

Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities: State and Regional AgrAbility Projects

FY 2005 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE:

DECEMBER 23, 2004



U.S. Department of Agriculture



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

**COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE;
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM FOR FARMERS WITH DISABILITIES:
STATE AND REGIONAL AGRABILITY PROJECTS**

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.500.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business on December 23, 2004 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this Request for Applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program. Such comments will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted by the deadline in the **DATES** portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Program Liaison Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; USDA-CSREES; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.; Washington, D.C. 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities: State and Regional AgrAbility Projects RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES requests applications for the Assistive Technology Program for Farmers with Disabilities – State and Regional AgrAbility Projects (AgrAbility) for fiscal year (FY) 2005 to increase the likelihood that farmers, ranchers, farm workers, or farm family members with disabilities and their farms experience success. CSREES anticipates approximately \$4.0 million will be available for support of AgrAbility in FY 2005. Of this amount, CSREES anticipates approximately \$600,000 will be available to fund approximately four new State and Regional AgrAbility Projects (SRAPs), and the remainder will be awarded to the National AgrAbility Project (NAP) and eligible SRAPs.

This notice identifies the objectives for AgrAbility, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an

AgrAbility Project grant. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

AgrAbility is authorized under the Smith-Lever Act of May 8, 1914, as amended, (7 U.S.C. 341 et seq.) and in Section 1680 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5933) as amended by Section 246 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998, and Section 7122 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002. CSREES anticipates that funding will be available under Section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343(d)) line item for Farm Safety in the FY 2005 Appropriations Act.

B. Purpose and Priorities

AgrAbility increases the likelihood that individuals with disabilities and their families engaged in production agriculture (AgrAbility's customers) become more successful. The program supports cooperative projects in which State Cooperative Extension Services (CES) based at either 1862 or 1890 Land-Grant Universities subcontract to private, non-profit disability organizations. Measures of success may include improvements in customers' financial stability or access to life activities and in the capacity of the states and regions to deliver services this population requires in a timely and satisfying manner.

To address the specialized needs of AgrAbility's customers, the program builds service capacity on national, regional, state, and local levels through **education** and **networking**. In the absence of capacity, projects provide **assistance** to customers. Projects use marketing to direct the public to initiatives in the three priority areas, elucidated below.

1. Education

Education comprises AgrAbility's long-term investment strategy. The program has particular interest in funding educational activities with the following elements:

- (a) Within the context of production agriculture, learning objectives focus on accommodating disabilities and avoiding secondary injuries in persons with disabilities;
- (b) Audience includes health, farm, and government service providers;
- (c) Delivery formats include authoring or adapting printable resources, live presentations taught in-person or remotely, and recorded presentations that may encourage audience interaction; and
- (d) Means to appraise instructive efficacy.

2. Networking

Networking depends on education; but networking will eventually make AgrAbility sustainable. The program has particular interest in funding networking activities with the following elements:

- (a) Objectives encourage the sharing of information among, and the provision of services, value, or funds from individuals or organizations not employed by AgrAbility;

- (b) Partners include customers, peer supporters, volunteer groups, university student groups, stakeholders and public and private funding organizations;
- (c) Delivery formats include the donation of goods and services of direct benefit to AgrAbility customers; and
- (d) Means to appraise economic value of services rendered to AgrAbility and its customers.

3. Assistance

Assistance satisfies customers' immediate needs that are inadequately addressed by health, farm, and government service providers. This program has particular interest in funding assistance activities with the following elements:

- (a) Objectives focus on individualized consultative services that increase the likelihood that AgrAbility Project customers and their farm operations experience success;
- (b) Audience includes AgrAbility customers and others working at the same farms;
- (c) Delivery formats include product selection advice, accessibility and ergonomic recommendations, life activities and farm operations planning guidance, and advocacy to obtain service and financial aid. Assistance can occur in person or from a distance; and
- (d) Means to appraise successes experienced following intervention.

