USDA - Agricultural Research Service
1890s Faculty Research Sabbatical Program (FRSP)

FY 2019 Program Information

Application Deadline: June 19, 2019

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Program Description

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Research Service (ARS) is committed to enhancing the agricultural research capacity of the 1890 Land-Grant Universities (LGUs) by partnering with them in a program offering research and training opportunities to career-track faculty at 1890 LGUs through the award of faculty research sabbaticals. The ARS 1890 Faculty Research Sabbatical Program will provide mutual benefit to the 1890 LGUs and ARS: 1890 LGU faculty will have the opportunity to work alongside ARS scientists in established research programs, develop new research skills and techniques, co-author research papers from successful collaborative research, and demonstrate increased capacity to develop scientifically competitive research. ARS scientists will benefit from bringing new and talented partners into our research programs and establishing new collaborative research with 1890 LGUs.

ARS will invest up to $500,000 each year into this 1890 Faculty Research Sabbatical Program, pending annual appropriations. The ARS-LGU research partners may identify opportunities to develop more long-term funding ideas to sustain their research relationships beyond the term of the sabbatical, which could include the 1890 Institution Teaching, Research and Extension Capacity Building Grants (CBG) Program offered by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

ARS is USDA’s chief scientific in-house research Agency and conducts research to develop and transfer solutions to agricultural problems of high national priority and provide information access and dissemination to:

- Ensure high-quality, safe food, and other agricultural products;
- Assess the nutritional needs of Americans;
- Sustain a competitive agricultural economy;
- Enhance the natural resource base and the environment; and
- Provide economic opportunities for rural citizens, communities, and society as a whole.

ARS will accept proposals from faculty at any of the 1890 LGUs for the 1890 Faculty Research Sabbatical Program. A maximum of three applications may be submitted by each 1890 LGU per competition. The proposal must be co-authored by:

- A career-track 1890 LGU faculty member who:
  - Has been employed for a minimum of 5 years in his/her current position, and
  - Is approved for sabbatical leave by his/her home institution; and
• Any full time ARS scientist* (ARS host mentor) who:
  o Will be the research cooperator and host mentor for the 1890 LGU faculty member;
  o Has successfully completed the prescribed probationary period, is in good standing relative to performance, and has his/her supervisor’s approval;
  o Has adequate facilities and other resources needed to host the 1890 LGU faculty member; and
  o Has worked with the 1890 LGU faculty member to identify a research project that is complementary and relevant to his/her base-funded research.

*Note that an ARS scientist must be a Category I or IV scientist and have an active delegation of authority as an ARS Principal Investigator, prior to any award to the 1890 LGU.

The ARS website (www.ars.usda.gov) is a valuable resource for 1890 LGU scientists in identifying ARS research projects and locations of interest.

For the Federal fiscal year (FY) 2019 program:
• Each 1890 faculty research sabbatical agreement will provide up to $125,000 to support expenses (e.g., salary, housing allowance, personal living expenses, and travel) for the proposed collaboration (beginning on or about September 1, 2019) and the LGU faculty member’s 6- to 12-month residency at an ARS laboratory to conduct cooperative research of mutual interest with ARS. The award will be a Non-Assistance Cooperative Agreement, (7 U.S.C. 3318(b)).
• Only one award may be made to an institution per year.
• Although this program is primarily intended to support 1890 LGU faculty members, faculty may opt to use a portion of their funds to support travel expenses of their students participating in the collaborative research project.
• Up to $25,000 of the total awarded may be retained by the ARS host mentor for budgeted lab supplies for procurement by ARS or for the ARS host mentor travel to the 1890 LGU faculty member’s home institution.

The Non-Assistance Cooperative Agreement awarded for collaboration between the 1890 LGU (for the faculty member) and ARS shall begin on or around September 1, 2019, and the residency at the ARS laboratory must begin no later than June 1, 2020. The length of the agreement will be for either 1 year or 1.5 years, depending on the start date of the residency. At the conclusion of the agreement, the 1890 LGU faculty member and ARS host mentor will be required to jointly complete an accomplishment report.

Proposal and Submission Instructions

The co-authored proposals are submitted internally by the ARS host mentor; there is not a Grants.gov application. Using the provided 1890s Faculty Research Sabbatical Program application template, the proposal must be developed jointly by the interested career-track 1890 LGU faculty member and his/her prospective ARS host mentor. The ARS host mentor’s Area
Director will submit the completed application package by the application deadline. All proposals must include the following, as indicated in the application template:

1. Names and affiliations of the 1890 LGU faculty member and ARS host mentor;
2. The project number for the parent ARS intramural project (to be provided by the ARS host mentor);
3. An introduction that provides background context and describes the significance of the proposed research;
4. The objectives of the work to be conducted by the 1890 LGU faculty member during his/her sabbatical leave;
5. The materials and methods required to accomplish the proposed research;
6. The resources currently available at the ARS location to support the proposed research;
7. The expected outputs and impacts of the proposed research;
8. The benefits of the proposed cooperative research to U.S. agriculture, the 1890 LGU, ARS, and to the parent ARS intramural project;
9. A description of how the 1890 Faculty Research Sabbatical will enhance the capabilities of the 1890 LGU faculty member and how capacity building will happen. This description should be prepared collaboratively by the 1890s LGU applicant and prospective ARS host mentor; and
10. The requested budget.

Additionally, applicants are required to provide:

- The curriculum vitae of the 1890 LGU faculty member;
- The curriculum vitae of the ARS host scientist (including any prior mentoring experience);
- A letter from the Authorized Official of the 1890 LGU that:
  - Documents institutional approval for submission of the application and of the proposed research;
  - Describes the specific arrangements at the 1890 LGU with respect to salary and date and duration of the sabbatical leave;
  - Recognizes the full-time nature of the sabbatical leave, including agreement that the 1890 LGU faculty member will be conducting the research at the ARS location and thus will be minimally engaged in their normal faculty duties; and
  - Stipulates the application is approved as one of no more than three applications from the 1890 LGU to this program for Federal FY 2019.

*Note that the 1890 LGU does not submit the proposal application to ARS. The proposal is submitted by ARS internally. This is not a Federal assistance award and does not involve Grants.gov.*

Successful proposals will:

- Propose innovative research on some aspect of agriculture or food relevant to the ARS mission and programs;
• Have potential benefits and impact for the state where the 1890 LGU is located and beyond;
• Strengthen the expertise and research capacity being brought to the project by the 1890 LGU applicant; and
• Enhance the scope or impact of the ARS host mentor’s research project.

The ARS host mentor must submit the completed application package(s) to their Research Leader who shall forward the application package(s) to their Area Director’s Office. The Area Director’s Office must then email all approved applications to stephanie.pearl@usda.gov by the program deadline, which is June 19, 2019.

Application Review and Selection

All application packages for the 1890 Faculty Research Sabbatical Program will be screened to ensure they satisfy the requirements as described above. Those that do not will be returned without review.

Proposals will be reviewed by a panel composed of the four ARS Office of National Program Deputy Administrators or their designated National Program Leader substitutes. Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

• Relevance to the ARS mission;
• Ability to further the development of the 1890 LGU faculty applicant;
• Scientific merit of the proposed research; and
• Relevance and utility to the base-funded research of the ARS host scientist.

The ARS Administrator will make the final selection of proposals for funding based on the panel’s evaluations. Finalists will be notified in July 2019 and will be required to complete a REE-454 budget template for the FY 2019 1890 Faculty Research Sabbatical Program award.