

Rural Futures Institute Competitive Awards Program 2016 Research & Engagement Proposals

*All proposals must be electronically uploaded as a single PDF document to
<http://ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/2016REaward>*

Proposal deadline: March 15, 2016, 4:00 PM Central Time
Award notification: June 15, 2016
Starting date: July 1, 2016

Scope: Up to four awards will be made with \$100,000 maximum per award. The project time period will not exceed 24 months.

I. BACKGROUND

The University of Nebraska is committed to establishing a transformative Rural Futures Institute (RFI). The RFI vision, mission and core values are the fundamental underpinnings for this request for proposals.

Vision

The RFI will be a locally, nationally and internationally recognized leader focused on increasing community capacity as well as the confidence of rural people to address their challenges and opportunities, resulting in resilient and sustainable rural futures.

Mission

Through a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, the Rural Futures Institute mobilizes the diverse resources of the University of Nebraska and its partners to support rural communities and regions in building upon their unique strengths and assets to achieve their desired futures.

Core Values

The work commissioned and supported by the RFI must be guided by the Institute's core values:

- *Bold*
- *Innovative*
- *Collaborative*
- *Transdisciplinary*
- *Agile*
- *Reflective*

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the RFI Competitive Awards Program is to foster the development of research and engagement work that addresses critical challenges and opportunities facing rural areas. These awards are to function as "seed grants" that are designed to lay the foundation for grant requests to funding sources external to the University of Nebraska or sustainable funding through other mechanisms such as fees and contracts.



Although all of the core values underpin this Competitive Awards Program, successful proposals must explicitly address **transdisciplinary** and **collaborative** considerations both internal and external to the University. Transdisciplinary research uses a research strategy that crosses many disciplinary boundaries to create a holistic approach. Additionally, if the RFI is to be successful, it must create an environment in which deep and meaningful collaborative partnerships are the norm: across campuses; across departments and disciplines; and with external stakeholders such as other non-University campuses, communities, state and local government, trade associations, civic groups and the philanthropic community. These collaborative partnerships are the essence of engaged research or “engagement.” Engaged research establishes reciprocal relationships of mutual respect and understanding. The mindset and attitude must be one of doing research “with the community”, rather than doing research “for the community” or “to the community.” Finally, proposals are expected to be **innovative** and **bold** in their proposed action, partnerships and outcomes.

It is important to note that the issues facing rural areas include economic considerations but not to the exclusion of other equally important considerations. Basic human services such as health care and education present both challenges and opportunities to rural people and places. Even broader considerations are the natural environment and the civic, cultural, design and artistic aspect of human and community development that cannot easily be counted and measured, nor justified only in terms of economic returns. This competitive awards program encourages proposals in which progress and viability are defined by the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental considerations.

III. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- University faculty and staff as well as Nebraska community members and non-NU higher education faculty/staff are welcome to apply, however, either the Principal Investigator (PI) or a co-Principal Investigator (co-PI) must be affiliated with NU and take responsibility for administering the award funds.
- Collaboration with partners external to the University of Nebraska is strongly encouraged.
- An individual may serve as the PI for only one proposal but may serve as a (co-PI) on one or more proposals.

IV. REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel that will include both academic and non-academic representation. This panel will prioritize applications for funding based upon the criteria provided in Sections V and IX of this RFP. Final approval of proposals to be funded will be made by the Executive Director of the Rural Futures Institute.

V. SELECTION CRITERIA

1. Potential to result in contributions to and measurable outcomes consistent with the RFI vision and mission.
2. Compatibility with the RFI core values, especially transdisciplinary, collaborative, innovative and bold considerations.
3. Potential to increase competitiveness for future external funding that is consistent with the vision and mission of the RFI.
4. Matching funds are not required but may increase the likelihood a proposal will be selected for funding.

VI. EXPECTATIONS

Those proposals ultimately funded will have certain expectations of the PI and the key personnel including the following:

- Participation in a working group composed of RFI grant recipients. It is anticipated this group will meet at least once per academic year to share 'best practices' and lessons learned around innovative and creative processes and strategies unique to the research and engagement work undertaken.
- Recipients are expected to demonstrate sharing their insights and findings at a variety of appropriate venues including conferences, such as the Rural Futures Conference, and refereed publications.
- Recipients are expected to actively pursue external funding sources and submit a proposal for external funding within 24 months following the initial RFI award. Failure to do so may disqualify the applicant from future RFI funding competitions.
- A final report is required and due to the RFI no later than one month following the conclusion of the project.