Marketing does not address education, networking, or assistance objectives but may make key audiences aware of AgrAbility and its initiatives. Appropriate marketing activities have the following elements:

- (a) Objectives concentrate on program or project awareness to the exclusion of information required to provide education, assistance, or facilitate networking;
- (b) Audience includes everyone;
- (c) Delivery formats include public appearances with displays and the production or distribution of program awareness materials, press releases, public service announcements, print advertisements, Web pages with awareness content, newsletters, or electronic notices; and
- (d) Means to link these activities with registration, information and consultation requests, and networking successes.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. In FY 2005, CSREES anticipates approximately \$4.0 million will be available for support of AgrAbility. Of this amount, CSREES anticipates approximately \$600,000 will be available to fund approximately four new SRAPs, and the remainder will be awarded to eligible SRAPs and to the NAP. (Note: No more than 15% of total funds available may be awarded to the NAP.)

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2005, applications may be submitted to AgrAbility as one of the following two types of requests:

- (a) **New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to AgrAbility. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

- (b) **Resubmitted application.** This is an application that had previously been submitted to AgrAbility but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV.B.5). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

In FY 2004, SRAPs competed and received four year awards. Year one funds were released at that time. Contingent on the availability of funds and adequate progress, CSREES intends to provide continuing funds (continuing award increments) to each eligible SRAP for FY 2005; therefore, eligible SRAPs need not apply formally under this RFA to receive FY 2005 funding.

C. Project Types

AgrAbility supports two project types: State and Regional AgrAbility Projects (SRAPs), and National AgrAbility Projects (NAPs). In FY 2005, CSREES is not soliciting applications for a new NAP, but plans to fund the NAP and eligible SRAPs with continuing award increments. Nevertheless, CSREES anticipates funding approximately four new SRAPs. However, since SRAPs stand to improve their chances of success by cooperating with the NAP, both project types are explained below.

1. State and Regional AgrAbility Projects (SRAPs)

SRAPs operate within a geographic area defined on the basis of counties, States, or both. SRAPs may function independently of each other. States with insufficient potential clientele to merit individual AgrAbility projects may submit regional, multi-state proposals. At a minimum, the CES primary applicant must subcontract to one private, non-profit disability organization. Applicants proposing to serve remote or diverse potential customer populations may wish to form partnerships that include one or more land-grant institutions, non-land-grant institutions, Hispanic-serving institutions, or additional, private, non-profit disability organizations to effectively serve the entire qualifying population. For these applications to succeed, one eligible institution must assume the lead role.

SRAPs receive support from, and submit documentation and reports to, the NAP. CSREES views the relationship between the SRAPs and the NAP as critical to the success of AgrAbility. Prior to applying, applicants should contact the current NAP for detailed information concerning standard operating procedures, best field practices, and access to the NAP's library of AgrAbility-related instructional materials.

SRAP applicants may propose projects with a maximum duration of four years. The project period should begin approximately April 1, 2005. FY 2005 appropriations will fund the awarded project's first-year budget. Each project should submit a request for at most \$150,000 per year for each year of funding requested. Requested funding levels may be adjusted based on the merit review. Multi-year funding will depend on the availability of funds and the demonstration of satisfactory progress. Thus, all proposals must include specific, measurable accomplishments for each project year.

SRAP commitments include: attending annual, three-day, national training workshops with at least one representative from each of the primary university and non-profit disability organization partners (two-person minimum); attending quarterly all-staff teleconferences; participating in NAP-initiated efforts to collect activity data; and submitting annual and final reports to CSREES (see Part VI, E.). Applicants may request funds to pay for these commitments.

2. The National AgrAbility Project (NAP)

The NAP has a dual mission. The NAP provides limited, on-demand SRAP-type services in geographic areas without SRAPs. But more significant to the success of the program, the NAP helps SRAPs become more successful at meeting their objectives. The NAP typically produces or recommends the education materials or forums, networking tactics, assistance protocols, and marketing products SRAPs adopt for their own use. The NAP connects all SRAPs by: moderating information sharing forums; identifying, promoting, and addressing opportunities and challenges for AgrAbility; recognizing and capitalizing on economies of scale; and evaluating the program's impacts annually.

CSREES views the relationship between SRAPs and the NAP as critical to the delivery of a successful AgrAbility program. Because SRAPs symbiotically interact with the NAP, failure to comply with the NAP's operating, documentation, and reporting requirements will result in the NAP suspending service to the non-compliant SRAP. Prior to applying, applicants should

contact the NAP for detailed information concerning standard operating procedures and best field practices.

