

# Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program

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*FY 2005 Request for Applications*

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:**      **January 5, 2005**



**U.S. Department of Agriculture**



**Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service**

**SUMMARY:** The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) requests applications for the Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program (NNF) for fiscal year (FY) 2005 to provide fellowship programs to help meet the Nation's need for development of scientific and professional expertise in the food and agricultural sciences. In FY 2005, CSREES is only soliciting applications to train students for master's and doctoral degrees in food and agricultural sciences. Approximately \$6 million is available for support of this program. CSREES intends to allocate approximately \$1 million for Fellowships at the master's degree level and the remaining \$5 million for Fellowships at the doctoral degree level.

This notice identifies the objectives for NNF projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a NNF grant. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next Request for Applications (RFA) for this program.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on January 5, 2005 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this RFA are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**ADDRESSES:** The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is: Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 1420, Waterfront Centre; 800 9<sup>th</sup> 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: Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants 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.

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](mailto: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 Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program RFA.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Jeffrey Gilmore; Director; Higher Education Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2251; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; Washington, DC 20250-2251; Telephone: (202) 720-1973; Fax: (202) 720-2030; E-mail: [jgilmore@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:jgilmore@csrees.usda.gov).

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT:** 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 as provided for in the **Addresses** and **Dates** portions of this Notice.

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.210.

## *Table of Contents*

<b>PART I--GENERAL INFORMATION</b>	
A. Legislative Authority and Background.....	5
B. Purpose, Priorities and Fund Availability .....	5
C. Eligibility.....	6
D. Indirect Costs .....	6
E. Matching Requirements .....	6
F. Funding Restrictions.....	7
G. Types of Applications .....	7
<b>PART II--PROGRAM DESCRIPTION</b>	
A. Project Types .....	8
B. Program Description .....	8
<b>PART III--PREPARATION OF AN APPLICATION</b>	
A. Program Application Materials.....	9
B. Content of Applications .....	9
C. Submission of Applications .....	19
D. Acknowledgment of Applications .....	20
<b>PART IV--REVIEW PROCESS</b>	
A. General.....	21
B. Evaluation Criteria .....	21
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality.....	22
<b>PART V--AWARD ADMINISTRATION</b>	
A. General .....	24
B. Organizational Management Information.....	24
C. Award Document and Notice of Award.....	24
<b>PART VI--ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	
A. Access to Review Information.....	26
B. Use of Funds; Changes.....	26
C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements .....	27
D. Applicable Federal Statutes and Regulations .....	27
E. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards .....	28
F. Regulatory Information .....	29
G. Definitions.....	29

## **PART I--GENERAL INFORMATION**

### ***A. Legislative Authority and Background***

Legislative authority for this program is contained in section 1417(b)(6) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(6)). This program is subject to administrative provisions that can be found at 7 CFR 3402.

### ***B. Purpose, Priorities and Fund Availability***

NNF awards grants to train students for master's and/or doctoral degrees and provide additional postdoctoral training for Fellows who have completed their doctoral degrees at colleges and universities that have demonstrable teaching and research competencies in the food and agricultural sciences. NNF grants are specifically intended to support fellowship programs that encourage outstanding students to pursue and complete their degrees or obtain postdoctoral training in areas where there is a national need for the development of scientific and professional expertise.

In FY 2005, CSREES intends to support both master's and doctoral levels of study with NNF grants. Post-doctoral Fellowships will not be awarded in FY 2005. NNF applications are being solicited in the following national need areas: (1) animal, microbial, or plant molecular biology, including genomics and bioinformatics; (2) natural resources and the environment; (3) agricultural systems and natural resource engineering; (4) marketing and management; (5) food science and human nutrition; (6) human or family science and consumer sciences; and (7) multidisciplinary and/or multi-institutional programs.

Priority will be given to applications that propose to establish innovative models for graduate training with collaborative research and technology transfer components that transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries in agriculture (e.g., master's degree programs with summer research opportunities for Fellows at other colleges and universities; or doctoral programs with teaching opportunities in related topics). In addition, CSREES is especially interested in proposals addressing the multidisciplinary areas of bio-security, and human nutrition and obesity, and proposals that would help to increase the multicultural diversity of the nation's scientific and professional expertise.

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application, Fellowship request or to make a specific number of awards. In FY 2005, approximately \$6 million is available to fund NNF projects. Of this amount, CSREES intends to allocate approximately \$1 million for Fellowships at the master's degree level, and the remaining \$5 million for Fellowships at the doctoral degree level. CSREES reserves the right to reallocate funds between degree levels based on the quality and quantity of application submitted.

## ***C. Eligibility***

### **1. Eligible Institutions**

Applications may be submitted by: (1) Land-Grant Institutions, (2) colleges and universities having significant minority enrollments and a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences, and (3) other colleges and universities having a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences. Applications also may be submitted by research foundations maintained by eligible colleges or universities.

