



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY

**Center for Sustaining Agriculture  
and Natural Resources**

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*The Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources (CSANR) exists to catalyze research, extension, and educational activities that improve the sustainability of agriculture, natural resources, and food systems in Washington State and around the world.*

*BIOAg (Biologically Intensive Agriculture and Organic Farming) is an internal competitive grant program designed to catalyze WSU faculty engagement in biologically-intensive, organic and sustainable agriculture research and extension.*

- *Biologically-intensive agriculture includes farming practices and systems that rely on biological and ecological processes which are renewable, non-polluting, and mutually beneficial to farmers and society.*
- *Organic agriculture is a legally defined set of agricultural management practices (see USDA National Organic Program).*
- *Sustainable agriculture is economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially just. The three dimensions are seen as co-equal.*

## **BIOAg Program: Request for Proposals**

### **GOAL:**

The goal of the BIOAg solicitation is to engage WSU faculty to advance the development, understanding, and use of biologically intensive organic and sustainable agriculture in Washington State. BIOAg funding can be requested for three purposes:

- to stimulate new research initiatives
- to augment existing research to address critical gaps
- to move existing, game-changing research out into the world

### **HISTORY AND CONTEXT:**

The BIOAg Program was established through a collaborative effort of WSU CSANR and concerned Washington stakeholders, with funding from the Washington State Legislature beginning in 2006. The program aims to help Washington farmers, ranchers and land managers develop, verify, and promote effective biologically-intensive, organic, and sustainable agriculture strategies on all types of farms and all aspects of Washington's agriculture and food systems. The BIOAg program supports *both* incremental improvements and transformative ideas that redesign farm or food systems.

Applicants are encouraged to browse the [CSANR Grants Database](http://csanr.wsu.edu/csanr-grants/bioag-grant-program/) to get a sense of the breadth of projects funded. The database provides project reports, research outcomes, and publications resulting from research previously funded under BIOAg. The database can be navigated by year, researcher, project type, or topic.

Award rates in recent years have ranged from 30-50% of submitted proposals. Investigators are *highly encouraged* to call and discuss proposal concepts with CSANR Director Chad Kruger (509-335-4605, [cekruger@wsu.edu](mailto:cekruger@wsu.edu)) prior to submission to ensure program relevancy and to increase competitiveness in the program. Final decisions regarding allocation of funding are dependent on the availability of funds.

## **OVERVIEW OF BIOAG PROJECT TYPES AND GUIDELINES FOR FY24:**

Due to reductions in funding the BIOAg Program will fund only one project category in FY24:

- BIOAg Project Grants (Research, Extension, or Integrated)

The Principle Investigator must adequately describe how the proposed project is relevant to BIOAg and this solicitation.

### **Social Sustainability:**

In FY24, special consideration will be given for proposals focused on equity and/or the *social* dimension of sustainability. This includes, but is not limited to, proposals that address how biologically intensive, organic, and sustainable agriculture strategies may impact people from under-represented communities (e.g., by decreasing costs of organic produce; addressing food deserts), long-term social costs (e.g. [true cost accounting](#)), or how to increase engagement of minority or under-represented communities (e.g. farmworker, low income, other) in research and extension programs. In addition, all PIs will be asked to describe how their proposed project addresses the social dimension of sustainability. For example, if a proposal is focused on a specific technology or methodology, PI's should explain how they will engage with individuals who might ultimately be impacted by the technology when applied, and/or how they will make sure that results reach under-represented audiences.

#### *Examples:*

Projects with research areas that disproportionately affect rural/low-income/underserved populations (e.g. heat, climate change, farmworker)

- Develop curriculum and outreach materials specifically for most-affected populations

Projects with research areas typically not associated with social sustainability

- Assessment of social cost and/or benefit (areas of increased public benefit from ecosystem services)

### **Proposal Guidelines:**

- Project proposals for seed funding of new ideas must precisely articulate the expected extramural grant program targeted by the Investigator, including articulation of why that grant program is identified.
- Proposals should prioritize needs relevant to the State of Washington.

- Consistent with the intent of original partner support for the establishment of the Program, BIOAg funding may not be used to support the development or commercialization of crops and livestock using genetic engineering.