Since FY 2000, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in partnership with Easter Seals, Inc., has served as the NAP. Applicants may contact the National AgrAbility Project; c/o University of Wisconsin-Extension; Department of Biological Systems Engineering; 460 Henry Mall; Madison, WI 53706; Telephone: (866) 259-6280; Fax: (608) 262-1228; TTY: (800) 947-3529; Web: <http://www.agrabilityproject.org>.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Only extension directors of 1862 and 1890 Land-Grant Institutions are eligible to submit applications and receive AgrAbility awards. Award recipients must partner with and subcontract to at least one private, nonprofit disability organization. Award recipients may subcontract to other organizations provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no matching requirement for SRAP applicants and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Request Application Package

Program application materials are available at the following CSREES web site: <http://www.csrees.gov/fo/funding.cfm>. If you do not have access to the web page or have trouble downloading material and you would like hard copies, you may contact the Proposal Services Unit, Competitive Programs, USDA/CSREES at (202) 401-5048. When calling the Proposal Services Unit, please indicate that you are requesting the RFA and associated application forms for AgrAbility. These materials also may be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to psb@csrees.usda.gov. State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated application forms for AgrAbility.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

The application should be prepared following the guidelines and instructions below. Each application must contain the following elements in the order indicated:

1. General

Use the following guidelines to prepare an application. Proper preparation of applications will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion:

- (a) Prepare the application on only one side of the page using standard size (8 ½” x 11”) white paper, one-inch margins, typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point font, and single or double spaced. Use an easily readable font face (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, Times Roman). Justify text to the left.
- (b) Number each page of the application sequentially, starting with the Project Description, including the budget pages, required forms, and any appendices.
- (c) Staple the application in the upper left-hand corner. Do not bind. An original and eight (8) copies of the application (nine (9) total) must be submitted in one package, along with four (4) additional copies of the “Project Summary,” Form CSREES-2004, as a separate attachment.
- (d) Include original illustrations (photographs, color prints, etc.) in all copies of the application to prevent loss of meaning through poor quality reproduction.
- (e) Assemble the contents in the following order:
 - (1) Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)
 - (2) Table of Contents

- (3) Project Summary (Form CSREES-2004)
- (4) Response to Previous Review
- (5) Project Description
- (6) References
- (7) Appendices to Project Description
- (8) Key Personnel
- (9) Collaborative Arrangements (including Letters of Support)
- (10) Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)
- (11) Budget (Form CSREES-2004)
- (12) Budget Narrative
- (13) Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)
- (14) Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)
- (15) Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)
- (16) Page B, Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002), Personal Data on Project Director

2. Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)

Page A

Each copy of each grant application must contain a “Proposal Cover Page”, Form CSREES-2002. One copy of the application, preferably the original, must contain the pen-and-ink signature(s) of the proposing Project Director(s) (PD) and the authorized organizational representative (AOR), the individual who possesses the necessary authority to commit the organization’s time and other relevant resources to the project. If there are more than three co-PDs for an application, please list additional co-PDs on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information and signatures) and attach to the Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002). Any proposed PD or co-PD whose signature does not appear on Form CSREES-2002 or attached additional sheets will not be listed on any resulting grant award. Complete both signature blocks located at the bottom of the “Proposal Cover Page” form. Please note that Form CSREES-2002 is comprised of two parts - Page A, which is the “Proposal Cover Page”, and Page B, which is the “Personal Data on Project Director.”

Form CSREES-2002 serves as a source document for the CSREES grant database; it is therefore important that it be accurately completed in its entirety, especially the e-mail addresses requested in Blocks 4.c. and 18.c. However, the following items are highlighted as having a high potential for errors or misinterpretations:

- (a) Type of Performing Organization (Blocks 6a. and 6b.). For Block 6a., a check should be placed in the appropriate box to identify the type of organization which is the legal recipient named in Block 1. Only one box should be checked. For Block 6b., please check as many boxes that apply to the affiliation of the PD listed in Block 16.
- (b) Title of Proposed Project (Block 7.). The title of the project must be brief (140-character maximum, including spaces), yet represent the major thrust of the effort being proposed. Project titles are read by a variety of nonscientific people; therefore, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible. In addition,

introductory phrases such as “investigation of,” “research on,” “education for,” or “outreach that” should not be used.

