Elizabeth R. Griffin Program

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

Funding Institute: Elizabeth R. Griffin Program, Center for Health Security, Johns Hopkins University

Funding Opportunity Title: Addressing Agricultural Biorisk Evidence Base Gaps with Applied Research

Deadline for Application: June 15, 2026
Estimated Review Period: June 15 – July 31, 2026
Estimated Period of Performance: August 1, 2026 – July 31, 2027

Award Amount: Up to $75,000/Institution

About Elizabeth R. Griffin Program

The Elizabeth R. Griffin Program (ERGP) at Johns Hopkins University's Center for Health Security works to enhance and sustain leadership in the expanding field of global health science and security. Our mission is to develop and deliver innovative biorisk management solutions that are local, practical and sustainable with our global partners. For more information see https://ergp.centerforhealthsecurity.org/.

Overview of Funding Opportunity

There is a global recognition that the current evidence base to inform laboratory and on-farm biological risk management has gaps, and that applied agricultural biosafety and biosecurity policies are not always based on evidence. This notice of funding will support the design and implementation of applied agricultural biorisk research to address evidence gaps in working with high-consequence veterinary and agricultural pathogens as identified during the RAV3N Biorisk and Biosafety Gap Assessment Workshop or similar gap analysis like the WOAH working group agent specific biorisk gap analysis. ERGP is seeking proposals that address one or more key focus area components listed below. Each proposal will go through an internal ERGP and external expert review. Successful proposals should address at least one of the key focus areas and at least one component under that area.

Key Focus Areas

Area I: Agricultural Biosecurity, Systems (Prevention & Mitigation)

Objective: Research to strengthen agricultural production and food system protections to prevent the introduction, establishment, and spread of high-consequence animal and zoonotic pathogens.
Components: On-farm biosecurity engineering controls – equipment for built environment; cost-effectiveness and adoption science for biosafety and biosecurity interventions; guidance for on-farm biosecurity best practices; equipment integrity and infrastructure resilience; AI integration and cyberbiosecurity for agricultural production systems; supply chain and food system biosecurity; livestock and crop health protection measures; wildlife–livestock interface risk mitigation; and sanitation, decontamination, and waste management systems.

Area II: Laboratory & Diagnostics for Agricultural Biosafety, Biosecurity, and Biocontainment (Detection & Characterization)

Objective: Research to enhance secure pathogen detection, diagnostic innovation, and laboratory biocontainment capabilities supporting animal and zoonotic disease surveillance.
Components: Biocontainment systems i.e. improved guidance for effective and cost-efficient materials (flooring), systems (engineering controls), protocols (sample inactivation) for ABSL-3 and ABSL-3Ag; laboratory accident prevention and reporting; risk assessment (new/improved methodologies) for pathogens, personnel, and environmental exposure; personnel reliability and insider/outsider threat mitigation; AI integration, laboratory cyberbiosecurity and data protection; aerobiology and aerosol transmission risks; diagnostic development and validation for animal and zoonotic diseases; sample handling, transport, and validation protocols; and aquaculture biosecurity.

Area III: Operational Agricultural Biosecurity and Biosafety Systems Resilience (Response & Recovery)
Objective: Research to strengthen operational systems that support coordinated detection, response, and recovery from agricultural disease events.
Components: Occupational health and worker protection across laboratory, field, and farm environments; new/improved guidance on infection prevention control and quarantine standards; incident reporting and response coordination mechanisms; operational testing of biosecurity systems through exercises and simulations; and continuity-of-operations planning for agricultural and animal health systems; risk communication and extension strategies; innovative methodologies for workforce innovation and capacity development; and integrated biosurveillance and field monitoring systems.

Note: *Components are listed in order of priority*

In addition to publishing our findings with our awarded recipients, ERGP will make all materials (and accompanying guidance) available on our ERGP website, free to download and access. Our intent is to improve the sharing of lessons learned from both governmental and non-governmental communities of practice and support the rollout of evidence-based approaches for addressing agricultural biorisk.

Grants will be awarded to selected institutions for up to $75,000 USD in funding support over a 12-month period of performance. Each facility will develop a budget associated with the research plan to be approved before funds are distributed. Participating laboratories are required to provide a mandatory 20% cost share contribution to the overall project budget. Detailed instructions on submission for this RFP can be found below. Only complete submissions will be reviewed and considered for funding.

Proposal Consideration
This funding opportunity aims at the design and implementation of applied agricultural biorisk research to address evidence gaps in working with high-consequence veterinary and agricultural pathogens. This work will contribute to recommended guidance on laboratory biosafety, using research techniques to evaluate the application and effectiveness in operational contexts. All proposals must make a clear experimental plan for how the applicant will test the application and outcomes of their focus area(s)/component(s) in their facility.

Eligible Applicants
ERGP welcomes submissions from laboratories across the United States working with high-priority veterinary and agricultural pathogens. Applicants should demonstrate an established or planned partnership with either a USDA or RAV3N-network laboratory in their proposal.

