PennState
College of Agricultural Sciences

McIntire-Stennis

Federal FY25 (2025-2026) Competitive Grants Program

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Deadlines

Full Application — **Monday, July 14, 2025 (11:59 pm)**

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Funding Opportunity Description

Overview

Research and Graduate Education announces the availability of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program funds and seeks applications from Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences faculty that adhere to the provisions of the McIntire-Stennis Act of October 10, 1962 (16 U.S.C. 582a-582a-7), as amended.

This grant opportunity is being offered to support forestry research that includes investigations relating to:

- reforestation and management of land for the production of timber and other related products of the forest;
- management of forest and related watershed lands to improve conditions of water flow and to protect resources against floods and erosion;

- management of forest and related rangeland for production of forage for domestic livestock and game and improvement of food and habitat for wildlife;
- management of forest lands for outdoor recreation;
- protection of forest land and resources against fire, insects, diseases, or other destructive agents;
- utilization of wood and other forest products;
- development of sound policies for management of forest lands and the harvesting and marketing of forest products; and
- such other studies as may be necessary to obtain the fullest and most effective use of forest resources.

Research and Graduate Education will seek proposals that are comprised of basic and applied studies related to forestry research that will lead to future leveraging. In addition, research at branch locations or experimental forests may be supported by McIntire-Stennis funds if it is related to an approved project.

Solicitation and Oversight of Proposals and Projects

The Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station is responsible for soliciting and receiving research proposals, for facilitating a selection process to identify and determine funding eligibility for the proposals, and ensuring that funds received are properly budgeted, accounted for, and reported to USDA on an annual basis.

Legislative Authority

Guidelines governing the use of funds allocated to Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences are provided under the provisions of the McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Act of October 10, 1962 (16 U.S.C. 582a-582a-7). Funds are allocated annually from USDA to the College of Agricultural Sciences based on the formula for apportionment as specified in the McIntire-Stennis Act and may vary from year-to-year.

Eligibility Information

Eligible Applicants

All College of Agricultural Sciences' faculty are eligible to apply. Individuals can only be the Principal Investigator (PI) on one proposal, but may serve as co-PI on more than one proposal. The PI must be a tenure-track/tenured faculty member or a non-tenure track faculty member identified by their department head as an independent researcher and holding a minimum rank of assistant professor. The PI will be considered the leader and will be responsible for subsequent reporting requirements. Other non-tenure track faculty, post-doctoral researchers and PhD candidates may participate as co-principal investigators, but cannot lead proposals. Principal investigators and key personnel must have an active research project, demonstrate competency to implement and complete a project, provide fiscal accountability, prepare project reports on time, and demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers and other interested parties. Investigators who are delinquent in submitting progress reports to internal or external sponsors, are not eligible to apply.

Reporting Requirements

Annual reports and subsequent termination reports are required from all successful applicants and must be submitted through the NIFA Reporting System (NRS) via the USDA NIFA portal.

Award Information

Available Funding

Proposal budgets are targeted for a total of $100,000 per year (October 1 through September 30) for up to two years and the amount requested must align with the proposed work. Funding will be allocated annually from USDA appropriations and must be expended the year they are allocated. **Subsequent year funding is contingent on adequate federal appropriations.** Budgets in excess of $100,000 per year can be submitted, but significant justification should be included in the budget justification to warrant a higher funding level.

Application and Submission

Submission Dates and Times

An electronic version of the proposal should be submitted via the Penn State InfoReady system **by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, July 14, 2025. {**https://psu.infoready4.com/#freeformCompetitionDetail/1985044**}**

The InfoReady form requires the completion of a **PROPOSAL ABSTRACT** in addition to uploading the Proposal. The **PROPOSAL ABSTRACT** (300 word maximum) should succinctly described the proposed work to provide a brief description of the problem to be addressed, project objectives, expected deliverables and a description of the effort to be undertaken in terms that can be understood by a diverse audience including the general public, university personnel, stakeholders, non-experts, and various public and private organizations.

