Federal Formula Fund Research Guidelines—CUAES

Background
Consistent with Cornell University’s federal land grant institutional designation and mission, and as a center of applied research within the University, the Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station (CUAES) enters the 21st Century with a long, proud, and productive tradition of supporting research on agriculture and other rural concerns that has benefited New York State, the Northeast, and the nation. Since its inception in 1879, the mission of CUAES has been to promote the development of research-based knowledge that will advance and improve the State’s and nation’s agriculture and food systems, environmental and natural resource base, and associated human and community development.

During the past decade, Congress enacted several pieces of Federal legislation redefining how state agricultural experiment stations across the nation conduct their business. In 1994, the Government Performance and Results Act required Federal agencies, including USDA, to set mission goals and to report annually, in tangible, understandable terms, on progress toward meeting such goals. In 1998, the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act (AREERA) required every land grant college and university (including associated extension and experiment station components) receiving Federal Formula Funds (FFFs) "to establish a process for receiving input from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, extension, or education on the uses of such funds." AREERA also required plans of work and annual reporting, not only on program impacts but also on the process used to identify stakeholders and to solicit their input. Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), in cooperation with CUAES and NYSAES (New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva), has developed a collaborative, statewide program development structure and process to improve stakeholder engagement, research-extension integration, campus-county linkages, multi-disciplinary approaches, and strategic work group initiatives.

The Federal actions taken in the past decade also have expanded the emphasis and requirements for use of FFF in multi-state research activities, multi-disciplinary research efforts, and the greater integration of research and extension programming. All projects proposed for CUAES support will be reviewed to ensure compliance with the intent of Congress.

Highlights
- Pre-proposals are required for all proposed FFF projects, including new or revised Multistate projects.
- All pre-proposals will be reviewed by external stakeholders, CCE program council directors, department chairs, and CUAES
- Pre-proposals and projects that are ultimately funded by CUAES will address high priority program and/or issue areas, as determined via processes that query and engage a wide spectrum of stakeholders.

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• It is not the intention of CUAES to be a primary, long-term source of support for any faculty member.
• A PI can have one active Hatch and one active Multistate project, at the same time.
• Support of new, tenure-track faculty of assistant professor rank remains a high priority for CUAES funding. New assistant professors will receive special consideration by CUAES, but funding is still contingent on submission of a pre-proposal during the annual RFP.
• FFF funding (including Multistate travel funds) for retired faculty will be terminated at the end of the year in which retirement occurs.
• Expenditures for capital equipment will require the pre-approval of the Director of CUAES, as required by USDA-NIFA.
• Use of Hatch or Multistate funds for international travel requires pre-approval from the Director of CUAES.
• Annual progress and/or termination reports are required for all projects. These reports are completed through USDA’s REEport system (replaced CRIS in 2013).

**Extensions:**
We cannot offer no-cost or other extensions on projects. Your project’s scope of work and expenditures must be completed by the project’s specified term date.

**Carry-forward of Federal Formula Funds**
CUAES and NYSAES expect PIs to spend funds in the budget year in which they are allocated. If you have an unspent balance at the end of the federal year, and your project is continuing, you may carry over the unspent balance. Keep in mind we will be monitoring continuing accounts. If there are large carry over balances, and our funding is cut, we would look at those projects first.

NIFA does not allow carry-forward for Animal Health. All Animal Health funding must be spent within the year it was allocated.

**General Requirements for Allocation of Federal Formula Funds**
Federal Formula Funds are allocated by the Director of CUAES for the use of faculty in conducting research consistent with research and extension priorities, specific purposes of the various FFF research programs, and identified stakeholder needs. CUAES funds will be used strategically to support research in priority areas, especially where external funding sources are limited or nonexistent.

A faculty member can be a PI on only one active FFF project, be it Hatch, Multistate, McIntire-Stennis, or Animal Health & Disease. However, collaboration as co-PI or collaborator on multi-disciplinary projects is encouraged.

FFF support for retired faculty will be terminated at the end of the year in which retirement occurs. Use of FFF allocations for work other than the approved project is not permitted.

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Allocation of Funds via the Annual Pre-proposal Process

Funds are available to initiate new research projects with priority given to multidisciplinary, collaborative efforts consistent with CUAES-identified needs and rated highly by off-campus stakeholders. Other considerations include input from department chairs, the productivity record of the researcher(s) involved, and the potential to increase PI competitiveness in seeking sponsored research funding. Hatch, McIntire-Stennis and Animal Health funds are allocated for three years. Multistate funds can be allocated up to five years, depending on the length of the Multistate. To apply for funding, PIs must submit a pre-proposal for review during the period indicated in the annual RFP.

Pre-proposals from new tenure-track faculty of assistant professor rank will receive priority for CUAES support. To receive special consideration as a new faculty member, within three years of joining the faculty, new assistant professors should submit pre-proposals as part of the annual RFP. We encourage pre-proposals that specify collaboration with others, but single investigator projects will be considered in the case of new assistant professors. As with all pre-proposals submitted in the RFP, the proposed work should:

- Address one or more of the research and extension priorities;
- Address CUAES-identified research priorities (New York and Northeast Regional needs), as reflected in off-campus stakeholder reviews;
- Articulate how the proposed research will support extension/outreach;
- Define clear, measurable impacts.
- All proposed projects requesting CUAES funds, regardless of category (including revisions of terminating projects), require pre-proposals and positive stakeholder reviews.
- Each pre-proposal will be subject to CUAES/CCE and stakeholder review. Pre-proposals will be rated according to relevance of the proposed project to identified needs and degree to which the research will support extension/outreach.
- Annual funding levels for new initiatives are in the $10,000 to $30,000 range.

Allocation of Multistate Research Funds

Multistate Research involves cooperative, jointly planned research employing multidisciplinary approaches in which a State Agricultural Experiment Station (SAES), working with another SAES, the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), or another college or university, cooperates to solve problems that concern more than one state. Projects seeking Multistate Research Funds (MRF) undergo a review and approval process, first at the regional level by the appropriate association of state agricultural experiment station directors, and finally by USDA/NIFA program reviewers.

There is no central pool of MRF funds. Approval of a new or revised MRF project carries no automatic commitment for funding by the participating agricultural experiment station. The CUAES director may approve involvement of a faculty member in a MRF project, but actual commitment of funds is made following the annual pre-proposal process. All new and revised MRF funding requests begin with the submission of a pre-proposal during the annual RFP so proposed contributions can be reviewed and compared to other requests.

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and priorities. Commitments typically will be made for the five-year duration of approved MRF projects (pending availability of funds).

Priorities within CUAES may change, thereby causing termination or reduction in funding, even though a MRF project may be renewed by the region and by NIFA. MRF funds are not intended to be a form of entitlement to scientists.

**Annual Reporting Requirements**
Acceptance of FFF support by CUAES investigators carry the expectation that recipients will comply with the rules for reporting and accountability established by NIFA. Annual progress reports are required. At the end of the project a Final report is due summarizing all the years the project was active. Failure to comply with such reporting requirements is cause for revocation of funds prior to the scheduled termination of the original funding commitment, and for early termination of a project by the CUAES Director.

**Equal Opportunity**
Cornell University is an equal opportunity, affirmative action educator and employer. Federal Funds are to be used in accordance with all applicable Federal State and local laws. No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, or veteran status, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The Recipient agrees to comply with the non-discrimination requirements of: Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; The Age Discrimination Act of 1975; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; or any other non-discrimination provisions of statutory law.