(c) Program to Which You Are Applying (Block 8.). Enter “AgrAbility”.

(d) DUNS NO. (Data Universal Numbering System) (Block 11.) A DUNS number must be included for the legal recipient named in Block 1. See Part VIII,G.

(e) Proposed Start Date (Block 12.). Enter “04/01/2005”.

(f) Type of Request (Block 14.). Check the block for “New” or “Resubmission.”

(g) Project Director (PD) (Blocks 16.-19.). Blocks 16.-18. are used to identify the PD and Block 19. to identify co-PDs. If needed, additional co-PDs may be listed on a separate sheet of paper and attached to Form CSREES-2002, the Proposal Cover Page, with the applicable co-PD information and signatures. Listing multiple co-PDs, beyond those required for genuine collaboration, is discouraged.

(h) Other Possible Sponsors (Block 21.). List the names or acronyms of all other public or private sponsors including other agencies within USDA to which your application has been or might be sent. In the event you decide to send your application to another organization or agency at a later date, you must inform the identified CSREES agency contact (see Part VII) as soon as practicable. Submitting your application to other potential sponsors will not prejudice its review by CSREES; however, submitting the same (i.e., duplicate) application to another CSREES program is not permissible.

Page B

Page B should be submitted only with the original signature copy of the application and should be placed as the last page of the original copy of the application. This page contains personal data on the PD(s). CSREES requests this information in order to monitor the operation of its review and awards processes. This page will not be duplicated or used during the review process. Please note that failure to submit this information will in no way affect consideration of your application.

3. Table of Contents

For consistency and ease in locating information, each application must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following the proposal cover page. The Table of Contents should contain page numbers for each component of the application. Page numbering should begin with the first page of the Project Description.

4. Project Summary (Form CSREES-2004)

The application must contain a “Project Summary,” Form CSREES-2004. The summary should be approximately 250 words, contained within the box, placed immediately after the Table of Contents, and not numbered. The names and affiliated organizations of all PDs and co-PDs should be listed on this form, in addition to the title of the project. The summary should be a

self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on: overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; plans to accomplish project goal(s); and relevance of the project to the goals of AgrAbility. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. If there are more than three co-PDs for an application, please list additional co-PDs on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information) and attach to the Project Summary (Form CSREES-2004).

5. Response to Previous Review

This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II, B., “Types of Applications.” PD’s must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page, titled “RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW,” which is to be placed directly after the “Project Summary,” Form CSREES-2003.

6. Project Description

PLEASE NOTE: Written text for the Project Description shall not exceed thirty (20) pages. Project Descriptions may contain up to five (5) additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (twenty-five (25) pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Project Descriptions must include the following, as applicable:

(a) Project Justification

Justify the need for the project clearly and concisely by describing its magnitude and scope in national terms. Provide current baseline data including incidence of injuries and disease in the farming population. For all estimates included, explain and substantiate any assumptions made. Review current related programs concentrating on limitations this application intends to address. Justify the applicants’ ability to provide these services by detailing the applicants’ accomplishments from similar projects. Describe the stakeholders’ role in defining the application’s scope and their future role in project planning.

(b) Work Plan

Objectives must address each of the priority areas listed in Part I, B. within the context of the NAP vision enumerated in Part II, C., 2. Use an outline format for this section with objectives as primary headings. Denote activities required to achieve each objective. Group these activities by the targeted accomplishment year. Organize the objectives and their activities in a logical sequence, the sum of which must comprise an attainable project within the four-year maximum duration. For example, achievement targets for number of on-farm assessments or educational activities may increase each year. An educational module may be developed in year one, pilot-tested in year two, and presented in year three. Consider and discuss human subject safeguards and Institutional Review Board policies and processes. Under each activity, list expected outcomes and describe the proposed means of evaluating the activity’s efficacy and any outcomes’ value to stakeholders. The plan should allow evaluation results to refine and adjust objectives and activities while informing future plans. Use a summary table at the end of this section to show the relationships between objectives (and the activities designed to attain the

objectives), indicators of objective achievement, and the data sources which will inform evaluators. Thus, this table should have a minimum of three rows, at least one for each objective, and three columns.

