices. It is the gathering, producing, harvesting and preserving of plants and animals for food and fiber by Native/Indian/Indigenous people. Native agriculture supports family, community, tribe, and country, and often incorporates ceremonial, traditional and cultural values.

**6. For what activities can an award be used?**

Entities receiving funds will be required to use the funds to provide services to Native farmers and ranchers, including those seeking to become farmers and ranchers, to support and promote their continued engagement in agriculture.

Funds may be used for: project support, re-grants, scholarships, re-lending or capital expenditures.

**7. Can we request funding for a combination of the above (project support, re-grants, scholarships re-lending and/or capital expenditures)?**

Yes. A single application may include a mix of funds requested for project support, scholarships, re-grants and/or capital expenditures. For example, an applicant may request funds for program staff and re-grants together in one project budget. Project applications must follow the instructions contained within the RFA and should restrict their requested funds to the types of projects for which NAAF is seeking applications in the 2019 RFA process.

**8. Can we request funds for general support?**

No, funds will not be provided for general support. All applications funded must be focused on discrete and identifiable projects.

**9. Do we need to create a new project in order to be eligible for NAAF funds?**

NAAF will consider projects that describe activities for which you are seeking continuation funding. In other words, you are allowed to have a project currently underway, but apply to NAAF for funding to continue the work undertaken in the project to reach new audiences or to improve original projects. Not all projects need to be new. Future RFAs may allow for continuation funding as well, but those determinations will be made at a later date.

**10. Are any activities excluded from funding?**

The following applicants/uses of funds are NOT eligible under this 2019 Request for Applications:

- a) Entities that do not provide business assistance, agriculture education, technical support or advocacy services to Native farmers and ranchers
- b) Work based outside the United States or its territories
- c) Projects that do not provide assistance designed to further the success of Native farmers and ranchers or provide resources designed to further such success
- d) Projects that seek funding predominately to provide outreach on USDA programs and services (resources for those types of activities are already provided by USDA, therefore use of NAAF funds to provide redundant activity support is unallowable)
- e) Projects that do not provide assistance that impacts and assists individual Native farmers and ranchers
- f) Projects that assist individual Native farmers and ranchers, but the services are not agriculture-related
- g) Use of funds that are not restricted exclusively to charitable and educational purposes described in IRS Section 170(c)(2)(B)
- h) Use of funds for emergency direct financial funding to Native farmers and ranchers, such as addressing natural disasters (those funds are already provided by USDA and are not allowable under this 2019 application); however funds that are used to provide generalized non-individual, non-financial support to Native farmers and ranchers facing or recovering from a disaster may be eligible
- i) Use of funds for litigation; however, offering of legal services important to Native farmers and ranchers is allowable (this can include, but is not limited to: estate planning, land purchase agreements, understanding of legal rights, contract negotiation and other typical services important to those engaged in agriculture)
- j) Use of funds for lobbying or political activity as defined by the IRS, which is influencing legislation (other forms of advocacy are eligible activities)
- k) Entities that are educational organizations but that do not have an established record of working with, by and through Native farmers and ranchers are not eligible for funding, unless they partner with a Native-controlled educational organization and such Native-controlled educational organization is the lead applicant on the project

### **11. What types of legal services may receive funding?**

Non-litigation legal services that assist Native farmers and ranchers are eligible for funding under NAAF. This includes, for example, legal services related to contract review and formation, property transactions, estate planning, credit repair, advice on farm programs, administrative appeals and general policy analysis or education work (other than policy work that influences legislation).

### **12. Can awards go to organizations that serve non-Natives?**

Organizations that serve a broader population may be eligible. However, award funds would have to be directed toward Native farmers and ranchers only. For example, a youth program that works to help the next generation of farmers and ranchers nationwide could be eligible if their application proposes funding for a program targeted to Natives, such as youth on a specific reservation, but not for other programs serving non-Natives.