### **Submission Guidelines:**

- Proposals must be submitted through the templates provided. Proposals not submitted through the templates will not be reviewed.
- Application instructions are included in the proposal forms linked below. Follow the instructions precisely or your proposal will be disqualified.
- Additional pages (beyond the template provided) are limited to a 1-page document to provide two supplementary graphics or tables ONLY. Use of this additional document to expand narrative will disqualify the proposal.
- The Lead PI must be a WSU faculty member in good standing with the program (contact us if clarification is needed). Faculty members must limit their submissions as Lead PI to a single proposal and as co-PI to a single proposal.
- Proposals from PIs new to the program are highly encouraged.
- PIs with no more than one currently funded BIOAg project are eligible to apply for a new project.
- PIs and co-PIs must provide a 2-page biographical sketch by email with their final proposal submission ([either USDA NIFA or NSF format](#)).
- BIOAg funding may not be used for faculty salary augmentation (i.e. summer salary, supplemental salary), and salary accruals are not allowable.
- Salary may be requested for soft money funded faculty and staff.
- Projects that are leveraged with other grant or gift support are encouraged.
- Upon award notification, a Grant Compliance Form that serves as the project contract will be required for awarded projects; the form will be reviewed and approved prior to the transfer of funds.

Any questions regarding the appropriateness of proposed topics or allowable expenses should be directed to the CSANR Director, Chad Kruger, [cekruger@wsu.edu](mailto:cekruger@wsu.edu), 509-335-4605 (54605 from campus). For all other questions, contact Katie Doonan at [kathryn.doonan@wsu.edu](mailto:kathryn.doonan@wsu.edu).

## **DETAILS ON PROPOSAL TYPES AND TIMELINES**

### **BIOAg Project Grants** *due by Tuesday, December 12, 2023*

Description: Projects should develop, investigate, or demonstrate sustainability on farms or in food systems using BIOAg principles. These project grants are intended to seed exploration of new research ideas, overcome remaining technical/economic/social barriers to the use of existing BIOAg practices, and ensure that existing research is utilized. PIs must indicate Research, Extension, or Integrated proposal. In the case of Integrated proposals, PIs must describe how the proposal

integrates research and extension, and how the integration adds value. Use of BIOAg Project grants to support graduate students is highly encouraged.

Project Grant Awards: \$10,000 – \$40,000

Project Grant Scoring Criteria	Research	Extension	Integrated
Does this proposal fit the BIOAg RFP and address eligible topics?	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Innovation or scientific contribution	35	15	25
Appropriate methods/procedures for proposed project	25	25	25
Impact potential	20	25	20
<b>Social Equity Statement</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>
Evaluation plan	N/A (0)	15	10
Appropriate cost – assessed and negotiated after proposal review	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100

## **LETTER OF INTENT FOR BIOAG PROJECT PROPOSALS**

***REQUESTED BY TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2023***

Letters of intent are encouraged but not required. The letter of intent will be used to identify appropriate reviewers and occasionally suggest potential additional collaborators. Please follow the format in the application instructions and submit to [kathryn.doonan@wsu.edu](mailto:kathryn.doonan@wsu.edu) as a Word document.

## **BIOAG APPLICATION**

***DUE TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2023***

### **Application Form and Instructions for BIOAg Letters of Intent and Project Proposals**

Funding decisions will be finalized by mid-February 2024.

Funding is expected to be used between March 2024 and December 2025. One 6-month no-cost extension may be granted depending on progress and review. Excellent progress and efforts at leveraging funding will be expected.

## **PROPOSAL REVIEW AND FUNDING DECISIONS:**

Each BIOAg project proposal receives ad hoc review from two CSANR Advisory Committee members who evaluate topic relevance and predicted impact. Each proposal is also thoroughly reviewed and scored by at least one ad hoc scientist with relevant expertise in the subject area. These written reviews are compiled and shared with the selection panel, comprised of a rotating subset of the CSANR Leadership Team members. The selection panel members, who also independently score proposals, meet to review all submitted proposals, comments, and scores. Using all information available, the panel makes a funding recommendation. Typically, funds are available for 30-50% of proposals received. PIs are notified of the status of their proposal in early February.

## **FY24 BIOAG SCHEDULE**

Tuesday, 11/14/23- Letter of Intent Due

Tuesday, 12/12/23- Application Due

January 2024- Proposal Review

February 2024- Funding Decision Announced

12/31/24- FY24 Progress Report Due

June 2025- Project Blog Post Due

12/31/25- FY24 Final Report Due