



1890 LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES CENTER OF EXCELLENCE for Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life (NHWQL)

Request for Applications (RFA) Release Date: May 15, 2024

Submission Deadline: June 17, 2024, 5:00 pm EST

Ad Hoc Review: July 8 – 19, 2024

Notification of Decisions: August 5, 2024

1. Background

The Center of Excellence for Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life (NHWQL) is one of six proposed centers of excellence at 1890 universities identified in the U.S. Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, commonly known as the 2018 Farm Bill. The Center is supported with funds from the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). Through a competitive process, USDA/NIFA awarded a grant to Southern University and A&M College (Southern University) to host and implement the NHWQL Center in collaboration with all nineteen 1890 universities.

The establishment of Centers of Excellence is one of the outcomes from the cooperative partnership between USDA and 1890 land grant universities (LGUs) under the auspices of the USDA/1890 Taskforce. The USDA/1890 Taskforce approved the establishment of the 1890 Anniversary Centers of Excellence to commemorate the 125th Anniversary of the signing of the Second Morrill Act of 1890. The nineteen 1890 LGUs worked collaboratively with the 1890 Universities Foundation to ensure inclusion of 1890 Centers of Excellence (COE) in the 2018 Farm Bill. The objective of this legislation is to fund outstanding teaching, cutting-edge research, and extension projects to increase agricultural productivity, and enhance academic achievement in food, agricultural, natural resources, and human (FANH) sciences and related fields.

Under the COE competitive process, USDA/NIFA awarded a grant to Southern University to host and implement the NHWQL Center in collaboration with two co-leads: North Carolina A&T State University (NCA&T) and Tuskegee University. The primary goal of this Center is to increase the capacities of 1890 institutions to address health disparities of underserved communities through nutrition research, teaching, and extension. The objectives of the NHWQL Center across research, teaching, and extension are as follows:

- **Research.** Conduct innovative research in the areas of food and nutrition, health and well-being and enhance the research infrastructures and capacities of 1890 institutions to address health disparities through nutrition research.
- **Teaching.** Expose students to the best educational and leadership opportunities within the field of nutrition, health, and wellness (which can prepare them for future careers) and service to underserved communities that are combatting health disparities.
- **Extension.** Provide innovative nutrition, health, and wellness education and training that leads to increases in knowledge and skills, and enhanced behavioral changes that are fundamental for pursuing nutritionally sound diets and healthy lifestyles.

This Request for Applications (RFA) calls for competitive proposals that address one or more of the NHWQL Center objectives through (1) interdisciplinary collaboration across at least two of the objectives **where applicable**, (2) multi-institutional partnerships, and (3) suitability of proposed programs for adoption across the NHWQL Center. Projects are expected to provide a variety of innovative programs to address “Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life”.

Southern University entered into a cooperative agreement with the 1890 Universities Foundation (The Foundation) to assist with the implementation of the Center’s goals and objectives. The Foundation provides a neutral entity to ensure the broadest and equitable participation of all 1890 universities. Therefore, this RFA is being issued by The Foundation to solicit proposals from the 1890 institutions and make sub-award recommendations to the NHWQL Center.

2. Available Funding

For this RFA cycle, \$500,000 is available for **events/conferences** and **pilot projects**.

Proposals must be based on the following two project types:

- a. Professional development events/conferences (\$50,000 max)
 - Single-institution and collaborative projects (up to two institutions) are acceptable.
- b. Pilot projects (\$150,000 max)
 - Only collaborative projects (two or more institutions) are acceptable, with clear synergy and task allocation among collaborating institutions.

Collaborative projects must detail how **two or more** institutions intend to collaborate and should clearly define the nature of collaboration (separate budgets are required).

Project durations should be planned to occur between August 19, 2024, and April 30, 2025. The period of performance is subject to an extension of time pending sponsoring agency’s approval.

3. Funding and Award Restrictions

- a. This RFA is only open to 1890 land grant universities. The submitting 1890 LGUs may collaborate with other public and private partners to leverage resources and expertise.
- b. Eligible institutions may submit a maximum of two proposals (one per project type). All proposals must include a letter of support from the Dean of the college/school of agriculture or his/her designee, such as the Research Director or Extension Administrator (or equivalent) at the submitting 1890 land grant university. Center partners (Southern University and A&M College, North Carolina A&T State University, and Tuskegee University) may not submit a proposal as the PI, but may serve as collaborators.
- c. Project performance period is through April 30, 2025. All funds must be expended by the project end date.
- d. Progress reports (financial and technical) are due on a quarterly basis, beginning October 15, 2024, and a final report will be due no later than June 14, 2025.
- e. Projects are expected to provide a variety of innovative programs to address “Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life”. They will require (1) interdisciplinary collaboration across at least two of the Center objectives **where applicable**, (2) multi-institutional partnerships where applicable, and (3) suitability of proposed projects, or its outcomes for adoption across the NHWQL consortium.
- f. The PI will be required to attend one 1890 Center of Excellence symposium during the period of performance for the award. Reasonable travel expenses must be included as part of the project budget.
- g. To ensure eligibility of funding, all guidelines outlined in this RFA must be followed.
- h. Successful applicants will be required to abide with all requirements and deadlines in the agreements between 1890 Universities Foundation and the NHWQL Center.
- i. Indirect costs are not allowable, and matching is not required.
- j. Applications submitted under this Center must also adhere to all USDA/NIFA guidelines as pertains to grants under the COE program. Please refer to the COE RFA for information on purpose and priorities (pg. 7), and other award administration provisions (pg. 19- 21) accessible at [https:// www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/rfa/FY-2021-1890-Centers-of-Excellence-COE-508.pdf](https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/rfa/FY-2021-1890-Centers-of-Excellence-COE-508.pdf).

