

National Corn Growers Association Request for Concepts

Innovative Solutions to Weed Management

Written Concept Deadline: 5:00PM Eastern, June 2, 2021

Full Application Deadline: 5:00PM Eastern, July 2, 2021

Program Contact: Nicole Hasheider

National Corn Growers Association

hasheider@ncga.com

636-733-5547

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I. Funding Opportunity Description

The National Corn Growers Association (NCGA) represents nearly 40,000 dues-paying corn farmers nationwide and the interests of more than 300,000 growers who contribute through corn checkoff programs in their states. NCGA and its 50 affiliated state organizations work together to create and increase opportunities for corn growers. A 15-member board, made up of volunteer corn growers, provides overarching strategy and guidance for the organization. Using the strategy set by the board, grower-led action teams seek opportunities for investment that will further the mission of the organization and the economic and environmental sustainability of all U.S. corn growers.

NCGA is issuing this Request for Concepts (RFC) to seek written concepts to address weed management in innovative, non-traditional ways using advancements in technology. Following a review of all concepts, NCGA will advance a select number of concepts and seek full funding proposals.

Concepts may include strategies including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Automation in weed control
2. Targeted herbicide applications (i.e. seek and spray technology)
3. Targeted tillage opportunities
4. Harvest technologies to reduce the weed seed bank

Additional consideration may be given to concepts that propose work across a variety of geographies and environments in which corn is grown.

II. Award Information

The anticipated maximum amount available to fund one or more selected proposals is \$100,000.

III. Eligibility Information

The Principal Investigator (PI) on the application will serve as the primary point of contact for all communications between NCGA staff and the project relating to scientific, technical, and budgetary aspects if the project is awarded. PIs must be faculty or staff at an Eligible Organization.

Eligible Organizations for competitive research funding include a) colleges and universities; b) university research foundations; c) other non-governmental research institutions and organizations; d) private organizations or corporations; and, e) federal, state, or local government agencies. Foreign and international organizations are ineligible to apply for this program.

Grant recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary to conduct the project. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria may result in the application being excluded from consideration.

If you have any questions about your institution's eligibility, please contact NCGA program manager Nicole Hasheider (hasheider@ncga.com).

IV. Application & Submission Instructions

The following information must be included in each submitted concept, which should be no more than two pages in length.

- i. the name, professional title, department, institution, and e-mail address of the PI and name, professional title, department, and institution of all co-PI's and/or collaborating investigators
- i. a descriptive title
- ii. rationale
- iii. overall hypothesis or goal
- iv. specific objectives
- v. approach

vi. potential impact and expected outcomes

Concepts must be received by **5:00PM Eastern Time on June 2, 2021**. Concepts received after this deadline will not be considered. Concepts will be reviewed by NCGA staff to ensure that the proposed project meets the intended goals of the organization. All applicants will be contacted following concept review with either invitation to submit a full proposal or notified of declination.

Concepts should be submitted as PDF files via email to Nicole Hasheider (hasheider@ncga.com). Concepts should be prepared with 12-point font and line spacing not exceeding six lines of text per vertical inch, including all figures and tables.

For those applicants selected for a full proposal, applications should include the following sections:

- Project Summary/Abstract (1-page limit)
- Project Narrative (6-page limit)
- Bibliography & References Cited
- Curriculum Vitae for PI and Co-PIs (2-page maximum per CV)
- Budget
- Budget Justification

The Project Narrative section must include all of the following:

- 1) Introduction: Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Summarize the body of knowledge or past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed activities significant to the proposed project. Include preliminary data pertinent to the proposed project. This section should include in-depth information on the following:
 - (a) Relevance to stakeholders:
 - (b) Connection to ongoing research, education, and/or extension programs;
 - (c) Reasons for performing the work at the proposed institution(s).
- 2) Rationale and Significance
 - (a) Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project; and,
 - (b) Clearly describe the potential for improvement in and sustainability of U.S. corn production systems, including discussion of technology transfer opportunities to ensure farmer access to successful research outcomes.
- 3) Approach
 - (a) Objectives: All applications must include a statement of objectives or specific aims of the proposed project in clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged terms.
 - (b) Methods: Explicitly state the procedures or methodology you will apply in the proposed project. This section should include, but not necessarily be limited to, descriptions of:

1. Stakeholder involvement, if applicable, in problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation
2. Proposed project activities, listed sequentially;
3. Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale;
4. Expected results;
5. How data will be analyzed or interpreted;
6. Plans to communicate results to appropriate audiences;
7. Pitfalls that might be encountered; and,
8. Limitations to proposed procedures.

(c) Project Timetable: The proposal must outline all important phases as a function of time for the entire project, including periods beyond FY2021 grant funding period, as applicable.

Budget requests **should not exceed \$100,000**. Indirect costs of up to 10% are allowed, per NCGA policy.

Student tuition is not allowed, however a stipend to cover hours worked is acceptable if supported in the budget justification.

Budgets should be reviewed and approved by the appropriate institutional sponsored project office prior to submission to NCGA.

Full Applications should be submitted as a single PDF file via email to Nicole Hasheider (hasheider@ncga.com). Applications should be prepared with 12-point font and line spacing not exceeding six lines of text per vertical inch, including all figures and tables.

Applications for the FY2021/22 funding cycle must be received by **5:00PM Eastern Time on July 7, 2021**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

V. Application Review Requirements

Proposals will be reviewed against the following criteria:

- Scientific merit of the application
 - Innovation, uniqueness, and originality
 - Clarity of objectives
 - Adequacy of the description of the research program; and
 - Suitability and feasibility of the methodology
- Qualifications of the PI and/or interdisciplinary team
 - Qualifications of the applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project
 - Demonstrated awareness of previous and alternate approaches to the identified problem
 - Potential of the PI and/or team to leverage requested NCGA funding with additional funding sources

- Level of collaboration from multiple cooperators and/or multiple states
- Planning and administration of the proposed project, including time allocated for completion of objectives, planned collaborative efforts, and dissemination of project results
- Project relevance
 - Project addresses priorities set forth in the RFC
 - Proposed work addresses stakeholder needs
 - Potential to transfer new technologies to stakeholders

Funding recommendations will be presented to NCGA Action Team grower members, who will recommend that your project is either approved for support from currently available funds or declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review. NCGA reserves the right to negotiate with the PI and/or the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to funding any project.

For questions related to this RFC:

Nicole Hasheider, Director of Biotech and Crop Inputs
National Corn Growers Association
hasheider@ncga.com
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