VII. FUNDING LIMITATIONS

Funds **may** be used for wages and salaries of faculty and staff (provided the award is not used to generate salary savings), graduate and undergraduate students and other key personnel; as well as operating expenses such as databases, supplies and travel that are directly related to the project. Funds **may not** be used for any of the following purposes:

- Indirect costs
- To replace current funding*;
- Remodeling, renovation or construction;
- Recruitment or start-up packages for new hires; and
- Items for purposes not exclusive to the project, such as desktop or laptop computers, printers, software and related accessories and general office supplies.

* In general, RFI funding cannot be used to replace current salary funding. Exceptions can be made if the salary savings are needed to backfill positions that allow the PI or other team members to meet current program commitments. Summer salary or positions funded with "soft" dollars are allowed. Exceptions should be explained in the Budget Justification section.

VIII. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS AND APPLICATION FORMAT:

The entire proposal must be submitted as a single PDF document. Please use single spacing and Times New Roman (or similar) 11-point font with one-inch margins on the title page, abstract and narrative. The proposal, including the required administrative approval form, must be received via email at ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/2016REaward by 4 p.m. (Central time) on Tuesday, March 15, 2016.

Each completed proposal will include the following eight components **in order**:

1. Title Page Information *(entered online, required for submission)*

- Project Title
- Total RFI Funding Requested (\$)
- Principal Investigator (name, title, affiliation, telephone, email)
- Co-Principal Investigator(s) (name, title, affiliation, telephone, email)
- Other Partners (if applicable)

2. Research and Engagement Proposal: Administrative Approval Form – signed (1 page) (See A-1)

The person who signs this form should be the PI or co-PI from the University of Nebraska who will administer the award funds. Include his/her campus address as well as the PI or co-PI signature. It also requires signatures of the appropriate campus administrators, verifying submission approval.

3. Abstract (1/2 page – abstract on separate page from project narrative)

Summarize the purpose, importance, expected outcomes and key activities/milestones of the proposal.

4. Project Narrative: (6-page maximum)

- The project narrative is limited to six single-spaced pages, using Times New Roman (or similar) 11-point font and one-inch margins
- The project narrative should include the following:
 - **Context/Justification:** Provide the background/rationale for the project, including why the topic/scope is critical to the future of rural areas, and its linkage to the RFI's vision and mission. What is the underlying need, problem or opportunity that the proposal addresses? How does the project consider the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental considerations?
 - **Ultimate Long-Term Impact** (one sentence): If the objectives of this proposal are successfully completed, what could potentially be different ten years from now in rural areas of Nebraska and beyond?
 - **Project Objective(s):** What specific objective(s) will be reached at the end of the grant period?
 - **Methodology and Time Line:** Explain the methodology and associated time line of the methodological steps that will be undertaken to insure that the project objectives are met in a timely and successful fashion. Explicitly address how the tools, results, applications, findings, innovations or processes will be shared with both the academic and non-academic communities, including rural people and places.
 - **Partnerships:** What new University partnerships will be established through this project with: (a) organizations, institutions and agencies external to NU, and (b) specific communities? What are the roles and responsibilities of each partner? What groundwork has already been laid and what else will be needed to insure that these partnerships function effectively? Will these partnerships be sustained beyond the award's lifetime?
 - **Project Success:** What does success look like and how will it be measured?
 - **Beyond the Project:** If this project proposal is successful, what might be the next logical steps and subsequent opportunities, including other funding opportunities?
 - **Identifying and Managing Adversity:** Obstacles and barriers are often encountered in the implementation and execution of new projects. What do you anticipate will be the most challenging aspect of executing your proposal and what are some steps that can be taken to minimize this challenge or are there alternative ways of moving the project forward if the obstacle is insurmountable?

*Note: References cited in the Context/Justification section **are** included in the 6-page limit.*

5. Budget Table(s) (1 or 2 pages) and **Budget Justification** (1 page)

Budget detail must be provided in the attached budget table(s) for Year One and, if applicable, Year Two. The budget tables (A2a and A2b) must be accompanied by a budget justification (*no more than*

one page) which explains expenditures in each budget category. Budget lines for Year 1 and Year 2 may be combined in the budget justification narrative.

6. Biographical Sketch or Vitae of PI and Key Personnel (2 pages per person)

Not to exceed two pages per person.

7. Letters of Commitment

If the success of the proposal is linked to agencies, organizations or institutions external to the University of Nebraska, include letters of commitment from the relevant agencies, organizations or institutions. The letters should specify clearly what the role and nature of the commitment is. NOTE: these are NOT letters of support in which external stakeholders indicate their support for the proposal. The latter type of letter is not to be included.

