

TSU College of Agriculture Faculty Research Policies and Procedures

This document contains important information to support your efforts to win grant funding – and to help ensure your successful research at the College of Agriculture. Please don't hesitate to stop by Room 102 in Farrell-Westbrook or reach out if you have any questions.

Key Contacts

- Dr. Fulya Baysal-Gurel, Associate Dean for Research, College of Agriculture
- Pierre Washington, Budget Office, College of Agriculture
- Dr. Corrine Vaughn, Office of Research & Sponsored Programs (RSP)
- Lawanda Johnson, Grants Accounting Office (GAO)
- Dr. Kumuditha Liyanage, Grants & Technical Reporting Manager, College of Agriculture
- Kelly Sobel, Grant Writer, College of Agriculture

NIFA CAPACITY GRANTS (Evans-Allen, Extension, and McIntire-Stennis)

- **Every faculty member is required to have an active NIFA Capacity Grant.**
 - If you are a new faculty member, you must submit your proposal **within 2 months of your start date**. Research faculty will submit either an Evans-Allen or a McIntire-Stennis (forestry) proposal, and Extension faculty will submit an Extension proposal.
 - Please discuss your idea/plan for your proposal with your Department head.
 - All proposals are for a three-year time period. You must submit a new proposal **at least two months before** your current grant expires.
 - For more information about NIFA Capacity Grants:
<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/programs/capacity-grants>.
 - For step-by-step instructions on writing/submitting these grants: see pages 2-3.
- **You must create an account on the NRS (NIFA Reporting System) portal**
 - NIFA's NRS portal is where you will submit your proposal and your annual progress/final reports. Please create an account (which requires you to verify your identity on Login.gov) **at the same time as you begin working on your proposal**.
 - NRS info: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/data/nifa-reporting-system>
 - Resources: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/data/nifa-reporting-system/nrs-resources>
 - FAQs: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/data/nifa-reporting-system/nrs-faq>
 - NRS registration guide: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/data/nifa-reporting-system/nrs-resources/nifa-reporting-system-registration-guide>
 - NRS user guide: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/data/nifa-reporting-system/nrs-resources/nifa-reporting-system-user-guide>
 - If you have any questions about NRS that are not answered on its website, you can email the **NRS Help Desk at nrs@usda.gov**.
 - If you have any problems creating an account on Login.gov or need help logging in:
 - Please visit the [Login.gov help page](#) or [Login.gov cannot verify my identity, what do I do now? FAQ](#).
 - If you experience a problem linking an eAuth account to login.gov:
<https://www.eauth.usda.gov/eauth/b/usda/helpdesk/requesthelp>.
- **Progress and Final Reports**
 - NIFA requires you to submit annual progress reports and a final report.
 - Please plan to submit your annual and final progress reports **by November 30** each year. You can do so directly on the NRS portal.

Capacity Grant Proposal Guidelines: Evans-Allen/McIntire-Stennis Grants

1. Write a summary of your proposed research. It should include two sections:
 - a. Non-technical description (**no more than 10,000 characters, including spaces**) that covers, in simple language:
 - The issue you plan to address and why it's important
 - Your goals and objectives
 - Your target audiences and how they will benefit
 - How your activities will lead to your planned outcomes
 - b. Methodology (**no more than 10,000 characters, including spaces**)
 - Describe how the project will be conducted, with an emphasis on the general scientific methods you will use and any unique aspects or significant departures from usual methods.
2. To begin the internal review process, please send your proposal (as a Word document) to Kelly Sobel.
3. Kelly will review the summary and provide copyediting suggestions to you.
4. Once you have revised the summary, please return it to Kelly. She will send it to two faculty members who Dr. Baysal-Gurel has designated as internal scientific reviewers.
5. Kelly will send you the reviewers' comments when their reviews are complete.
6. You can then finalize the summary and return it to Kelly for a final proofreading review.
7. You will then enter your final version of the summary into the NIFA NRS system and let Dr. Baysal-Gurel and Dr. Liyanage know that you have done so.
8. After Dr. Baysal-Gurel has signed off in the NRS portal, the proposal will be released to NIFA for review/approval.
9. The NIFA review takes approximately 30 days. You will receive an email from NIFA when your proposal has been approved.

