

## Centers of Excellence (CoE)

### Overview:

In Fiscal Year 2015, for applicable competitive research and extension programs, NIFA will be recognizing and providing priority in the receipt of funding to applications from “centers of excellence” that have been established for purposes of carrying out research, extension, and education activities relating to the food and agricultural sciences. OSU qualifies as a center of excellence as it is the State’s agricultural experiment station. OSU provides both financial and in-kind support to CFAES Departments. Below is a brief description of those resources.

#### **OSU Resources (customize to fit within your proposal)**

The Ohio State University, College of Food Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) is an 1862 Land Grant University, with over 10 locations throughout the State of Ohio and qualifies to serve as a Center of Excellence. CFAES provides a vast array of services to help leverage resources using both public and private partnerships of modern industry groups, institutions of higher education and state and federal resources to support Center of Excellence projects. CFAES supports over 200 faculty members and provides support through operations, personnel and services needed to conduct research activities, and core facilities including greenhouses, field, and laboratories. CFAES also supports several Centers of Innovation, focused collaborative research centers designed to address the most critical research areas 1) food security, production, and human health, 2) environmental quality and sustainability, and 3) advanced bioenergy and bio-based products. The Enterprise for Research, Innovation and Knowledge (ERIK) shows research expenditures for the 2021 fiscal year were \$1.236 billion. The analysis is part of the Office of Research submission to the National Science Foundation’s Higher Education Research and Development (HERD) Survey. For the year, federal research spending grew 7.7% from \$539 million in FY 2020 to \$581 million in FY 2021. Ohio State’s institutional investment in research grew to \$404 million in FY 2021, up from \$152 million the previous fiscal year. (Source: <https://research.osu.edu/annual-research-expenditures-exceed-12-billion-fiscal-year-2021>)

#### **Required Efforts/Standards for recognition as a Center of Excellence:**

(Each of these elements must be addressed in your proposal)

(Bullet points are suggestions from the Grant Development Support Unit)

- A. to ensure coordination and cost effectiveness by reducing unnecessarily duplicative efforts regarding research, teaching, and extension in the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in your proposal;**
  - The goal is to bring together people doing similar work and move away from funding multiple grants for the same type of work
  
- B. the ability of the CoE to leverage available resources through private-public partnerships among agricultural groups industry groups, other institutions of higher education, and the Federal Government in the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application;**
  - CoE’s are to be used as an incentive to leverage existing funds and build formal partnerships.
  - Who are you partnering with on the proposal, either as a collaborator or as a subaward? How is this partner identified in the proposal?
  - Resources leveraged should be commensurate with the size of the award
  
- C. the planned scope and capability of the center of excellence to implement teaching initiatives to increase awareness and effectively disseminate solutions to target audiences through extension activities in the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application; and**
  - Should the state extension specialist in your area of science be included in the proposal?
  - How will you disseminate the knowledge gained from the research?

- D. the ability or capacity of the center of excellence to increase the economic returns to rural communities by identifying, attracting, and directing funds to high-priority agricultural issues in support of and as a result of the implementation of the proposed research and/or extension activity outlined in this application.**
- How is your proposal relevant on a state, regional or national scale?
  - How will the proposed activities result in impacts/outcomes that are important and relevant to societal challenges?
  - Read the Stakeholder Input and Purpose and Priorities (located in each Request for Application) and relate those items to your application.

Additionally, where practicable (not required), center of excellence applicants should describe proposed efforts to improve teaching capacity and infrastructure at colleges and universities (including land-grant colleges and universities, cooperating forestry schools, certified Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture (NLGCA) (list of certified NLGCA is available at [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/pdfs/nlgca\\_colleges.pdf](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/funding/pdfs/nlgca_colleges.pdf) ), and schools of veterinary medicine).

**Important points:**

- ✓ **Self-Identify as a “Center of Excellence” include a justification within your proposal**
  - Request consideration for your area of science
- ✓ **Identify the research, extension and teaching activities included in your proposal**
- ✓ **There is no separate line item for funding. A CoE must fall within one of the competitive grants programs (AFRI, SCRI, etc.)**

**Center of Excellence status: (Peer Review of Application)**

All eligible applicants will be competitively peer reviewed and ranked in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Those that rank highly meritorious and requested to be considered as a center of excellence will be further evaluated by the peer panel to determine whether they have met the standards to be centers of excellence. In instances where they are found to be equally meritorious with the application of a non-center of excellence, based on peer review, selection for funding will be weighed in favor of applicants meeting the center of excellence criteria. NIFA will effectively use the center of excellence prioritization as a “tie breaker”. Applicants that rank highly meritorious but who did not request consideration as a center of excellence or who are not deemed to have met the centers of excellence standards may still receive funding.

In addition, the applicant’s Notice of Award will reflect that, for the particular grant program, the applicant meets all of the requirements of a center of excellence. Entities recognized as centers of excellence will maintain that distinction for the duration of their period of performance or as identified in the terms and conditions of that award.