



IFYE USDA READINESS TEAM

IFYE should intentionally assemble a cross-functional team with expertise that aligns with both USDA cooperative agreements and IFYE's mission. The objective is to ensure the organization has the capacity to respond quickly, develop a highly competitive application, and successfully manage a federal award if selected.

Below are the suggested work groups to develop the first set of 30-60-90-day goals and action steps to position IFYE for future work. Three scenarios need to be explored with each work group:

1. What do we need to do to be ready when the Appropriations Committee agrees to funding and USDA decides to proceed with a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO).
2. What do we need to do for the future should the language not be funded and we need to organize for life without Farm Bill monies?
3. What do we need to do with each work group to keep the wheels on for late 2026 – 1st quarter 2028?

Emphasis will be placed on items #1 and #3.

WORK GROUPS: PREPARE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PLANS OF WORK

The following five Work Groups are temporary rather than permanent committees. Each will dissolve once its goals are achieved or its grant is awarded, which we expect within 12-18 months.

PROGRAM DESIGN AND EVALUATION

Why it matters: Develops measurable outcomes that federal reviewers expect.

Skills needed: Experience with logic models, performance metrics, evaluation plans, impact assessment

Sub Work Group – Agricultural Education & International Exchange

Why it matters: Ensures the proposal clearly reflects agricultural learning, leadership development and cultural exchange outcomes.

Skills needed: Experience with IFYE, Extension, agriculture education, international exchange, or youth development

Sub Work Group – Data Management & Research

Why it matters: Collects historical data and documents organization capacity

Skills needed: Research, database management, program reporting, impact measurement

FINANCE AND BUDGETING

Why it matters: Prepares compliant budgets and oversees matching fund documentation

Skills needed: CPA, nonprofit finance, federal budgeting, grant financial management that includes regular grant reporting

Sub Work Group – Risk Management & Compliance

Why it Matters: Anticipates operational, legal, and program risks associated with federal funding

Skills/experience needed: Nonprofit governance, insurance, legal, compliance, international risk management

FUNDRAISING & DEVELOPMENT

Why it matters: Builds the required non-federal matching funds strategy

Skills/experience needed: Corporate sponsorships, foundation grants, donor development, capital campaigns

Sub Work Group – Partnership Development

Why it matters: Cultivates relationships with organizations that strengthen the proposal.

Skills/experience needed: Experience working with universities, Extension, commodity groups, Farm Bureau, agricultural associations, and international partnerships.

COMMUNICATIONS & STORYTELLING

Why it matters: translates IFYE’s impact into compelling narrative supported by data

Skills/experience needed: Marketing, communications, grant writing, public relations.

Sub Work group – Governmental Liaison

Why it matters: Regularly communicates with House of Representatives, Senate, Ag Farm Bill Committee staff and USDA (FAS and possibly NIFA)

Skills/experience needed: Build relationships with various governmental bodies and agencies to maximize potential; identify key contacts to move work forward.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT – COMMUNICATES AND WORKS WITH ALL WORK GROUPS

Why it matters: Lead work in developing a “Case for Support”; understands federal funding requirements, compliance, and proposal development

Skills/experience needed: Experience writing or managing USDA, USAID, State Department or other federal grants; interpret NOFO for proposal preparation

SAMPLE 30-60-90 GOALS AND ACTION STEPS

Communications, Story Telling and Government Liaison

Next 30 Days

1. Call to Action: Ask IFYE Alumni in the following states to contact their U.S. Senators who serve on the Senate Ag Committee: AR, MN, KY, CO, ND, IA, IL, MS, NJ, NM, KS, AL, GA, WV, VT, PA, SD, CA, MI, and NE. A draft/sample letter will be sent with the “Call to Action” asking alumni to request their vote to pass the 2026 Farm Bill in the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry.
2. Communication to the full Senate Ag Committee from the IFYE Immediate Past President outlining the IFYE program, International Agriculture Cultural Immersion and Exchange Program as included in the U.S. House of Representatives 2026 Farm Bill and as included in the Senate AG Committee draft. Urge them to support the language.
3. Monitor the progress of the Senate Ag Committee action

Next 60-90 Days

4. Call to Action: request an alumni Call to Action to all elected congressional Representatives and Senators asking them to vote YES on the Farm Bill. Repair a sample letter for their use.
5. Monitor the progress of the 2026 Farm Bill through full Congress and the final vote to make the Bill a law.
6. Formulate a timetable and message plan for the House and Senate Ag Committees subcommittee on Appropriations.
7. Formulate a visit to Washington, D.C. to call on Appropriations Committee members to familiarize them with IFYE, the Farm Bill language, alignment with Farm Bill objectives and the need for program support.
8. Formulate a plan to communicate and visit with appropriate USDA staff including Secretary Rollins, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, Ricki Schroeder, Deputy Secretary Vaden, Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary, Jennifer Tiller and FAS Administrator Whitley, Under Secretary of FAS, Luke Lindberg and Chief of Staff/Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary, Riley Pagett. Include both email communications and onsite visits.

Beyond 90 Days

9. When the Bill is passed into Law, revise plans as necessary to ensure support from the USDA. Assist USDA staff as needed or requested with info. Assist the IFYE grant proposal team with the development of the submission.
10. Keep Readiness Task Force Appraised of status at all times
11. Keep IFYE Alumni informed at appropriate times and request their support as appropriate.

Fundraising and Partnerships

Next 30 Days

1. Determine leaders for these two work groups.
2. Start a search for a Development Director/Fundraiser (write or revise a job description and determine a compensation method and goals and objectives)
3. Start developing a list of potential supporters/donors. Review previous lists including back to 2014 and Ken Gordon's list and Carolyn Hansen's list and Tom Brand's list.
4. Review previous proposals for grants and donations.

Next 60-90 Days

5. Start prioritizing the list into groups: Start immediate contacts; start contacting in 90 days; start contacting as soon as the Farm Bill passes the full Congress.
6. Monitor progress of Farm Bill for final passage into law
7. Work with the grant writing team to prepare sections of a new prototype proposal. Need to draft three versions: one for government agency proposals, one for agribusiness and one for charitable grants.

Beyond 90 Days

8. When the Bill is passed into law, hire a Development Director and start reaching out to the highest priority potential donors
9. Coordinate with the IFYE Association Development Chair and Alumni Communications Chair to communicate with all Alumni
10. Coordinate with Communications and Government Liaison team as appropriate.

Please note: With each of these two samples, goals need to be clearly stated and work will need to be divided between the main work group and sub work group to divide tasks and labor among volunteers within each group.