8. Waiver of Access to Reviewer's Assessment – signed (1 page)

The Principal Investigator (PI) submitting the proposal is required to sign the attached form (see A-3) on behalf of the team, waiving all access to the assessment of reviewers. A proposal without a completed waiver form will be returned. After funding decisions are made, anonymous reviewer comments will be forwarded to the principal investigator.

IX. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

Following is the list of criteria by which the research proposals will be evaluated (see A-4):

- Transdisciplinary, collaborative, innovative and bold (20 points)
- The context/justification (15 points)
- Short-term considerations/meeting project objectives (20 points)
- Long-term considerations (10 points)
- Project administration (20 points)
- Budget considerations (15 points)

X. SUBMISSION DATE

Proposals, including administrative approval signatures, must be received as a single PDF at ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/2016REaward by 4 p.m. (Central time) on Tuesday, March 15, 2016. Proposals received after this deadline will be returned to the applicant without review.

If you have questions about the submission process, please contact Kim Peterson at kpeterson@nebraska.edu or call 402-472-9287.

XI. POST AWARD MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Principal investigators will be required to submit project reports on behalf of their teams to the Rural Futures Institute. Reports will be required every six months and final reports will be required 30 days after the end of the project.

University of Nebraska – Rural Futures Institute (RFI) Research and Engagement Proposal: Campus Administrative Approval Form

Title of Proposal:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Principal Investigator (PI) or co-PI who will administer funds:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

PI/co-PI Signature: _____ Date: _____

Campus: [Choose an item.](#)

Department: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Address: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Phone: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Email: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Administrative Approval (*signatures required*):

Dept. Head/Chair of PI or co-PI: _____ Date: _____

Dean: _____ Date: _____

Year 1 RFI Research and Engagement PROPOSAL BUDGET

PROJECT TITLE:			
PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATORS:			
BEGINNING AND ENDING DATES OF PROPOSED PROJECT:	Y1 Funds Requested From RFI	Matching Funds	Total Project Cost
I. SALARIES, WAGES AND FRINGE BENEFITS			
A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR			
B. OTHER PERSONNEL			
1. CO-PIs			
2. OTHER PROFESSIONALS (TECHNICIAN, PROGRAMMER, ETC.)			
3. GRADUATE STUDENT			
4. UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT			
5. SECRETARIAL - CLERICAL			
6. OTHER			
TOTAL SALARIES AND WAGES (A+B)	\$	\$	\$
C. FRINGE BENEFITS (If charged as direct costs)			
1. FACULTY & STAFF			
2. OTHER			
TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES AND FRINGE BENEFITS (A+B+C)	\$	\$	\$
II. EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES (databases, supplies, etc.)			
1. _____ \$ _____			
2. _____ \$ _____			
3. _____ \$ _____			
4. _____ \$ _____			
5. _____ \$ _____			
TOTAL EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES	\$	\$	\$
III. TRAVEL			
1. IN-STATE			
2. OUT-OF-STATE			
TOTAL TRAVEL	\$	\$	\$
IV. OTHER DIRECT COSTS			
1. PUBLICATION COSTS/DOCUMENTATION/DISSEMINATION			
2. CONSULTANT SERVICES			
3. SUBCONTRACTS			
4. OTHER (Please Specify)			
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS	\$	\$	\$
V. TOTAL COSTS for YEAR 1 (Sum of I., II., III., and IV.)	\$	\$	\$

**Year 2
RFI Research and Engagement
PROPOSAL BUDGET**

PROJECT TITLE:			
PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATORS:			
BEGINNING AND ENDING DATES OF PROPOSED PROJECT:	Y2 Funds Requested From RFI	Matching Funds	Total Project Cost
I. SALARIES, WAGES AND FRINGE BENEFITS			
A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR			
B. OTHER PERSONNEL			
1. CO-PIs			
2. OTHER PROFESSIONALS (TECHNICIAN, PROGRAMMER, ETC.)			
3. GRADUATE STUDENT			
4. UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT			
5. SECRETARIAL - CLERICAL			
6. OTHER			
TOTAL SALARIES AND WAGES (A+B)	\$	\$	\$
C. FRINGE BENEFITS (If charged as direct costs)			
1. FACULTY & STAFF			
2. OTHER			
TOTAL SALARIES, WAGES AND FRINGE BENEFITS (A+B+C)	\$	\$	\$
II. EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES (databases, supplies, etc.)			
1. _____ \$ _____			
2. _____ \$ _____			
3. _____ \$ _____			
4. _____ \$ _____			
5. _____ \$ _____			
TOTAL EXPENDABLE SUPPLIES	\$	\$	\$
III. TRAVEL			
1. IN-STATE			
2. OUT-OF-STATE			
TOTAL TRAVEL	\$	\$	\$
IV. OTHER DIRECT COSTS			
1. PUBLICATION COSTS/DOCUMENTATION/DISSEMINATION			
2. CONSULTANT SERVICES			
3. SUBCONTRACTS			
4. OTHER (Please Specify)			
TOTAL OTHER DIRECT COSTS	\$	\$	\$
V. TOTAL COSTS for YEAR 2 (Sum of I., II., III., and IV.)	\$	\$	\$

