

Notice of Intent (NOI) No. DE-FOA-0001711**Notice of Intent to Issue:
"Fiscal Year 17 Biomass Research and Development Initiative"**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), Bioenergy Technologies Office (BETO) intends to issue a Request for Applications (RFA) entitled "Fiscal Year 17 Biomass Research and Development Initiative (BRDI)."

The RFA will address USDA and DOE programmatic objectives, administrative roles, and areas of interest in implementing Biomass Research and Development Initiative (BRDI) grants. Section 9001(a) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246) re-authorized the BRDI competitive grants program by amending section 9008 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (FSRIA), as amended, (Pub. L. 107-171) (7 U.S.C. 8108).

Collaboration between USDA and DOE on BRDI is directed under section 9008(e) (1) of FSRIA, as amended. Additionally, DOE provides funds guided by certain administrative provisions of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 and the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Section 9008(e)(3) of FSRIA provides direction and guidance on the technical areas as described in BRDI.

For fiscal year (FY) 2017, the BRDI program requires that funded projects address at least one (1) of the following three (3) legislatively mandated technical (topic) areas:

- 1) **Feedstocks development** – The intent of this Topic Area is to address research, development, and demonstration (RD&D) activities regarding feedstocks and feedstock logistics (including harvest, handling, transport, preprocessing, and storage) relevant to production of raw materials for conversion to biofuels and biobased products. The BRDI program is designed to support near-term commercial systems. Projects should emphasize development and optimization of existing feedstocks that will be available for testing and demonstration during the life of the project. Proposals that include breeding or genetic improvement of feedstocks should reconcile this work with the Program's emphasis on near-term impacts.
- 2) **Biofuels and biobased products development** – The intent of this Topic Area is to address RD&D activities to support (i) development of diverse cost-effective, innovative technologies for the use of cellulosic biomass in the production of biofuels, bioenergy, and biobased products; and, (ii) product diversification through technologies relevant to the production of a range of biobased products (including chemicals, animal feeds, and cogeneration power) that potentially can increase the feasibility of fuel production in a biorefinery.

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- 3) **Biofuels development analysis** – The intent of this Topic Area is to apply systems evaluation methods that can be used to optimize system performance and market potential and to quantify the project’s impact on sustainability; therefore, successful applications will consider the lifecycle (cradle-to-grave) impacts including environmental, social, and economic implications that are attributable to the project. Successful projects should include these sustainability data in engineering process models and be used over the life of the project to improve the system and quantify sustainability impacts.

NIFA and EERE envision awarding multiple financial assistance awards in the form of grants and cooperative agreements, respectively. The estimated period of performance for each award will be approximately three (3) years.

This Notice is issued so that interested parties are aware of NIFA’s and EERE’s intention to issue the RFA in the near term. All of the information contained in this Notice is subject to change. Neither NIFA nor EERE will respond to questions concerning this Notice. Once the RFA has been released, NIFA will provide an avenue for potential Applicants to submit questions.

NIFA and EERE plan to issue a RFA titled “Fiscal Year 17 Biomass Research and Development Initiative” in mid February 2017 via the EERE Exchange website (<https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/default.aspx>). If Applicants wish to receive official notifications and information from USDA and EERE regarding this RFA, they should register in EERE Exchange at <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/Registration.aspx>. When the RFA is released, applications will be accepted ONLY through EERE Exchange.

In anticipation of the RFA’s release, Applicants are advised to complete the following steps, which are **required** for application submission:

- Obtain a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number, at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.
- Register with the System for Award Management (SAM) at <https://www.sam.gov>. Designating an Electronic Business Point of Contact (EBiz POC) and obtaining a special password called an MPIN are important steps in SAM registration. Please update your SAM registration annually.
- Register in EERE Exchange at <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/Registration.aspx>. See the EERE Exchange Applicant Guide at <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/Manuals.aspx>. A list of frequently asked questions concerning EERE Exchange is at <https://eere-exchange.energy.gov/FAQ.aspx>
- Register in FedConnect at <https://www.fedconnect.net/>; use “Register as a Vendor” link. To create an organization account, your organization’s SAM MPIN is required.

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