Proposal Requirements

The full proposal must include all the following components (in the order listed) as a unified pdf and adhere to the page limits listed below:

1. **FULL PROPOSAL NARRATIVE (5 pages maximum)**
   - A. **PREVIOUS WORK AND PRESENT OUTLOOK:** Provide a brief summary covering pertinent research on the problem, the status of current research and the additional information needed, and how this proposal is expected to contribute to this need.
   - B. **OUTCOME BASED OBJECTIVES**: Provide a complete, concise, clear, and logically arranged statements defining the specific outcome-based aims of the proposed efforts along with details of the anticipated accomplishments. In all proposals, the objectives should delineate both the proposed aims, projected outcomes, deliverables, and any results anticipated.
   - C. **APPROACH/PROCEDURES:** Describe *in detail* how each of the stated objectives will be reached. List the proposed treatments, include a clear description of your experimental design and experimental units, reference methods to be used, appropriate statistical analysis, and estimated length of time required for the analyses. For all proposals, describe how the project will be managed (for example, how coordination between partners will be achieved and maintained if applicable).
   - D. **TIMETABLE:** All proposals must include a timeline that demonstrates the step-by-step progression of the research effort proposed, with appropriate milestone dates. In addition, describe the significant anticipated accomplishments that will demonstrate reportable progress.
2. **LITERATURE CITED, as appropriate.**
3. **BUDGET and BUDGET JUSTIFICATION/NARRATIVE (1-2 page)**

   A summary budget (up to 2 years) must be included in the proposal and shall only include direct project-related costs. **If you need assistance during the budget development process, please reach out to** hailey@psu.edu **and not the College's Grants and Contracts Office**. The Principal Investigator and Co-Principal Investigator(s) must include a portion of their salaries (10% per person minimum) on the budget to

directly support these research efforts. Salary savings will not be returned to the academic unit but will be reinvested into furthering efforts of College research programs. Fringe benefits are required in personnel costs and must be included in the summary budget. Equipment (>$10,000), tuition, supplemental salary, international travel, and subcontracting to outside entities is not permitted on the proposals. All other project costs typically allowed by federal extramural research sponsors are allowed in this program.

Budgets must be created in the attached excel document provided in InfoReady "FFY25 McStennis Budget Templates.xlsx" and must be uploaded into InfoReady.

Funding will be allocated annually (October 1 through September 30) from appropriations. Subsequent year funding is contingent on adequate federal appropriations.

Include a detailed budget justification/narrative. The budget justification is used to completely explain your expenses and easily understood by the reviewers and USDA. Please provide a justification (brief description and explanation of need) for the following budget sections:

1) Personnel – include individual's names, title, and role
2) Non-Personnel – include expendable supplies, domestic travel, purchased services, and other (computer time, publications, etc.)

Review Process and Criteria

General Review Process Description

The proposal reviews will ensure that the projects recommended for funding are of sufficient quality to merit funding; the proposed projects meet that criteria as defined by USDA's McIntire-Stennis Research Program. The review panel will be comprised of diverse faculty (assistant/associate/full professors) and make funding recommendations to the Associate Dean for Research. Final decisions for funding will be made by the Associate Dean for Research and are contingent on a USDA approval of a McIntire-Stennis AES project.

Merit Reviews

Each proposal will be reviewed to determine the need, priority, and scientific feasibly of the proposed project. The reviews will assure that the proposals are scientifically sound, relevant to society's forestry and fiber needs, not duplicative of efforts undertaken elsewhere, and have been evaluated in terms of national priorities.

The merit review process for McIntire-Stennis Research will accomplish the following:

- Ensure completeness of project proposal.
- Evaluate relevance of the proposed research.
- Evaluate quality and scientific value of the proposed research.
- Consider opportunities for cooperation with other individuals and/or units.
- Provide opportunity for the project leader to interact with reviewers and make adjustments as appropriate.
- Provide USDA NIFA with an indication, project by project, that the process was followed.

USDA NIFA Review

To ensure compliance with the purposes of the McIntire-Stennis Act, USDA must review and approve proposals in NRS prior to expenditure of McIntire-Stennis funds. USDA will review project proposals for compliance with the provisions of the McIntire-Stennis Act, especially for the project's forestry and forest-related research content.

They will review project proposals for scientific and technical adequacy and will also review classification coding of projects as they are approved to ensure accurate identification and recording of the proposed research efforts.

Award Administration

Administrative Program Management

The first-named investigator on the proposal will be considered the PI and will be responsible for subsequent reporting requirements. PIs and key personnel must demonstrate competency to implement and complete a project, provide fiscal accountability, prepare project reports and demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers and other interested parties.

Award Notice

Notification of award will come from Research and Graduate Education. Notification is expected to be made in September 2025.

Project Accountability Reporting Requirements

By the submission of a McIntire-Stennis Program Competitive Grant proposal and acceptance of funding, all investigators agree to:

1. ensure the quality of the project and expend all monies within the time frame specified in the award notice;
2. submit Project Initiation forms through NRS to establish a corresponding AES project for this proposal and complete and submit annual accomplishment and/or termination reports as required by USDA; and
3. acknowledge "USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture, McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program" in published articles, manuscripts, dissertations, posters, presentations, inventions, patents, and press releases.

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