Capacity Grant Proposal Guidelines: Extension Grants

1. Write a **non-technical summary** of your proposed research (**no more than 10,000 characters, including spaces**). The summary should describe, in simple language:
 - The issue you plan to address and why it's important
 - Your goals and objectives
 - The target audiences and how they will benefit
 - How your activities will lead to your planned outcomes
2. Send your proposal (as a Word document) to Kelly Sobel and cc: Dr. Fulya Baysal-Gurel and Dr. Latif Lighari for the internal review process.
3. Kelly will provide copyediting suggestions to you.
4. After you have revised the proposal, return it to Kelly. She will share it with two faculty members who Dr. Baysal-Gurel/Dr. Lighari have identified as faculty reviewers.
5. Kelly will send you the reviewers' comments/feedback.
6. You can then finalize the proposal and return it to Kelly for a final proofreading review.
7. You can then enter the proposal into the NIFA NRS portal and notify Dr. Baysal-Gurel, Dr. Lighari, and Dr. Liyanage that you have done so.
8. After Dr. Baysal-Gurel has signed off in the NRS portal, the proposal will be released to NIFA for review/approval.
9. The NIFA review takes approximately 30 days. You will receive an email from NIFA when your proposal has been approved.

COMPETITIVE GRANTS

Grants.gov

- You must create an account on grants.gov to pursue competitive grant opportunities.
 - Quick-start guide: <https://www.grants.gov/quick-start-guide/applicants>

The Proposal/Letter of Intent Submission Process

- **Please allow plenty of time** to write/submit your proposal.
 - Last-minute requests may not be able to be accommodated.
- **At least 30 days** before the proposal submission deadline, complete:
 - The College of Ag [Proposal Information Form](#) and send it to the Associate Dean for Research and your department head; and
 - RSP's [Intent to Submit a Proposal Form](#) (this form will be automatically shared with RSP when you click on "submit").
- **At least 10 days before** the submission deadline, create your proposed budget/budget justification and email it to the Associate Dean for Research for review and approval.
- **At least 5 working days** before the proposal submission deadline (and after you have received approval from the Associate Dean), email your budget/budget justification to RSP for review, and cc the Associate Dean.
 - For proposals requiring a cost share or match: you must also submit a description of the project's institutional cost share, how it will be met, and a letter of support from the Dean and/or Associate Dean of Research indicating support of the cost share.
- **At least 5 working days** before the proposal submission deadline, send your narrative (and any other parts of the proposal you want reviewed) to the Grant Writer for copyediting.
- **After RSP approves your budget,** your proposal can be submitted. RSP (specifically the VP for Research) is responsible for submitting all proposals on behalf of TSU.
 - **At least one day before the deadline,** load your proposal into grants.gov or the funding agency's portal, then reach out to RSP and ask them to submit it.
 - **Please do not wait until the submission deadline** to make this request.

The Post-Award Process

- If your proposal is funded (or if you receive a sub-award), please follow the steps below.
 1. Formal Acceptance of the Award
 - RSP is responsible for formally accepting the award.
 - You are responsible for ensuring RSP has formally accepted the award.
 2. NIFA Project Initiation Process
 - For NIFA-funded grants, you must complete NIFA's project initiation process and then let the Associate Dean know when you have done so.
 - See p.13 of the REEport User Guide for directions:
<https://www.nifa.usda.gov/data/reeport/reeport-user-guide>

3. Receiving a TSU Account/FOAP

- Complete an Award Acknowledgement and Budget Form and submit it to the Associate Dean, along with your award letter, budget, and budget justification.
 - To access the form, click on “Restricted Budget Acknowledgement Form” on the RSP post-award support page:
<https://www.tnstate.edu/research-1/postaward/index.aspx>
- The Associate Dean will then forward your form to the Grants Accounting Office (GAO), which will assign your project an account number, or FOAP.
- The GAO will create an account for your project in the Banner system.
 - For more information about this process: <https://www.tnstate.edu/research-1/postaward/index.aspx>

4. College of Ag Budget Office Requirements

- When you have a FOAP, email the College of Ag Budget Office to request that they:
 - Designate “approvers” for your account.
 - For all external grants, approvers will include: you, your Department Head, the Associate Dean of Research, and someone from the Budget Office.
 - Incorporate “time & effort percentage” data for all personnel funded by the award by submitting PARF(s) in the PeopleAdmin system.

