



19 River Oaks Way
Palm Coast, FL 32137
T: (501) 339-6140
W: www.agclassroom.org
E: director@naitco.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**TEN STATE AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAMS TO RECEIVE
USDA/NIFA-NAITCO "FIRE-UP GRANT" FUNDING FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS**

The National Agriculture in the Classroom Organization (NAITCO) has selected 10 state Agriculture in the Classroom (AIRC) projects for funding this year as part of a competitive grants program called the "USDA/NIFA-NAITCO Fire-Up Grants" program to support the growth of agricultural literacy in pre-kindergarten—12th (Pre-K-12) grade classrooms across the country.

The purpose of the Fire-Up Grants program is to strengthen state and territory AIRC programs with additional funding and create programs other AIRC state and territory programs can replicate.

Projects funded this year include one in which the Washington program will offer three summer institutes providing teachers with a unique professional development experience, and another in Montana that aims to increase agricultural literacy in elementary classrooms across the state with a variety of agriculture-themed books and lesson plans.

Funding for the competitive grants program comes from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (USDA/NIFA).

"Contributing to the support and expansion of agricultural science literacy programs is one of the goals of the Agriculture in the Classroom Program and the NAITCO project funded by USDA/NIFA. Through the implementation of innovative projects, expansion of successful existing ones and support for professional development for agricultural literacy educators, great progress will be made in advancing agricultural literacy efforts across the nation," said Dr. Carlos Ortiz, AIRC National Program Leader for USDA/NIFA.

"The generous support of USDA/NIFA provides an opportunity for our Agriculture in the Classroom state and territory programs to implement new and innovative ideas to increase their agricultural literacy impact," said Denise Stewardson, president of NAITCO and Director of Utah Agriculture in the Classroom. "The Fire-Up Grant projects selected inspire other Agriculture in the Classroom program managers, and many successful projects are replicated."

Projects selected for funding this year are:

Start-Up Grants

- **Colorado Foundation for Agriculture** — Colorado Foundation for Agriculture will create printed materials to reach a new audience of educators and school staff with its project "Advancing Agricultural Literacy – CoAIRC Outreach campaign for Pre-K-12 Educators." In addition, the Colorado program will offer virtual professional development opportunities for educators to highlight its educational resources.
- **Washington Agriculture in the Classroom** — Washington Agriculture in the Classroom will develop and deliver three Summer Agricultural Literacy Institutes as part of its project "Summer Ag Literacy Institutes: Investing in Teacher Education," which will help it strengthen its agricultural literacy professional development outreach efforts.

Scale-Up Grants

- **California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom** — California Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom will expand its "Taste and Teach" program to an additional 50 classrooms and 1,500 students and allow them to taste and learn about California grown commodities.
- **Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation** — Iowa Agriculture Literacy Foundation will add new content and update two of its "Iowa Ag Today" educational resources, print and distribute 40,000 copies of each of the two publications by January 2022, and create an online, digital version.

- **Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom** – Kansas Foundation for Agriculture in the Classroom will add new educational resources, videos, and webinars as part of its project “Providing a Path to Agricultural Literacy” that will reach in-service and pre-service teachers across the state.
- **Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom** – Minnesota Agriculture in the Classroom will expand its popular “Farm to Food Book Week” event in which farmers, professional athletes and elected officials virtually read agriculturally themed books to students and engage them in discussions about agriculture and careers related to it.
- **Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation** — Oregon Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation will develop and provide five secondary science kits and two secondary science workshops as part of its project “Secondary Science: Supplies and Sessions” to engage more Oregon teachers in agricultural literacy instruction in their classrooms.

Build-Up Grants

- **Arizona Agriculture in the Classroom** — Arizona Agriculture in the Classroom will develop five readers aligned to state standards to educate students about Arizona agriculture as part of its “F.A.R.M.S. Program.” These resources also will be available as templates for other state and territory AITC programs to replicate.
- **Louisiana Farm Bureau’s Agriculture in the Classroom** — Louisiana Farm Bureau’s Agriculture in the Classroom program will develop a Google Classroom using agriculturally themed resources to reach more teachers and students as part of its project “Increasing Knowledge and Implementation of Available Resources via Google Classroom.” The online, self-directed educational program will highlight the vast collection of state and national agricultural literacy educational resources available.
- **Montana Agriculture in the Classroom** — Montana Agriculture in the Classroom will provide 20 classrooms with a new agriculturally accurate book and standards-aligned lesson plans each month as part of its project “Montana Ag Book Buddies” to help bring agriculture to life in classrooms. Book and lesson plan topics include apples, Christmas trees, wool, gardens, food production, and more.

USDA/NIFA is a U.S. federal government agency created by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008. Its purpose is to consolidate all federally funded agricultural research and is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It replaced the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service in 2009. To learn more about USDA/NIFA, please visit <https://www.nifa.usda.gov/>.

NAITCO is a non-profit organization representing most of the 50 state AITC programs, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Its mission is to educate Pre-K-12th grade teachers and students about the importance of agriculture by providing them with online lesson plans and companion resources, a national conference, national awards programs, professional development workshops, and grants programs that demonstrate how agriculture is used to effectively teach core subject areas. To learn more about NAITCO, please visit <https://agclassroom.org/>.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT NAITCO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANDY GUFFEY at (501) 339-6140 or director@naitco.org.