



## **Research Facilities Act**

### **Background & Frequently Asked Questions**

*March 8, 2023*

This document answers questions about the Research Facilities Act (RFA). APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly (BAA) 2023 Farm Bill Request for the Research Facilities Act is [here](#).

#### **About the Current Research Facilities Act** – *Italicized text is included in statute.*

- RFA was reauthorized in the 2018 Farm Bill, statutory language can be found [here](#).
- **Reauthorization:** The RFA needs to be reauthorized in the 2023 Farm Bill. It expires Sept. 30, 2023.
- **Eligibility:** Eligibility for the competitive grants program includes any institution receiving National Institute of Food and Agriculture capacity funding: 1862, 1890, 1994, as well as non-land-grant colleges of agriculture. The funding is not limited to colleges of agriculture, but is inclusive of veterinarian sciences, nutritional sciences, as well as forestry and natural resources due to the definition of agricultural science in the original statute.
- **New Build/Deferred Maintenance:** The authority currently states that the program will be administered under the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture *“to assist in the construction, alteration, acquisition, modernization, renovation, or remodeling of agricultural research facilities.”*
- **Funding:** The statute does not contain a specific discretionary or mandatory funding level.
- **Match:** Current statute states that each *“proposal shall certify the availability of at least a 50 percent non-Federal share of the cost of the facility. The non-Federal share shall be paid in cash and may include funding from private sources or from units of State or local government.”*

#### **Other key points:**

- **Nonduplication of Facilities:** *“The proposal shall demonstrate how the agricultural research facility would be complementary to, and not duplicative of, facilities of colleges, universities, and nonprofit institutions, and facilities of the Agricultural Research Service, within the State and region.”*
- **Maintenance Plan:** *“The proposal shall demonstrate that the recipient entity has the ability and commitment to support the long-term, ongoing operating and maintenance costs of— (i) the agricultural research facility after the facility is completed; and (ii) each program to be based at the facility.”*
- **One Project at a Time:** *“An entity eligible to receive funds under this Act may receive funds for only one project at a time.”*

### **2023 Farm Bill – Five-year Reauthorization and Funding Request**

#### **Why is the APLU BAA “only” requesting \$5 billion for the 2023 Farm Bill?**

APLU BAA is requesting \$5 billion in mandatory funding for RFA, \$1 billion a year. This is within the community ask of \$8 billion for Title VII, the Research Title of the Farm Bill.

#### **Why is our request \$5 billion and not \$11.5 billion when that is what we need?**

Due to the fiscal environment, it is unclear how much funding will be available. \$5 billion represents a significant down payment. Early in the process, the land-grant community will have to prove how important these investments are to pave the way for additional funding in the future.

#### **What about the matching requirement?**

APLU Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resource (FANR)/Lewis Burke Associates Advocacy team is working with congressional champions to remove or broaden and reduce the matching requirement.



### **How can CARET/AHS and other stakeholders support this request?**

- ✓ Ask your congressional delegation to submit the APLU BAA request of \$5 billion in mandatory funding for the RFA to the House and Senate committee as part of their Farm Bill request.
- ✓ Submit the request directly to the committees via webform.
- ✓ Work with your government affairs representatives to ask your Members of Congress to co-sponsor marker bills that are supportive of mandatory funding for the RFA in the 2023 Farm Bill discussion.
- ✓ Work with your government affairs representatives to ask your Members of Congress to sign on to “Dear Colleague Letters” in support of mandatory funding for the RFA in the 2023 Farm Bill discussion.
- ✓ Check-in (not just in March or August) with your Members of Congress to impress upon them how critical the RFA is.
- ✓ Visit poor facilities and have discussions about your plans for new facilities.

### ***FY 2024 Annual Appropriations Request***

#### **Timing: Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 funding expires, September 30, 2023.**

- Both House and Senate Members are actively seeking priorities for FY 2024 appropriations with many deadlines in March.
- Since it’s reauthorization in 2018, RFA first received funding in FY 2023, \$2 million.
- RFA was considered twice for Reconciliation funding in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress (\$3.65 billion and \$1 billion) but was ultimately left out of the Inflation Reduction Act.

#### **FY 2024 Request:**

- \$500 million amount reflects a rounded down number of the annual need assessed in the 2021 Gordian report.
- Quote from [report](#) justifying the request: “Our analysis suggests that colleges and schools of agriculture will require a sustaining annual investment of approximately \$550 million each year just to keep deferred maintenance from growing.” Page ix (9).
- This number was selected because it can be justified via the Gordian report.

#### **Why is this number so low compared to the Farm Bill request?**

- Due to fiscal pressures, there is only so much funding allowed in each appropriations bill and thus getting significant increases for a single program line is highly unlikely in the Ag Appropriations bill.
- The Farm Bill allows for mandatory funding and typically (but not always) this can mean larger allotments of funding.

#### **What can CARET/AHS and other stakeholders do to support this request?**

- Submit request form to Members of Congress in support of the FY2024 annual appropriations ask of \$500 million for the RFA.
- Encourage your members to sign on to “Dear Colleague Letters” by coordinating with your government affairs representative. Weigh in directly with Members of Congress about why this request is so important.