4. Scope of Work and Deliverables

Projects under this RFA are required to address how they will increase the capacities of 1890 institutions to address health disparities of underserved communities through nutrition, health, and wellness research, teaching, and extension.

Proposals must address one or more of the following NHWQL Center objectives below.

- **Research.** Conduct innovative research in the areas of food and nutrition, health and well-being and enhance the research infrastructures and capacities of 1890 institutions to address health disparities through nutrition research. Examples of deliverables include (but are not limited to)
 - organizing an event (i.e., research symposium, workshop, conference, etc.) to facilitate collaborations among 1890 LGUs and other institutions and stakeholders that may lead to training/outreach opportunities for students and underserved communities;
 - conducting basic food and nutrition research to address health disparities of underserved communities; and
 - leveraging resources to mentor/train students and fostering opportunities for them to conduct cutting edge food and nutrition research (such as developing opportunities for students to gain research experience at nutrition research laboratories).

- **Teaching.** Expose students to the best educational and leadership opportunities within the field of nutrition (which can prepare them for future careers) and service to underserved communities that are combatting health disparities. Examples of deliverables include (but are not limited to)
 - organizing a leadership academy, workshop, or training that prepares students for careers in nutrition, health, and related fields while providing them opportunities to develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills;
 - developing a new experiential learning opportunity that provides students opportunities to engage with industry, community-based organizations, and federal agencies; and
 - enhancing instructional delivery systems for nutrition education via the use of state-of-the-art technology (i.e., e-learning and online instruction) and developing training programs for faculty to enhance teaching competency.

- **Extension.** Mentor students and provide innovative nutrition education and training that leads to increases in knowledge and skills, and enhanced behavioral changes that are fundamental for pursuing nutritionally sound diets and healthy lifestyles. Examples of deliverables include (but are not limited to)
 - creating a nutrition education program for underserved communities (i.e., demonstration, conference, workshop, etc.) to enhance food purchasing and food preparation skills and increase the awareness of the linkage between diet and health;
 - training extension educators to enhance the delivery of nutrition-based research discoveries and education programs that target underserved communities; and
 - enhancing methodologies, strategies, or delivery systems to enhance services to the underserved, including developing new or modifying existing curriculums for effective community-based programs.

This RFA encourages proposals that include innovative approaches to recruit, retain, mentor, and graduate minority students in FANH sciences with a focus on replication across the 1890 land grant system. Additionally, proposals should seek strategies to **integrate emerging technologies when addressing any of the Center objectives.**

5. Proposal Guidelines

5.1 Structure

Proposal narratives should use Times New Roman font of 12 point with 1” margins and 1.5-line spacing.

5.2 Format and length

- a. **Cover sheet** (1 page, format provided on page 7; does not count towards page limit)
- b. **Summary** (1 page; does not count towards page limit)
- c. **Proposal Narrative** (up to 5 pages, including clearly defined project rationale, goal(s), objectives and deliverables, methods (i.e., evaluation methods, data management plan and collaboration[s]).
 - **Rationale** – Clearly state the problem/issue to be addressed. Describe current health disparities. The rationale should demonstrate how the project will increase the research capacity of faculty at 1890 institutions, the number of participants in nutrition education intervention programs (and strategies to sustain their participation), and the number of students entering agriculture related jobs or pursuing post graduate degrees in nutrition and health, and related fields. In addition, please show how the project will improve collaboration and partnerships among 1890 institutions aimed at (a) improving healthy lifestyles, (b) increasing consumption of healthy foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, (c) increasing students’ participation in nutrition research and extension activities, and (d) enhancing students’ professional soft skills development.
 - **Objectives** – Applications must clearly state and discuss how the specific project will address Center objective(s), including how they will be accomplished. The proposal must identify the individual/individuals/teams responsible for accomplishing each objective. The objectives, outputs, and outcomes must relate to the scope of work and deliverables outlined above under section 4 (Scope of Work and Deliverables).
 - **Methods/Implementation/Evaluation** – Describe detailed procedures for accomplishing tasks and how the objectives of the project will be measured.
 - **Timetable** – Include a timetable with all details for completing the project, including dates, and roles and responsibilities of key personnel.
 - **Collaborations** – Describe how the resources (i.e., funding) available at the submitting and/or collaborating institutions will be leveraged among all collaborators.
 - **Partnerships** – Clearly describe all partnerships, including their roles and responsibilities to meet project goals and objectives.
 - **Sustainability Plan** – Describe how the project will be sustained after the funding cycle ends.
- d. **Leveraging of Resources** – Description of current campus/community program(s), institutional capabilities and resources, and expertise that lend themselves to the objectives and scope of work. (1 page max)
- e. **Reference list** (does not count towards page limit)
- f. **Budget** (format provided on page 9)
- g. **Budget justification** – No equipment is allowed (1 page max)
- h. **Letter of commitment from Project Investigator’s Dean** (1 page max)
- i. **A two-page CV, Current and Pending Support form, and Conflict of Interest form** must be submitted for all project investigators and collaborators.