(c) Division of Labor

CES and non-profit disability organization components may jointly or individually provide leadership for different objectives. Therefore, define the responsibilities of the respective organizations under each objective. For each activity, include time frames, personnel, and their roles. Applicants may consult with SRAPs, the current NAP, or consumer advisory type groups in developing their cooperators' role assignments.

(d) Project Schedule

Provide time lines or Gantt charts to demonstrate the duration and the sequence of project activities. Use varied hatching for different cooperators. Chart against a quarterly scale, so that a schedule should depict no more than 16 quarters.

7. References

All references to works cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an acceptable journal format. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Description.

8. Appendices to Project Description

Appendices to the Project Description are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

9. Key Personnel

The following should be included, as applicable:

(a) The roles and responsibilities of each PD and/or collaborator should be clearly described; and

(b) Vitae of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. This section should include vitae of all key persons who are expected to work on the project, whether or not CSREES funds are sought for their support. The vitae should be limited to two (2) pages each in length, excluding publications listings. The vitae should include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable, e.g., earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received. A chronological list of **all** publications in **refereed journals** during the past **four (4) years**, including those in press, must be provided for each project member for whom a curriculum vitae is provided. Also list only those **non-refereed** technical publications that have **relevance** to the proposed project. All authors should be

listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete reference as these usually appear in journals.

10. Collaborative Arrangements

Formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application. See instructions in the application forms for completing Form CSREES-2004, Budget.

11. Conflict of Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)

A "Conflict of Interest List," Form CSREES-2007, must be provided for all individuals who have submitted a vitae in response to item 8.(b) of this part. Each Form CSREES-2007 should list alphabetically, by the last names, the full names of the individuals in the following categories: (a) all co-authors on publications within the past four years, including pending publications and submissions; (b) all collaborators on projects within the past four years, including current and planned collaborations; (c) all thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors within the past four years; and (d) all persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting or financial arrangement within the past four years, who stand to gain by seeing the project funded. This form is necessary to assist program staff in excluding from application review those individuals who have conflicts of interest with the personnel in the grant application. The agency contact (see Part VII) must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

12. Budget

(a) Budget Form (Form CSREES-2004)

Prepare the budget, Form CSREES-2004, in accordance with instructions provided with the application forms. A budget form is required for each partner and for each year of requested support and another summing the requested support over all requested years. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period and for all partners. The budget form may be reproduced as needed by applicants.

For each year of requested support applicants should budget funding to attend an annual, three-day national training workshop with at least one representative from each of the primary university and non-profit disability organization partners (two-person minimum). (See Part II,C.).

Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable statutes, regulations, and Federal cost principles, and these

program guidelines, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project. Applicants also must include a budget narrative to justify their budget requests (see section (b) below.)

The amount requested for the private, non-profit disability organization, and all other subcontractors must be identified on line J., “All Other Direct Costs” on the applicant institution’s Budget Form, CSREES-2004. If costs other than those directly associated with subcontractual agreements are being included on line J., individually identify and explain these costs in the budget narrative. Separate budgets, Form CSREES-2004, and budget narratives must be submitted detailing the amount requested for private, nonprofit disability organizations.

(b) Budget Narrative

All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested, must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as they appear in the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper. The budget narrative should be placed immediately behind the Budget form.

13. Current and Pending Support Form (CSREES-2005)

All applications must contain Form CSREES-2005 listing other current public or private support (including in-house support) to which key personnel have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for person(s) involved is included in the budget. Please follow the instructions provided on this form. Concurrent submission of identical or similar applications to the possible sponsors will not prejudice application review or evaluation by the CSREES. However, an application that duplicates or overlaps substantially with an application already reviewed and funded (or to be funded) by another organization or agency will not be funded under this program. Please note that the project being proposed should be included in the “Pending” section of the form.

14. Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)

A number of situations encountered in the conduct of projects require special assurances, supporting documentation, etc., before funding can be approved for the project. In addition to any other situation that may exist with regard to a particular project, applications involving any of the following elements must comply with the additional requirements as applicable.