**RFI Research and Engagement
TOTAL Year 1 & Year 2 PROPOSAL BUDGET**

Total Cost for Year 1			
Total Cost for Year 2			
Total 2-YEAR PROJECT COST	\$	\$	\$

WAIVER

The undersigned Principal Investigator hereby waives all right of access to the identity of persons who may conduct outside peer evaluations of the RFI Research and Engagement proposal on behalf of the proposing team (PI and co-PIs) for:

Proposal Title:

Click here to enter text.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 20 ____.

Principal Investigator Signature

Please note: THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR LISTED ON THE COVER PAGE OF THE PROPOSAL MUST SIGN THE WAIVER.

Rural Futures Institute Competitive Awards Program
2016 Research and Engagement Awards
Full Proposal Score Sheet

PI Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Proposal Title: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Evaluation Criteria

Provide a numerical score for each of the following criterion, with written comments as appropriate.

Evaluation Criteria	Score	Possible Points
1. Transdisciplinary, Collaborative, Innovative and Bold: To what extent does this proposal develop reciprocal relationships of mutual respect and understanding by exhibiting the following characteristics:	20 Total Points	
a. Transdisciplinary , defined as utilizing a research strategy that crosses many disciplinary boundaries to create a holistic approach. The project goes between, across and beyond current disciplines to approach research in a new, innovative way.		5
b. Collaborative , defined as developing deep and meaningful partnerships across campuses, across departments and disciplines, and with external stakeholders, such as other non-University campuses, communities, state and local government, trade associations, civic groups, and the philanthropic community.		5
c. Innovative , defined as creating value by implementing new ideas.		5
d. Bold , defined as engaging in research that is risky, even fearless.		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
	Subtotal Score	
2. Context/Justification: The purpose of the RFI Competitive Awards program is to foster the development of research and engagement work that addresses critical challenges and opportunities facing rural areas.	15 Total Points	
a. How important is the need, problem or opportunity that is being addressed to the future of rural people and places?		10
b. How well does the proposal articulate the challenges and opportunities?		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
	Subtotal Score	
3. Short-Term Considerations/Meeting Project Objectives:	20 Total Points	
a. Does the research methodology insure that the project's objectives will be met in a timely and successful fashion?		10
b. Does the timeline of activities insure that the project's objectives will be met in a timely and successful fashion?		5

<p>c. How well will the tools, results, applications, findings, innovations or processes be shared with both the academic and non-academic communities, including rural people and places?</p>		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
		Subtotal Score
<p>4. <u>Long-Term Considerations:</u> Assume the project's short-term objectives are successfully met.</p>		10 Total Points
<p>a. How much potential exists for making a significant impact in the long-term relative to rural people and places?</p>		5
<p>b. How much potential exists for making a significant impact in the long-term relative to the scholarly community?</p>		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
		Subtotal Score
<p>5. <u>Project Administration:</u></p>		20 Total Points
<p>a. What is the capacity (individually and collectively) of the project team to:</p> <p>i. Effectively manage and successfully complete the proposed project?</p> <p>ii. Successfully pursue future funding opportunities?</p>		5
<p>b. Will new partnerships be established through this project? Are the roles and responsibilities of each partner clearly defined? How well will partnerships be sustained?</p>		10
<p>c. Has success been defined or described? How will it be measured?</p>		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
		Subtotal Score
<p>6. <u>Budget Considerations:</u></p>		15 Total Points
<p>a. Do the project's goals and objectives justify the budget?</p>		10
<p>b. Are funds spent appropriately?</p>		5
<i>Comments:</i>		
		Subtotal Score

Total Score: _____
(100 maximum)

Do You Recommend this Proposal for Funding? (must click one box)

- Yes** **No**

Additional Thoughts, Comments or Suggestions: (including suggestions to strengthen the overall proposal, recommendations on appropriate funding levels if different than what has been proposed, suggestions on additional partners or collaborators that have been overlooked and whose inclusion would strengthen the proposal, etc. Funding for selected proposals will be contingent on addressing the committee's concerns. Your comments will be shared with the PIs so please respond accordingly.)