**13. Can awards be used to serve Native communities that include, but are not limited to, farmers and ranchers?**

There are many needs in the Native communities and many worthy organizations seeking to meet those needs. However, these funds must be expended in accordance with the terms of the NAAF Trust Agreement which provides that awards must only be used for the benefit of Native farmers and ranchers to support their involvement with agriculture. Thus, programs which address non-agricultural issues, such as housing, would not become eligible just because some of the individuals served happen to be Native farmers or ranchers. However, an organization that serves a broader Native population but will use award funds specifically for Native farmers and ranchers may be eligible. For example, a community development financial institution (CDFI) that makes low-interest loans to small businesses generally could receive an award if the funds were going to be used solely for making such loans to Native farmers and ranchers, but the loans must support agricultural activity.

**14. Can grants include food processing activities?**

In order for food processing activities to be covered, there would have to be a direct involvement of Native farmers and ranchers, not simply supporting a food processing business that might buy its inputs from Native farmers and ranchers. Thus, if a farmer wanted to expand into processing some of his or her own produce for higher market value items, or if ranchers wanted to organize a cooperatively owned slaughtering and processing facility, then such activities could be supported with NAAF funds so long as the applicant is an eligible entity identified in the Trust Agreement. If a processing plant or food hub or other processing facility making value-added food products seeks funding, the application must specifically state the involvement of Native farmers and ranchers throughout the processing activities and the benefit Native farmers and ranchers will gain by participating with the processing facility. All other eligibility requirements must also be met.

**15. Can grants include research, for instance, on the health value of traditional Native foods?**

Projects that focus only on research will not be considered for funding during this program cycle. In addition, projects that focus only on health-related issues will also not be considered for funding during this program cycle. NAAF will allow curriculum development to occur within a funded project scope, but only if delivery of the curriculum during the project period occurs. Stand-alone curriculum development projects will not be funded; delivery to Native farmers and ranchers is essential. NAAF is looking for projects that deliver developed content with practical application to the success of Native farmers and ranchers.

Awards

**16. What is the maximum award that can be issued?**

The maximum award size depends upon the type of project for which funding is sought. Special Emphasis projects have a maximum allowable award of \$75,000 per project. Targeted grants do not have a limit to the amount requested.

**17. Over what period of time must award funds be spent? May we apply now for an award that will fund future work?**

Funding for specific, eligible programs may be requested for expenditures expected to be made within 24 months (2 years) of receipt of an award. NAAF will consider future requests for no cost extensions of time to complete the funded project deliverables/activities. Applicants are free to request projects of a less than 2-year time frame for implementation. Your application and related documents (budget and budget justifications) must be clear as to the length of time your project will utilize for implementation.

**18. Can awards be renewed?**

Project awards must be complete within 24 months of start date. NAAF will entertain future requests to continue projects awarded in this cycle. Applications submitted in the 2019 RFA process should not describe project activities past the 24-month time frame.

**19. What reports are due at the end of the award period?**

All successful applicants will be required to provide periodic progress reports through an online or hard-copy system (as determined applicable by NAAF to the project funded). Those periodic progress reports will be required by deadlines outlined in the funding agreement which all successful applicants will be required to execute with NAAF before funds are transferred.

**20. When will award recipients be announced?**

All efforts will be made to make final determinations for funding no later than December 1, 2019 so that successful applicants can be notified by that deadline or shortly thereafter, grant agreements finalized, and funds dispersed as soon as possible. Project start dates will be determined once this process is concluded, but all project start dates will be in 2020.

**21. Will all eligible applicants receive funding?**

No. There is a limited amount of money available during the 2019 RFA process and applications could exceed the total funds available to distribute. NAAF Board of Trustees will determine how much funding to release for project funding during each subsequent year. The funding levels for which applications will be sought, and the types of applications which will be sought may change from year to year.

Application Process

**22. How many applications can an organization submit?**

An organization is allowed to submit one application, but the application itself can include funding requests for multiple projects or a mix of allowable projects, so long as the applicant is an eligible entity for the project described and so long as a separate narrative of the project and a separate budget and budget justification are included for each component of the project is included in the application.