5. Sub-Award Contracts

- If your grant includes sub-awards, you are responsible for initiating the process of executing the appropriate contracts for your sub-awardees.
 - Work with the Associate Dean to develop a contract outlining the scope/length of services and compensation.
 - Ask the sub-awardee to sign the contract and to provide W-9 forms.
 - Complete a Contract Routing Form and send it, along with the contract and W-9 forms, to:
 - First, the Associate Dean;
 - Then, the Dean’s Office,
 - And finally, the Office of Academic Affairs, which will have the contract signed by TSU’s Chief Counsel and President.
 - When the signed contract is returned to you, share it with the Associate Dean and with the sub-awardee institution.
 - The sub-awardee can now complete a service and submission invoice and submit it to the TSU Accounts Payable office.

Reporting and Fiscal Reviews

Reporting

- It is essential that you submit all required reports and invoices accurately and on time. You are responsible for:
 - Working with the GAO to ensure that grant financial reports/invoices and time-and-effort reports are completed and submitted in a timely and accurate manner.
 - Submitting all progress/annual reports to the funding agency following their guidelines and timelines.
 - Ensuring that all faculty, graduate students, and others funded by the award submit Semester Activity Reports on the project’s progress/accomplishments.

Fiscal Reviews

- The College of Ag Budget Office will perform semi-annual fiscal reviews of your award.

- Any expenditures made outside the approved award budget may be charged to you as a personal expense.

Revisions/Changes to Funded Projects

- It is imperative that you execute your project as approved by the funding agency.
- If you must change your work plan, Co-PI, or budget for any reason, you must first receive approval from the Associate Dean and the funding agency.
- Please note that transferring funds from participant cost, equipment, or scholarships/fellowships is not permitted.
- **Budget Revision Requests**
 - Submit a Budget Revision Form to the Associate Dean.
 - Click on “Budget Revision Form” on the RSP post-award page: <https://www.tnstate.edu/research-1/postaward/index.aspx>
 - For capacity grants, only one budget revision per fiscal year is allowed.
- **Co-PI Change Requests**
 - Send an email request to the Associate Dean along with: your award letter, a letter from the new Co-PI’s authorized organizational representative, the new Co-PI’s CV, and a “Current and Pending Support” form from the new Co-PI.
 - The Associate Dean and RSP will submit the request to the funding agency.
- **No-Cost Extensions**
 - You must make the request **at least 60 days before** your grant expires.
 - Submit an email request to the Associate Dean along with your award letter and no cost extension request form.
 - The Associate Dean will request an SF425 (Federal Financial Report Form) from GAO and share it with RSP, who will submit your request to the funding agency.

OTHER INFORMATION

- **RSP provides a range of services to support you.** Visit the RSP webpage (<https://www.tnstate.edu/research-1/about/contact.aspx>) to learn about:
 - The proposal submission process (Note that proposal budgets must be submitted to the Associate Dean for Research **at least 10 working days before the submission deadline and to RSP at least 5 working days prior to the deadline**).
 - Pre-award support services and contact information: <https://www.tnstate.edu/research-1/preaward/index.aspx>
 - Post-award support services/processes/contacts: <https://www.tnstate.edu/research-1/postaward/index.aspx>
- **Funding Opportunities**

For information about funding opportunities, search the listings on the funding agency sites – and join their email lists:

 - NIFA: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/grants/upcoming-request-applications-calendar>
https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDANIFA/subscriber/new?qsp=USDANIFA_2
 - SARE: <https://www.sare.org/grants/>
<https://www.sare.org/news/join-our-mailing-list/>
 - NSF: <https://new.nsf.gov/funding/opportunities>

<https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/USNSF/subscriber/new?qsp=823>

- Grants.gov: <https://www.grants.gov/search-grants>
<https://www.grants.gov/connect/manage-subscriptions/>
- TN Dept of Agriculture: <https://www.tn.gov/agriculture.html>
<https://www.tn.gov/agriculture/businesses/business-development/scbg.html>
- Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research: <https://foundationfar.org/>
<https://foundationfar.org/grants-funding/>

○ **Grant Writing**

- Kelly's role is to help you communicate your research ideas clearly and effectively. Contact her for assistance in editing your draft grant proposals.
- Grant-writing advice from NIFA:
 - Tips: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/general-grant-writing-tips-success>
 - Fact sheet: chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/20TipsforGrantWritingSuccess_FactSheet.pdf
- NIFA Grants Training/Technical Assistance Resources
 - NIFA has developed a number of resources for applicants and grantees, especially to assist new and underrepresented applicants to NIFA programs. Visit this one-stop page: [Grants Training/Technical Assistance information](#).

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY OF THIS INFORMATION, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO STOP BY, CALL, OR EMAIL THE RESEARCH OFFICE. WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU BE SUCCESSFUL IN GETTING FUNDING FOR YOUR RESEARCH!