(a) Recombinant DNA or RNA Research

As stated in 7 CFR Part 3015.205 (b)(3), all key personnel identified in the application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health entitled, “Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules,” as revised. If your project proposes to use recombinant DNA or RNA techniques, you must so indicate by checking the “yes” box in Block 20. of Form CSREES-2002 (the Proposal Cover Page) and by completing Section A of Form CSREES-2008. For applicable applications recommended for funding,

Institutional Biosafety Committee approval is required before CSREES funds will be released. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

(b) Animal Care

Responsibility for the humane care and treatment of live vertebrate animals used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Where a project involves the use of living vertebrate animals for experimental purposes, all key personnel identified in an application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the applicable provisions of the Animal Welfare Act of 1966, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.), and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary in 9 CFR Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of these animals. If your project will involve these animals, you should check “yes” in Block 20. of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section B of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving the use of live vertebrate animals results in a grant award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has approved the project. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

(c) Protection of Human Subjects

Responsibility for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Guidance on this issue is contained in the National Research Act, Pub. L. No. 93-348, as amended, and implementing regulations promulgated by the Department under 7 CFR Part 1c. Since AgrAbility projects involve human subjects, you should check the “yes” box in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section C of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving human subjects at risk is recommended for award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the research plan and CSREES has accepted documentation of the IRB approval. Please refer to the application forms for additional instructions.

15. Certifications

Note that by signing Form CSREES-2002 the applicant is providing the certifications required by 7 CFR Part 3017, regarding Debarment and Suspension and Drug-Free Workplace, and 7 CFR Part 3018, regarding Lobbying. The certification forms are included in the application package for informational purposes only. These forms should not be submitted with the application since by signing Form CSREES-2002 your organization is providing the required certifications. If the project will involve a subcontractor or consultant, the subcontractor/consultant should submit a Form AD-1048, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions, to the grantee organization for retention in their records. This form should not be submitted to USDA.

16. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)

As outlined in 7 CFR Part 3407 (the CSREES regulations implementing NEPA), the environmental data for any proposed project is to be provided to CSREES so that CSREES may determine whether any further action is needed. In some cases, however, the preparation of environmental data may not be required. Certain categories of actions are excluded from the requirements of NEPA.

In order for CSREES to determine whether any further action is needed with respect to NEPA, pertinent information regarding the possible environmental impacts of a particular project is necessary; therefore, Form CSREES-2006, "NEPA Exclusions Form," must be included in the application indicating whether the applicant is of the opinion that the project falls within a categorical exclusion and the reasons therefore. If it is the applicant's opinion that the proposed project falls within the categorical exclusions, the specific exclusion(s) must be identified. Even though a project may fall within the categorical exclusions, CSREES may determine that an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for an activity, if substantial controversy on environmental grounds exists or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present which may cause such activity to have a significant environmental effect.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by close of business on December 23, 2004 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

The following list of costs, although not all inclusive, are not permitted: entertainment, meals for persons not traveling on behalf of the project except when provided to maintain a continuity of a meeting, tickets to shows or sporting events, alcoholic beverages and costs associated with banquets and award ceremonies.

Awards and Certificates of Achievement are disallowed by OMB Circular A-21 – Cost Principles for Educational Institutions and OMB Circular A-122 – Cost principles for Non-Profit Organizations.

Any expense not directly related to the program or project is considered unallowable. Examples include child-care services, kitchen help hired to prepare refreshments, and promotional or appreciation gifts such as clothing, coffee mugs, or bags.

CSREES has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

Pursuant to Section 1473 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (91 Stat. 981), indirect costs are unallowable costs under Section 3(d) of the Smith-Lever funded projects, and no funds will be approved for this purpose. Costs that are a part of the institution's indirect cost pool may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable.

In addition, tuition remission is prohibited by Section 1473 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3319).

E. Other Submission Requirements

1. What to Submit

The original and eight (8) copies (nine (9) total) of the application must be submitted. In addition, submit four (4) copies of the application's Project Summary. All copies of the application and the Project Summary must be submitted in one package.

2. Where to Submit

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by the USDA. The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is:

AgrAbility Program
c/o Proposal Services Unit
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 1420, Waterfront Centre
800 9th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20024

Telephone: (202) 401-5048

Applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the following address:

AgrAbility Program
c/o Proposal Services Unit
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
STOP 2245
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250-2245

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on Form CSREES-2002. If the applicant's e-mail address is not indicated, CSREES will acknowledge receipt of the application by letter.