### **23. Can I submit a paper application?**

Yes. Paper applications (hard copy, type-written) are allowed but must be postmarked and date-stamped no later than Monday, September 30, 2019 at 11:59 pm CDT in order to be accepted.

### **24. When are applications due?**

Monday, September 30, 2019 at 11:59 pm CDT is the deadline for all applications. This deadline applies to online applicants and to hard-copy submittal applicants. Online applicants are required to have a completed application uploaded and submitted through the online system by this deadline; hard-copy applicants are required to send their application with a postmarked date and time stamp that is in compliance with the same deadline.

### **25. Why are tribal or board resolutions required as part of the application process?**

The NAAF Trust Agreement includes various requirements for the eligibility of applicants that will be allowed to apply for NAAF funding. If the applicant must secure a Tribal or board resolution prior to submitting proposals for funding, then those resolutions should be included in the application. If a Tribal government application requires resolution before applications may be submitted, then those resolutions should be included in the application. Limited waivers of sovereign immunity are required by the Trust Agreement, and there is specific guidance related to those documents reflecting eligibility.

### **26. Can NAAF provide assistance with writing an application?**

No. NAAF staff, the review panel and the NAAF Board of Trustees must remain completely unbiased in their work, which will ultimately lead to funding recommendations and final funding decisions. Therefore, the only assistance NAAF can provide is to a) help organizations determine whether or not they and their programs are eligible entities, and b) how to use the website (or a hard-copy submittal process) to submit an application, or c) specific questions providing details regarding submittal. NAAF staff, reviewers or Trustees will not comment on or strategize with applicants concerning their particular project. If you have questions in these areas, please contact: [grants@NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org](mailto:grants@NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org).

### Budget

### **27. What does NAAF look for in a project budget?**

NAAF will take into consideration the size of the budget request in relation to the organization's annual operating budget and its existing expenditures on programs serving Native farmers and ranchers. Another factor NAAF will consider will be a demonstration of the applicant's ability to manage the funds awarded.

**28. Are indirect expenses allowed to be covered in the application budget? If so, what is the percentage allowed?**

Indirect expenses of up to 15% are allowed. NAAF reserves the right to raise or lower indirect costs allowed within future RFA processes, based on stakeholder comments and the successes or challenges faced by successful applicants during implementation of their project.

**29. Are matching funds required?**

No. Cost share, in-kind or matching funds is not required for NAAF funding. However, while not required, these funds can be listed or noted as such in the grant application budget or budget narrative. In-kind, third party contributions are encouraged but not required. An application will be reviewed to see if the entity applying has the capacity to responsibly manage an award. An organization should seek funding commensurate with its capacity.

**30. Is there a cap on overhead a non-intermediary may receive from an award?**

Yes. We understand that effective programs require some overhead for staff and other expenses. However, we also must ensure that as much of these funds as possible is put to work directly benefitting Native farmers and ranchers. Please see the response to FAQ Question #28.

Intermediaries

**31. What is an intermediary? Are intermediary projects allowed?**

An intermediary is an organization that makes grants to support other, smaller organizations or which provides funding to individuals or groups, such as through scholarships or re-grants or loans. Intermediary projects are allowed. However, intermediary applicants must be clear as to their role in the project described and must identify how they will monitor success within their described project.

**32. What additional requirements are there for intermediaries?**

Applicants for intermediary funding must demonstrate a record of successfully assisting nonprofits and communities, normally including experience in grantmaking, scholarships or loans, and that they have the ability to provide adequate due diligence for a re-granting, loan or scholarship program.

**33. Does a CDFI apply as a regular applicant or an intermediary?**

If a CDFI seeks funds specifically to make grants or low-interest loans, the intermediary section of the application should be included and their role in the project must be detailed.



