

Aflatoxin Mitigation Center of Excellence Competitive Grants Program

Fiscal Year 2021 (FY2021) Request for Applications (RFA)

Letter of Intent Deadline: 5:00PM Eastern, October 30, 2020

Full Application Deadline: 5:00PM Eastern, December 18, 2020

Program Contact: Robyn Allscheid

National Corn Growers Association

allscheid@ncga.com

(636) 733-5532

- I. Funding Opportunity Description
- II. Award Information
- III. Eligibility Information
- IV. Application & Submission Instructions
- V. Application Review Requirements

I. Funding Opportunity Description

The Aflatoxin Mitigation Center of Excellence (AMCOE) Competitive Grants Program was developed by a consortium of southern state corn checkoff boards to provide a unified approach to funding projects affecting growers across the region. The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) located in Chesterfield, Missouri, serves as the management structure for the AMCOE competitive grants program. This structure was developed to leverage more dollars for solving aflatoxin issues and to build strong regional teams which would be highly competitive for federal, public and private funding.

The AMCOE Competitive Grants Program funds research addressing six Priority Research Areas:

- 1. Biological control
- 2. Transgenic modification
- 3. Plant Breeding
- 4. Amelioration technology for contaminated grain

5. Best management strategies
6. Improved testing procedures

II. Award Information

This RFA solicits applications for the FY2021 funding cycle. The anticipated amount available for awards to support the AMCOE program in FY2021 is \$300,000. The maximum individual award amount is \$75,000.

This RFA is being released prior to final budget availability for FY2021. Final checkoff contributions may affect the level of funding for this program in FY2021.

You may submit one of two types of applications: (1) New Application; or (2) Renewal Application.

(1) **New Application**: This is a project application that has not been previously funded by AMCOE. **All new applications require a Letter of Intent.** We will review all new applications to ensure they meet administrative requirements and all applications will be evaluated by a review panel using criteria and selection processes described in this RFA.

(2) **Renewal Application**: This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. **Renewal applications do not require submission of a Letter of Intent.** Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications; they also must contain a Progress Report as part of the Project Narrative. We must receive the renewal applications by the full application deadline. We will evaluate renewal applications at the same time as new applications, and renewal applications will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

III. Eligibility Information

The Principal Investigator (PI) on the application will serve as the primary point of contact for all communications between AMCOE program officials and the project relating to scientific, technical, and budgetary aspects if the project is awarded. PIs must be faculty or staff at an Eligible Organization.

Eligible Organizations for AMCOE competitive research funding include a) colleges and universities; b) university research foundations; c) other non-governmental research institutions and organizations; and d) private organizations or corporations. Federal, State, or Local government agencies, foreign and international organizations are ineligible to apply for this program.

Grant recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary to conduct the project. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude AMCOE from making an award.

If you have any questions about your institution's eligibility, please contact NCGA program manager Robyn Allscheid (allscheid@ncga.com).

IV. Application & Submission Instructions

For all new applications, a Letter of Intent is a prerequisite for submission of a Full Application. The Letter of Intent is limited to two pages.

On Page 1, provide only the following information:

- i. the name, professional title, department, institution, and e-mail address of the PI and name, professional title, department, and institution of all co-PI's and/or collaborating investigators
- ii. the Priority Research Area that is most closely addressed in the application

On Page 2, include:

- i. a descriptive title
- ii. rationale
- iii. overall hypothesis or goal
- iv. specific objectives
- v. approach
- vi. potential impact and expected outcomes

Letters of Intent for the FY2021 funding cycle must be received by **5:00PM Eastern Time on Friday, October 30, 2020**. Letters received after this deadline will not be considered. Letters will be reviewed by the AMCOE steering committee in order to plan for the review panel and ensure that the proposed project fits appropriately within the AMCOE Priority Research Areas. All applicants will be contacted following committee review with either invitation to submit a Full Proposal or notified of declination.

Letters of Intent should be submitted as PDF files via email to Robyn Allscheid (allscheid@ncga.com). Letters of Intent should be prepared with 12-point font and line spacing not exceeding six lines of text per vertical inch, including all figures and tables.