All applicants must be institutions that confer a graduate degree in at least one of the national need areas of the food and agricultural sciences targeted by NNF in the current application cycle (see Part I, B. for FY 2005 national need areas). It is the objective to award grants to colleges and universities that have notable teaching and research competencies in the food and agricultural sciences. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

### **2. Eligible Scholars**

Persons eligible to receive NNF support must: (a) not have completed two semesters or equivalent hours of full-time study as defined by the institution, or after passing of candidacy/qualifying examinations, whichever is later; (b) not have been enrolled previously in the academic program at the same degree level; (c) be citizens or nationals of the United States as determined in accordance with Federal law; and (d) have strong interest, as judged by the institution, in pursuing a degree in a targeted national need area and in preparing for a career as a food or agricultural scientist or professional.

Institutions are urged to take maximum advantage of opportunities for awarding NNF Fellowships to members of underrepresented groups at the graduate level in the food and agricultural sciences, particularly minorities and women.

## ***D. Indirect Costs***

Indirect costs are unallowable under NNF. In lieu of indirect costs, institutions may receive \$1,000 per year cost-of-education allowance for each Fellow supported by an NNF award. Institutions may use the cost-of-education allowance to defray program-related expenses including, but not limited to, student retention and mentoring programs, Fellow travel to attend professional meetings and/or to conduct research, laboratory fees and educational expenses (e.g., books and supplies). An institution may elect to apply the cost-of-education institutional allowance to a Fellow's tuition and fees; however, such is not required.

## ***E. Matching Requirements***

There are no matching requirements for NNF grants and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

## ***F. Funding Restrictions***

NNF funds must be used to: (1) support the same Fellow at the doctoral degree level for a maximum of three years and provide at least \$22,000 per year, and/or (2) to support the same master's degree level Fellow for a maximum of two years and provide at least \$15,000 per year.

If funds remain as a result of Fellows completing their studies early (less than twenty-four months for a master's degree or less than thirty-six months for a doctoral degree) or Fellowships being terminated prematurely, such funds may be used, within the time remaining on the award, to support: (1) pursuit of a doctoral degree in a discipline in the food and agricultural sciences by a master's degree level NNF Fellow at the grantee institution, or (2) a replacement NNF Fellow. Such funds cannot be used to increase annual Fellowships provided to existing NNF Fellows. If less than one semester/quarter remains on the award, the grantee must refund unexpended monies to CSREES.

Should a Fellow require additional time beyond the grant period to complete his or her degree, it is expected that the grantee will endeavor to continue supporting the Fellow through other means.

## ***F. Types of Applications***

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

- 1. New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to NNF. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part IV--Review Process.
- 2. Resubmitted application.** This is a project application that had previously been submitted to NNF but was not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part III, B., 5.). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

## **PART II--PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

### ***A. Project Types***

In FY 2005, CSREES intends to support both master's and doctoral levels of study with NNF grants. NNF typically awards \$32,000 for each master's Fellow (\$15,000 per year for two (2) years, plus \$1,000 per year cost-of-education allowance), and \$69,000 for each doctoral Fellow (\$22,000 per year for (3) three years, plus \$1,000 per year cost-of-education allowance).

NNF awards are limited by law to a maximum of five years' duration. No extensions beyond the five year period are allowed. Institutions may, however, apply for new awards in any fiscal year(s) in which appropriated funds are available for this program.

There is no limit to the number of NNF applications an eligible institution may submit; however, in FY 2005, an institution may only receive support for a maximum of four (4) master's Fellowships and four (4) doctoral Fellowships, not to exceed a total of \$404,000 in NNF awards. This support may be provided through two (2) or more grant awards.

Each application may request a maximum of four (4) Fellowships. A separate application must be submitted for each degree level (master's or doctoral) and for each program area (see Part I, B.) for which support is requested. CSREES reserves the right to fund fewer Fellows than requested in an application, and to partially fund Fellowship requests.

### ***B. Program Description***

Fellowships may be held only by persons who meet the eligibility requirements (see Part I., C., 2.). Fellows must be identified and Fellowships must be awarded within eighteen (18) months of the effective date of a grant. Institutions that fail to meet this deadline will be required to refund monies associated with unawarded Fellowships to CSREES.

A Fellow at the master's degree level who maintains satisfactory progress is eligible to receive NNF support for a maximum of twenty-four (24) months during a thirty-month period. A Fellow at the doctoral degree level who maintains satisfactory progress is eligible to receive NNF support for a maximum of thirty-six (36) months within a forty-two-month period.