Content Consideration
Applicants must follow the instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. Failure to furnish complete information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from consideration. All applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information on the two sections required for this NOFO:

- **Section 1 – Project Proposal(s):** Applicants must provide a completed project proposal using the provided RFP template. The proposal form must be completed in its entirety and clearly specify the proposed scope, deliverables, and timeline. Applicants must specify a point of contact for outreach and must complete the applicant contact form for the submission to be considered completed. ERGP and our external expert committee will view the following attributes favorably in the proposal consideration process:
    - A collaborative research strategy outlining clear aims and objectives;
    - An experimental plan to test each objective;
    - A clear process for data analysis and evaluation of findings;
    - Identify opportunities for collaboration with USDA or RAV3N laboratory partner(s); Considerations in your proposal timeline for revision of SOPs and guidance document (if needed);
    - Preparation of a manuscript for peer reviewed publication;
    - Inclusion of outcomes and recommendations from your study design that go beyond awareness raising and aim to operationalize and institutionalize agriculture biosafety and biosecurity approaches;
    - Effective mechanisms for long-term sustainment, including institutional/facility plans to support findings post-period of performance;

- **Section 2 - Budget:** Using the provided project budget template, applicants must provide a complete budget and budget narrative. The budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories:
    - Personnel: Describe the wages, salaries, and benefits of temporary or permanent staff who will be working directly on the project, and the percentage of their time that will be spent on the project.
    - Travel: Estimate the costs of travel and per diem for this project. (*It should be noted that ERGP will provide travel support for registration and attendance for each awarded facility's PI to attend the USDA ARS Bi-Annual Conference.)*
    - Equipment: Describe any machinery that is required for the project, which has a useful life of more than one year (or a life longer than the duration of the project), and costs at least $5,000 per unit. (*Physical security and equipment upgrades may be included within proposals for infrastructure improvement, but laboratory construction and renovation efforts are not appropriate*.)

- Supplies: List and describe all the items, consumables, and materials, including any computer devices, that are needed for the project. If an item costs more than $5,000 per unit, then put it in the budget under Equipment.
- Cost Sharing: This proposal requires a 20% contribution to the overall project budget. Costs (which can incorporate indirect costs as a cost share percentage) should be listed and accounted for to total 20%.
- Other Direct Costs: Describe other costs directly associated with the project, which do not fit in the other categories. For example, shipping costs for materials and equipment or applicable taxes. All "Other" or "Miscellaneous" expenses must be itemized and explained.
- Indirect Costs: These are costs that cannot be linked directly to the project activities, such as overhead costs needed to help keep the organization operating. We will only accept IPC from organizations with a current federally negotiated NICRA or the de minimis rate.

Application and Submission Information

- **Award Period**: Awards will be granted for a laboratory/facility for up to a 12-month period of performance, based on date of award. We are estimating 2-4 weeks for the proposal review and selection process, 6-8 weeks for awards to be executed and an estimated start date of August 1, 2026.
- **Award Amount**: Grants will be awarded to selected institutions with a maximum award of $75,000 per institution (total costs).
- **Application Submission Process:** Applicants should submit project proposals electronically using Project Proposal Template, and Budget Template. Applicants should submit one application form per laboratory/facility. For questions on the submission process, please contact the ERGP team at: afogart1@jh.edu
- **Application Deadline:** All applications must be submitted on or before June 15, 2026, 11:59 p.m. eastern time. Applications submitted after 11:59 EST p.m. will be ineligible for consideration.
- **Evaluation Procedure:** ERGP will form an external agriculture biosafety expert committee to review and select applicants for funding.

Award Selection Criteria

Applicants should note that the following criteria serve as a standard against which all project proposals will be evaluated.

- **Experimental Plan:** Applications should include a detailed experimental plan and objectives. ERGP will evaluate the proposal in terms of how well it adheres to the project's research objectives, the relevance and feasibility of the proposed activities, the timeline for completion, and the extent to which the impact of the project will continue beyond the conclusion of the period of performance.
- **Organizational Capability:** Applicants must demonstrate how their resources, capabilities, and experience will enable them to achieve the stated research plan and objectives. The proposal(s) must identify all key partners that will be involved in implementation of this project.

- **Budget:** ERGP must be able to determine that proposed costs are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project activities, and must adhere to all federal expenditure principles and regulations.
- **Impactful and Measurable Engagements**: Proposals should describe the overall outcome for the research proposal, along with specific, measurable, and realistic benchmarks by which to gauge progress toward that end-state. Compelling project proposals will establish milestones to be met during the training period and describe observable progress whenever possible.
- **Contribution to the Evidence Base**: Applicants should outline how they will publish their research in peer review journals and provide other opportunities to share their protocols, templates, and/or other relevant work products, and to present their fundings in various scientific conferences or laboratory network meetings.

Award Administration Information

- **Award Notices:** The award notice shall be communicated by ERGP. The award agreement provided by the authorized JHU central office is the authorizing document to support transfer of award funds and terms and conditions for the award. The award agreement will be provided to the recipient through email. No expenses are authorized by JHU until an agreement has been fully executed between JHU and the award recipient organization. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.
- **Anticipated Time to Award:** Applicants should expect to be notified of a decision within 60-90 days after the submission deadline. ERGP staff will provide information on scheduling a project kick off call and any relevant requirements, including regular project deliverable reporting within 30 days from award signature.

Contract Terms and Conditions

To be eligible to receive an award, successful applicants must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) via SAM.gov, complete a JHU administered profile questionnaire, and register with JHU PaymentWorks as a subrecipient vendor.

Contact Us

If you have any questions on the requirements, please contact our Senior Analyst, Alanna, at afogart1@jh.edu