For those applicants selected for a Full Application, applications should include the following sections:

Project Summary/Abstract (1-page limit)
Project Narrative (8-page limit)
Bibliography & References Cited
Curriculum Vitae for PI and Co-PIs (2-page maximum per CV)

Budget
Budget Justification

The Project Narrative section must include all of the following:

- 1) Introduction: Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Summarize the body of knowledge or past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed activities significant to the proposed project. Include preliminary data pertinent to the proposed project. This section should include in-depth information on the following:
 - (a) Relevance to stakeholders;
 - (b) Connection to ongoing research, education, and/or extension programs;
 - (c) Reasons for performing the work at the proposed institution(s).
- 2) Rationale and Significance
 - (a) Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project;
 - (b) Describe the specific relationship of the project's objectives to one of the priority research areas. Applications that do not address at least one priority research area will not be reviewed; and,
 - (c) Clearly describe the potential for improvement in and sustainability of U.S. corn production systems, including discussion of technology transfer opportunities to ensure farmer access to successful research outcomes.
- 3) Approach
 - (a) Objectives: All applications must include a statement of objectives or specific aims of the proposed project in clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged terms.
 - (b) Methods: Explicitly state the procedures or methodology you will apply in the proposed project. This section should include, but not necessarily be limited to, descriptions of:
 1. Stakeholder involvement, if applicable, in problem identification, planning, implementation, and evaluation;
 2. Proposed project activities, listed sequentially;
 3. Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale;
 4. Expected results;
 5. How data will be analyzed or interpreted;
 6. Plans to communicate results to appropriate audiences;
 7. Pitfalls that might be encountered; and,
 8. Limitations to proposed procedures.
 - (c) Project Timetable: The proposal must outline all important phases as a function of time for the entire project, including periods beyond FY2021 grant funding period, as applicable.
- 4) Progress Report (if applicable) This requirement only applies to Renewal applications. These applications must include a progress report within the applicable

page limitation of the Project Narrative. This may be a separate section or incorporated into other parts of the Project Narrative.

Budget requests **should not exceed \$75,000** per year. Multi-year projects will be considered; however, awards will only cover one year, and projects must be resubmitted for renewal funding each fiscal year.

Budgets should include travel costs for the PI (or a designated project representative) to attend the annual AMCOE research meeting, held each winter in coordination with the Commodity Classic.

Indirect costs are not allowed on AMCOE awards.

Student tuition is not allowed on AMCOE awards, however a stipend to cover hours worked is acceptable if supported in the budget justification.

Budgets should be reviewed and approved by the appropriate institutional sponsored project office prior to submission to AMCOE.

Full Applications should be submitted as a single PDF file via email to Robyn Allscheid (allscheid@ncga.com). Applications should be prepared with 12-point font and line spacing not exceeding six lines of text per vertical inch, including all figures and tables.

Applications for the FY2021 funding cycle must be received by **5:00PM Eastern Time on Friday, December 18, 2020**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

V. Application Review Requirements

We evaluate each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, a technical review panel will evaluate applications that meet the administrative requirements.

The technical review panel will include scientific experts with relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience as well as corn producer and checkoff board staff members who can assess the relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs.

After the panel has completed its deliberations, the corn checkoff representatives will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review. NCGA reserves the right to negotiate with the PI and/or the submitting organization or institution

regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to funding any project.

Applications will be reviewed against the following criteria:

- 1) Scientific merit of the application
 - a. Innovation, uniqueness, and originality
 - b. Clarity of objectives
 - c. Adequacy of the description of the research program
 - d. Suitability and feasibility of the methodology
- 2) Qualifications of the PI and/or interdisciplinary team
 - a. Qualifications of the applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project
 - b. Demonstrated awareness of previous and alternate approaches to the identified problem
 - c. Potential of the PI and/or team to leverage requested AMCOE funding with additional funding sources
 - d. Level of collaboration from multiple cooperators and/or multiple states
 - e. Planning and administration of the proposed project, including time allocated for completion of objectives, planned collaborative efforts, and dissemination of project results
- 3) Project relevance
 - a. Project addresses one of the six priority research areas
 - b. Proposed work addresses stakeholder needs
 - c. Potential to transfer new technologies to stakeholders

For questions related to the AMCOE Competitive Grants Program please contact:

Robyn Allscheid, Director of Research & Productivity
National Corn Growers Association
allscheid@ncga.com
(636) 733-5532