



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

Federal Demonstration Partnership

Federal Agency Updates

August 2012

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE



USDA NIFA

Update Overview

- Changes in NIFA Personnel
- Changes in Terms and Conditions
- Discussion on No-Cost Extensions
- Grantee Outreach Activities
- Policy Statement
- Communications Assessment & Strategic Communications Planning

Change in Agency Personnel

Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy

- May 7 – appoint as NIFA Director
- Previously dean of Oregon State University's College of Agriculture Sciences and director of Oregon Agricultural Experiment Station

Edward Nwaba

- August 13 – Director of Awards Management Division
- Formerly Chief of NIFA's Oversight Branch

Changes to NIFA Award Terms and Conditions

- Deletion of items that are also included in Appendix C, National Policy Requirements (e.g. reporting subawards and executive compensation, requirement to be registered in SAM, etc.)
- Addition of research integrity article and expansion of research misconduct language
- Change in REEport implementation date to FY 2013.

2nd No-cost Extension Pilot

- Ran from December 1, 2004 to September 30, 2005.
- It explored whether it would be feasible for agency to eliminate the requirement for agency approval on second no-cost extension requests.
- Agency did not pursue expansion of pilot
- The pilot has concluded.

1st Time No-cost Extension for Multi-year Awards

- The extended date will not be accepted by agency **if** there are overdue annual reports (technical or financial)
- Could be problematic if award expires:
 - May potentially fall in a situation of having to justify “extenuating circumstances”.
 - At risk for ASAP account being placed on “manual review”, which restricts the awardees' ability to draw funds.

Grantee Outreach Activities

- 1890s Conference – Agenda set by LGIs
- Monthly teleconferences with 1890s
- Webinars held with the HSIs
- NIFA Asst. Director-OGFM Contacted 37% of all Tribal College Presidents & calls continue.
- Plan teleconferences with Insular Areas
- Attended Administrators Officers' Conference
- Participating in Regional Conferences

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NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Statement

The NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Statement is a comprehensive guidance document that updates and expands the current guidance documents and administrative manuals for competitive and formula grants.

NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Statement

Sources of Requirements:

- Program Legislation
- Appropriations Legislation
- USDA & NIFA Regulations
- OMB Circulars (as codified)
- Executive Orders
- Government-Wide and NIFA Terms and Conditions
- National Public Policy

NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Statement

August 2012	Complete internal NIFA/OGC review
Mid-Sept. 2012	Final Draft with NIFA & OGC comments released for 60 day public comment period (published on Regulations.gov)
Nov./Dec. 2012	NIFA review and consideration of public comments
Early 2013	Final Policy Statement published

Next Presentation

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Communications Assessment &
Strategic Communications Planning

Communications Assessment

- Communications assessment an outgrowth of recommendations identified in the Organizational Assessment and organizational/operational goals detailed within OGFM's Vision-Based Strategic Plan during FY11
- Feedback regarding internal/external communications were collected through various methods:
 - Working discussions
 - Group working discussions
 - Online questionnaire of both internal staff and grantees

Internal and External Communication Plans

- 12 foundational communication strategies developed, 6 internal and 6 external
 - Examples include:
 - Centralized communication coordination
 - Triage of inbound issues
 - Professional development related to communications and customer service
 - More targeted outreach through continued implementation of Grantee Outreach Program pilot
- Strategies designed to create a more positive communication environment through:
 - Strengthened communication
 - Greater engagement/robust dialogue with key stakeholders
 - Increased overall satisfaction amongst internal staff and grantees

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