**34. What criteria or factors will be considered when reviewing or evaluating applications?**

- a) Proposed Results (30% weight). The extent to which the project includes clear statements of what the applicant anticipates Native farmers and ranchers will understand, analyze, develop, decide, or implement through participation in the project; how realistic and attainable the estimated number of Native farmers and ranchers to be reached is; the relative level of rigor associated with the Native farmer and rancher activities; and the degree to which the results anticipated speak to NAAF priorities. This category also will focus on whether the results as identified as a priority for investment of NAAF funds are important to the intended audience. As to CDFI applicants, the applicant will examine the amount and number of potential loans it will provide to Native farmers and ranchers. For educational organizations or education-focused projects, the applicant will describe the number of students and/or current or future Native farmers and ranchers to be served and the proposed results from the project within this target audience, including the benefits students will experience by engaging with the project. For Tribal governments, the applicant should discuss the proposed results that investment in the proposed activity will provide for Native farmers and ranchers. Discussion of proposed results should be included within each of the Special Emphasis areas for which funding may be sought by an eligible applicant.
- b) Farmer and Rancher Demand (20% weight). The applicant must demonstrate that the demand for the proposed activities exists within the Native farmer and rancher community they are seeking to serve. They must describe Native farmer and rancher willingness to participate in the activities proposed and the indicators (if any) that reflect interest in the proposed project activities. The clear identification of the intended audience is required, as is the identification of the location of the intended audience. As to CDFI applicants, the applicant will examine the demand for loans among an identified target audience. As to educational organizations or education-focused projects conducted by nonprofit organizations or by Tribal governments, the applicant will discuss perceived demand for the content being delivered through the proposed project and should also project the number of anticipated participants. For Tribal governments, the applicant should discuss the demand for value-added agricultural activities among those Native farmers and ranchers who will be affected by and served through the funded project. Discussion of Native farmer and rancher demand should be included within each of the Special Emphasis areas for which funding may be sought by an eligible applicant.
- c) Team/Organizational Capacity and Collaborators (15% weight). NAAF is interested in evaluating the skills, knowledge and experience of the project team and organization to effectively deliver on the project activities as proposed, and NAAF is interested in encouraging and supporting effective collaborations that will increase the likelihood of Native farmer and rancher success and participation in the project. Effectiveness is demonstrated by skills, knowledge and experience in the area and access to Native farmers and ranchers. Among CDFIs, applicants will describe the qualifications and experience of the team within the organization focused on loan and/or technical assistance delivery to Native farmers and ranchers. Among educational organizations, nonprofit organizations or tribal governments, the applicant will identify the relative qualifications

and experience of primary project personnel and any identified partners or collaborators. For Tribal governments, the applicant should discuss the skills and/or professional qualifications of those who will be engaged for the project. Discussion of team/organizational capacity and collaborators should be included within each of the Special Emphasis areas for which funding may be sought by an eligible applicant.