If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline, please contact the agency contact (see Part VII). Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, please cite that number on all future correspondence.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel. Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) the amount of relevant formal technical education, extension experience, or experience dispensing disability services accrued by the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual remains engaged in these activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant education, extension, or disability service fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, occupational therapists, rehabilitation engineers, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can affirm the potential usefulness of proposals recommended for award to producers and the general public.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Project scope adequately addresses program priorities in education, networking, and assistance as each has relevance for the state or region (listed in Part I, B.) (15%);
2. Included baseline data on potential AgrAbility customers and audiences seem current and accurate; description of current programs available in the state or region adequately conveys a lack of capacity; marketing efforts described seem likely to engage target populations (10%);
4. Work Plan objectives succinctly and sequentially summarize key milestones necessary to achieve project goals (10%);
5. Work Plan objectives seem clear, suitable, and feasible with respect to the following (35%):
 - (a) Techniques, procedures, and methodologies;
 - (b) Data collection, analysis, and means of interpretation;
 - (c) Expected results or outcomes; and

(d) Procedures for evaluating project efficacy, including fixed performance indices with probabilities for obtaining them;

6. Project personnel have distinctly defined roles and demonstrate sufficient expertise, competence, and access to adequate facilities to complete project, while the PD appears sufficiently familiar with Institutional Review Board (IRB) processes and has adequately considered human subject safeguards (10%);

7. Selection of additional subcontractors and entities with whom the project intends to cooperate, and the division of responsibilities assigned to each partner collectively position project for success (5%);

8. Project Schedule systematically organizes tasks, illustrates successor task dependence, and allocates sufficient time for each task (5%); and

9. Budget apportions funds appropriately given scope of project; budget forms comply with instructions; amounts are allocated and tallied correctly; and narrative provides adequate justification in each budget category used (10%).

C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, VA 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of panelists will be made available in such a way that the panelists cannot be identified with the review of any particular application.

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

B. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one-time basis as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

C. Award Notice

The grant award document shall include, at a minimum, the following:

1. Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has awarded a grant under the terms of this request for applications;
2. Title of project;
3. Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
4. Identifying grant number assigned by the Department;
5. Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;

6. Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;
7. Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
8. Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
9. Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view CSREES award terms and conditions);
10. Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and
11. Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

- 7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.
- 7 CFR Part 3--USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.
- 7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.
- 7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.
- 7 CFR Part 3015--USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.
- 7 CFR Part 3017--USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants).
- 7 CFR Part 3018--USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019--USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3052--USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407--CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute)-- prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq.—Bayh-Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

E. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

1. Outputs

Grantees must make every effort to ensure that the project participants with disabilities can access the materials and services offered to them and their families. It is recommended that materials be in accessible formats, delivery of education and services be in accessible locations, World Wide Web materials comply with criteria in Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794(d)), and the CES or private, non-profit disability organization be accessible via Telephone Device for the Deaf. In accordance with CSREES General Terms and Conditions – A, Article 16, “Sharing of Findings, Data, and Other Project Products,” the grantee will submit half of the required copies of articles, educational publications, and audio-visual products to the program contact at CSREES and half to the NAP. Audio-visual products include software and database applications. Grantees need not submit confidential materials, but should endeavor to eliminate the confidential aspects of such materials where appropriate to allow sharing.

2. Reporting

The grantee must prepare an annual report to CSREES that details all significant activities that support the project’s goals and objectives. Supply served population demographics and aggregated feedback. Organize annual reports by objectives and deliverables identified in the proposal. Provide tables to facilitate comparing targeted results with actual results. Include success stories. The program contact at CSREES must receive reports within 90 days of each project year’s end.

In addition, grantees are required to submit initial project information and annual summary reports to CSREES’ Current Research Information system (CRIS). The CRIS database contains narrative project information progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are

made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparation and submission of project documentation will be provided to the applicant by the agency contact. Documentation must be submitted to CRIS before CSREES funds will be released. Project reports will be requested by the CRIS office when required. Awardees will need to assign codes and percentages to classify their projects. The primary problem areas AgrAbility addresses are (1) RPA 723 Hazards to Human Health and Safety; (2) RPA 801 Individual and Family Resource Management; and, (3) RPA 802, Human Development and Well-Being. The primary subjects of investigation AgrAbility targets are (1) SOI 6010, Individuals; (2) SOI 6020, Families; and (3) SOI 6050 Communities. The primary fields of science AgrAbility utilizes include (1) FOS 2020 Engineering; (2) FOS 3020 Education; and FOS 3100 Management. A complete list of CRIS codes and explanations appears on the Web at <http://cwf.uvm.edu/cris/revman/manvi.htm>.

