

## **Working with State & National Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Development Grant Programs – Panel**

**11:05 am – 11:50 am Breakout Session**

**Moderator: Karen Funkenbusch, Missouri AgrAbility**

**Panel:** Timothy Prather, Tennessee AgrAbility; Rick Peterson, Texas AgrAbility and Maureen Cunningham, Brain Injury Association of Missouri

### **Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) Basics**

According to the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service's most recent Ag Census data, the number of young people entering farming continues to decline, but the number of new farmers and ranchers over the age of 35 as well as the number of smaller farms and ranches nationwide continue to rise. Ensuring there will be a "new generation" of beginning farmers and ranchers — regardless of age or production choice — is especially important to the continuation of agricultural production in the United States.

The BFRDP is a competitive grant program administered by USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) that funds education, extension, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives directed at helping beginning farmers and ranchers of all types.

BFRDP is targeted especially to collaborative local, state, and regional networks and partnerships. It supports financial and entrepreneurial training, mentoring, and apprenticeship programs; "land link" programs that connect retiring farmers and landowners with new farmers; vocational training and agricultural rehabilitation programs for veterans; and education, outreach, and curriculum development activities to assist beginning farmers and ranchers. Topics may also include production practices, conservation planning, risk management education, diversification and marketing strategies, credit management, and farm safety training. BFRDP grants have a term of 3 years and cannot exceed \$200,000 per year.

### **FUNDING PRIORITIES**

In accordance with the authorizing legislation, priority will be given to partnerships and collaborations led by or including nongovernmental, community-based organizations and school-based agricultural, educational organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach. At least 5 percent of the funds will support programs and services that address the needs of beginning farmers or ranchers with limited resources; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. At least 5 percent of the funds will support programs and services that address the needs of veteran farmers and ranchers. The term "farmer" is used in the broadest sense and should be interpreted to include traditional agricultural farmers, ranchers, and tree farmers. As far as possible, geographical diversity will also be ensured.

Topics for programs and services, as listed in the Agricultural Act of 2014, include:

- Basic livestock, forest management, and crop farming practices

- Innovative farm, ranch, and private, nonindustrial forest land transfer strategies
- Entrepreneurship and business training
- Financial and risk management training (including the acquisition and management of agricultural credit)
- Natural resource management and planning
- Diversification and marketing strategies
- Curriculum development
- Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships
- Resources and referral
- Farm financial benchmarking
- Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers
- Agricultural rehabilitation and vocational training for veterans
- Farm safety and awareness
- Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers

### **Eligibility**

**Who Is Eligible to Apply:** 1862 Land-Grant Institutions, 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, 1994 Land-Grant Institutions, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Other or Additional Information (See below), Private Institutions of Higher Ed

**More on Eligibility:** The recipient must be a collaborative, state, tribal, local, or regionally based network or partnership of public or private entities, which may include: state cooperative extension service; community-based and nongovernmental organization; college or university (including institutions awarding associate degrees); or any other appropriate partner. Others may be eligible to apply. Please refer to Part III of the current BFRDP Request for Applications for complete eligibility requirements.

### **Program in Action**

BFRDP has been around for nearly a decade and farming communities around the country are seeing real impacts on the ground. A recent evaluation of BFRDP showed that program funding is helping to grow the next generation of farmers while also building a national infrastructure, new models, and best practices for training new farmers. Over the past nine years, BFRDP has invested nearly \$145 million to develop and strengthen innovative new farmer training programs and resources across the country and has funded 291 projects in nearly all 50 states.

### **Example: AgrAbility state-level projects with BFRDP**

- Missouri, Karen Funkenbusch, Director/PI
- Tennessee, Tim Prather, Director/PI
- Texas, Rick Peterson, Director/PI

### **How to Apply and Program Resources**

BFRDP website: <https://nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/beginning-farmer-and-rancher-development-program-bfrdp>