- d) Impact on Access to Credit (10% weight). NAAF is interested in projects that encompass addressing the core issues regarding Native farmer and rancher access to credit. All applicants will identify how and to what extent the project focuses on core access to credit issues of Native farmers and ranchers. As the issue of access to credit is important to NAAF regardless of the project funded, all project eligible entities should discuss the impact on improving access to credit for Native farmers and ranchers. For all project applicants, the applicant should discuss what impact the project will have on the improved ability of Native farmers and ranchers to access credit and/or their successfulness. Discussion of impact on access to credit should be addressed within each of the Special Emphasis areas for which funding may be sought by an eligible applicant.
- e) Results (10% weight). The effectiveness of the plan for evaluating and tracking Native farmer and rancher success or participation (results) is required. NAAF will examine whether these results are measurable and whether there is a good plan for tracking results. For all categories of eligible entities and project focus areas, the applicant should identify how results will be achieved and in what manner, as well as the plans for evaluating and tracking target audience success or participation. Be as specific as possible. For educational organizations, the applicant should discuss what the anticipated results of education content delivery will be among the target audience of Native farmers and ranchers or future Native farmers and ranchers. For Tribal governments, the applicant should discuss what result the funding of the proposed project will have on the ability to track success among Native farmers and ranchers served by the project. Discussion of results proposed should be included within each of the Special Emphasis areas for which funding may be sought by an eligible applicant.
- f) Innovation (10% weight). NAAF will evaluate the extent to which the project employs innovative approaches to develop or deliver business assistance, technical support, agricultural education or advocacy and the materials or tools to do so; and how well the applicant builds upon existing knowledge in the field and/or collaborates with others so that broader dissemination of knowledge can occur and more efficient use of tools can be achieved. For all categories of eligible entities or projects, this category will identify and discuss innovative aspects of the project design and delivery methods. Discussion of innovation proposed should be included within each of the Special Emphasis areas for which funding may be sought by an eligible applicant.
- g) Wide application and replicability (5% weight). NAAF is interested in the extent to which the proposed project might have wider application, allow for adaptation to specialized audiences, improve marketing and promotion techniques, encourage new methodologies or have intertribal application and replicability. For all types of eligible applicants or projects, this category will identify and discuss replicability potential. Discussion of application and potential replicability should be included within each of the Special Emphasis areas for which funding may be sought by an eligible applicant.

### **35. Does NAAF have a conflict of interest policy?**

Yes. All NAAF staff and all NAAF Board of Trustee members are required to comply with Conflict of Interest policies. Anyone involved in evaluating the applications will recuse themselves from evaluating any applications from organizations or entities with which they have a conflict of interest or an appearance of conflict of interest.

### **36. What will happen after I submit an application?**

Applications will be screened first to determine whether the applicant is an eligible entity. If the applicant is an eligible entity their application will be reviewed by the review panel. All applications will be reviewed by the review panel unless they have been disqualified for one of three reasons: 1) failure to provide evidence of eligible entity status; 2) failure to include all required forms and information within their submitted application; or 3) failure to submit their application by the closing deadline.

The review panel will consider all evaluation criteria factors when deciding which organizations to submit to the Board of Trustees for final decisions for possible funding.

### **37. What will happen to the information and documents I submit during the NAAF process?**

All information and documents received during this process are held in confidence and will become a part of the records of NAAF.

#### Contact

### **38. If I have questions about eligibility, the application process or the application website, how can I get answers? Is there a way to contact someone to ask questions not covered in this FAQ document?**

Please be advised that NAAF staff can only answer questions pertaining to the application system, the RFA and the application process. We cannot advise you on your application scope, project design, budget, or application responses to questions. To provide information, NAAF will receive questions through multiple avenues:

Webinars on the application process will be conducted:

- Registration Links for GoToWebinar
  - Aug 13: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7926956968599810828>
  - Aug 20: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7635393972704348940>
  - Sep 3: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6861891940610329100>
- a) After the webinars, a recording will be archived and will be accessible from the NAAF website at [NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/grants-webinar](http://NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/grants-webinar).
- b) Assistance by email is available by sending your question(s) to [grants@NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org](mailto:grants@NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org).
- c) Assistance by phone is available by calling (479)-445-6226 between 8:00a.m. and 4:00

p.m. CDT, Monday through Friday except on holidays. Calls going to voicemail will be handled in the order in which they were received. We are expecting a high volume of calls so please expect 24-48 hours for your technical assistance request to be answered.

**39. Will NAAF update these FAQs?**

Yes, NAAF will provide updates of these FAQs if warranted and any updated FAQ will be available on the NAAF website at [NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/grants](http://NativeAmericanAgricultureFund.org/grants). Please check the website throughout your application process so that you are reviewing the most updated version of the FAQ. If no additional FAQs are warranted, then no updates will occur. NAAF anticipates that there may be new FAQs based on inquiries we receive.

Thank you for your interest in the 2019 Request for Applications. We look forward to receiving your applications for possible funding.