Awardees in need of assistance should contact the CRIS Office c/o Ms. Carolyn Deckers at 202-690-0009 or through e-mail cdeckers@cris.csrees.usda.gov. For more information about CRIS visit <http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>.

At the end of the grantee's final year, the grantee must prepare a final report to CSREES that summarizes all significant activities that supported the project's goals and objectives, while providing final served population demographics, aggregated feedback, and trends. The final report will compare the state of services available to AgrAbility customers before and after the project. Organize final reports by objectives and deliverables identified in the proposal. Provide tables to facilitate comparing targeted results with actual results, aggregated for the entire project. List all educational materials produced by the project. Include success stories. Provide suggestions for improving the administration of AgrAbility or recommendations to guide other professionals initiating an AgrAbility project. Reports must be received by the CSREES program contact within 90 days of the final project year's end.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Bradley Rein; National Program Supervisor; Plant and Animal Systems Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2220; 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-2220; Telephone: (202) 401-0151; Fax: (202) 401-5179; E-mail: brein@csrees.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

2. Changes in Project Plans

(a) The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the agency contact.

(b) Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

(c) Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

(d) Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

(e) Changes in Project Period: The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

(f) Changes in Approved Budget: Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of one year. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule-related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

Administrator means the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Authorized departmental officer or *ADO* means the Secretary or any employee of the Department who has the authority to issue or modify grant instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

Authorized organizational representative or *AOR* means the president, director, or chief executive officer or other designated official of the applicant organization who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

Budget period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.

Department or *USDA* means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Disability means a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activity (examples include but are not limited to: vision, hearing, speech, communications, mobility, education, work, daily living tasks).

Education activity means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

Extension activity means an act or process that delivers science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions.

Grant means the award by the Secretary of funds to an eligible organization or individual to assist in meeting the costs of conducting, for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program as identified in these guidelines.

Grantee means an organization designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

Institutional Review Board refers to an administrative body charged with protecting the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in activities conducted by the affiliated institution. It approves, requires modifications in, or disapproves all activities within its jurisdiction.

Matching means that portion of allowable project costs not borne by the Federal Government, including the value of in-kind contributions.

Peer review means an evaluation of a proposed project for scientific or technical quality and relevance performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed work or to give expert advice on the merits of a proposal and management of the project.

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer as defined above.

Private, Non-profit Disability Organization means an organization with a 501 ©(3) designation under the Internal Revenue Code, involved in providing community-based direct services to individuals with disabilities.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by a grant award.

Project director means the single individual designated in the grant application and approved by the Secretary who is responsible for the direction and management of the project.

Project period means the period, as stated in the award document, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

F. CSREES' Grants.gov Implementation Plans

Grants.gov is an internet web site for grant and other financial assistance information (e.g., allows grant seekers to find funding opportunities). It also will serve to facilitate electronic transmission of information pertaining to grants and other financial assistance information (e.g., electronic application submission). In FY 2004, CSREES initiated the receipt of applications electronically through the Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) storefront for limited programs. As a result of this initiative, it was evident that improvements are necessary prior to further implementation of electronic applications. CSREES is working hard to provide Grants.gov as an option for programs in FY 2005. More information about CSREES' Grants.gov plans, including important announcements, program implementation, and detailed requirements, is posted on the CSREES' web site, http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/other_links/egov/egov.html which will be updated as appropriate. It is suggested that this site be visited periodically for important updates.

Grants.gov is not available for submission of applications in response to this RFA. See the section titled, "Other Submission Requirements" for information about the format (i.e., hard copy or electronic) for the submission of proposals under this RFA.

G. DUNS Number

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A Federal Register notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. Therefore, potential applicants should verify that they have a DUNS number or take the steps needed to obtain one. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number go to <http://www.grants.gov/RequestaDUNS>. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

H. Required Registration for Grants.gov

The Central Contract Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government. Such organizations must register in the CCR prior to the submission of applications via grants.gov (a DUNS number is needed for CCR registration). For information about how to register in the CCR visit "Get Started" in the web site, <http://www.grants.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.