6. Review/evaluation guidelines

Proposals will be evaluated based on all criteria identified below.

Table 1. Proposal Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Score
Specific goal and objective(s) that align with scope of work and deliverables	15
Methodology/Implementation/Evaluation supports proposed approach	15
Clearly described expected/measurable outputs and outcomes	15
Clearly articulated rationale for the proposed work or problem/issue addressed	10
Clearly defined targeted audience/population	10
Sustainability plan after the funding cycle ends	10
Adequate budget and a clear budget justification that demonstrates cost effectiveness	10
Clearly defined collaborations/partnerships	10
Adherence to application guidelines and instructions and the effectiveness of conveying ideas with clarity and thoroughness.	5
Total	100

7. Timeline

- RFA Release Date – May 15, 2024
- Submission Deadline – June 17, 2024 (5:00 pm EST)
- Ad-Hoc Review – July 8-19, 2024
- Notification of Decisions – August 5, 2024

8. Submission

The deadline for submission is June 17, 2024, at 5:00 pm EST.

Proposals must be submitted as one portable document format (PDF). Submissions with non-PDF attachments or multiple PDF attachments WILL NOT be accepted for review.

Proposals must be submitted to the 1890 Universities Foundation at:

submissions@1890foundation.org with the following Subject Line: “NHWQL Proposal – Leading PI’s Last name”. No late submissions will be accepted.

Questions regarding this RFA can be addressed to:

Name: Antonio McLaren

Title: Vice President for Program Innovation & Implementation

Address: 1220 L Street, NW, Suite 1000 Washington, DC 20005

Office: 202-360-9406

Email: amclaren@1890foundation.org

1890 LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

Nutrition, Health, Wellness, and Quality of Life

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COVER SHEET

Project Title:

Objective(s) to be addressed [Research, Teaching, Extension, or Integrated (must include at least two of the three objectives)]:

Project Type (see section 2):

Proposed Start Date:

Key Personnel (use table below):

Name(s) of Key Personnel	Institution	Project Role (PI, Co-PI, Collaborator)

Primary Project Contact (use table below):

Name:	
Title:	
Institution:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Fax:	
E-mail:	

Total Amount Requested: _____

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Rationale – Clearly articulate the rationale for the proposed work or problem/issue addressed. Clearly define the targeted audience/population.

Objectives – List specific objective(s) that align with the scope of work and deliverables. Describe expected/measurable outputs and outcomes.

Methods/Implementation/Evaluation – Describe detailed procedures for accomplishing tasks and how the project objectives will be evaluated and measured.

Collaborations – Describe how the resources (i.e., funding) available at the submitting and/or collaborating institutions will be leveraged among all collaborators.

Partnerships – Clearly describe all partnerships, including their roles and responsibilities to meet project goals and objectives.

Leveraging of Resources – Describe current campus/community program(s), institutional capabilities and resources, and expertise that lend themselves to the objectives and scope of work.

Sustainability Plan – Describe how the project will be sustained after the funding cycle ends.

Timetable – Include a timetable with all details for completing the project including dates, and roles and responsibilities of key personnel.

Budget – Use the **budget template** below to illustrate your budget, along with a detailed budget justification that demonstrates cost effectiveness.

All projects involving human subjects or animals must comply with IRB and/or IACUC policies.

All funded projects must acknowledge NIFA funding.

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BUDGET

Items	Amounts
Personnel (including fringe benefits)	
Subtotal	
Supplies	
Subtotal	
Other Direct Costs (i.e., Travel)	
Subtotal	
Total	

Detailed Budget Justification

Please provide a detailed budget justification (not to exceed one page) that demonstrates cost effectiveness.