It is the intent of this program that Fellows pursue full-time uninterrupted study, in residence or thesis/dissertation research activities, including time spent pursuing USDA-funded special international study or thesis/dissertation research activities. However, Fellows are permitted, at the discretion of their institutions, to accept additional supplemental employment that would positively contribute to their training (e.g., research or teaching assistantships), if tuition waivers are included as compensation.

# **PART III--PREPARATION OF AN APPLICATION**

## ***A. Program Application Materials***

Program application materials are available at the CSREES Funding Opportunities web site (<http://www.reeusda.gov/1700/funding/ourfund.htm>). If you do not have access to the web page or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hard copy, 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 the National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program. 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](mailto:psb@csrees.usda.gov). State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated application forms for the National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program.

## ***B. Content of Applications***

The applications should be prepared following the guidelines and the 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 1/2" 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).
- (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 six (6) copies of the application (7 total) must be submitted in one package, along with six (6) additional copies of the "Project Summary," Form CSREES-2003, 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) The contents of the application should be assembled in the following order:
  - (1) Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)
  - (2) Table of Contents
  - (3) Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)

- (4) Response to Previous Review (if applicable)
- (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 PDs 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 (Block 6.a. and 6.b.). For Block 6.a., 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 6.b., 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 Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Program.

(d) Type of Request (Block 14). Check the block for new or resubmitted.

(e) 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.

(f) 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 program contact 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-2003)**

The application must contain a “Project Summary,” Form CSREES-2003. 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 the NNF. 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-2003).

The national need area(s) addressed by the application should be identified in the Project Summary (see tables below). Applicants should enter the appropriate national need area number and degree level code in the “Need Area” box located on the right-hand side of the Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003).

<b>National Need Area Targeted in FY 2005</b>	<b>Number</b>
Animal, Microbial, or Plant Molecular Biology, Including Genomics and Bioinformatics	1
Natural Resources and Environment	2
Agricultural Systems and Natural Resource Engineering	3
Marketing and Management	4
Food Science and Human Nutrition	5
Human/Family Science and Consumer Sciences	6
Multidisciplinary and/or Multi-institutional	7

<b>Degree Level Targeted in FY 2005</b>	<b>Code</b>
Master’s level	M
Doctoral level	D

Applicants also should select one of the following codes that best describes the major academic discipline addressed by the application and enter this code under “Discipline”, which is also located on the right-hand side of the Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003).

<b>Discipline Targeted for FY 2005</b>	<b>Code</b>
Animal Science	A
Aquaculture	Q
Entomology -- Animal	J
Entomology -- Plant	T
Related Biological Sciences (includes General/Basic Biotechnology, Biochemistry and Microbiology)	B
Veterinary Medicine/Science	V
Plant Sciences and Horticulture	P
Conservation and Renewable Natural Resources	C
Environmental Sciences/Management	L
Soil Sciences	D
Water Sciences/Resources (includes Water Quality)	W
Agricultural/Biological Engineering	E
Agricultural Marketing and Management (includes Agricultural Economics)	M
Food Science/Technology/Manufacturing (includes Food Safety)	F
Human Nutrition	N
Family and Consumer Sciences (excludes Human Nutrition)	H
Agricultural Social Sciences (includes Rural Sociology)	S
Multidisciplinary degree programs	G

## **5. Response to Previous Review**

This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part I, G., “Types of Applications”. PDs 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:** The Project Description shall not exceed twenty (20) pages of written text and up to five (5) additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (25 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition.

This portion of the application should describe how the proposed project offers unique opportunities for achieving the national objective of encouraging outstanding students to pursue and complete graduate degrees in an area of food and agricultural sciences where there is a national need for the development of scientific and professional expertise. The Project Description must include, and be organized into, the following four sections. A description of the information that must be included in each section is included below:

### **Section 1**

- (a) Identify the national need area(s) addressed by the application;
- (b) Demonstrate the likelihood that the proposed program of graduate study will result in the development of outstanding graduates to meet the future needs of a globally interconnected, technologically advanced, rapidly diversifying and consumer-driven food and agricultural industry;
- (c) Substantiate clearly the quality of the institution's graduate teaching and research program(s) in the food and agricultural sciences in the discipline(s) for which Fellows are being recruited;
- (d) Discuss the quality of the institution’s graduate students, the strength of its curriculum and instructional approaches, the availability of research opportunities, and utilization of strategies for developing the critical thinking and problem-solving skills of students;
- (e) Present evidence that the overall academic program recognizes and addresses current trends and future needs, and prepares students for successful careers in the food and agricultural sciences professional and scientific workplaces; and
- (f) Discuss current or planned programs at the institution designed to encourage outstanding graduate students, especially from underrepresented groups, to pursue and complete graduate studies in food and agricultural sciences.

Supportive information may include: (1) student enrollment, retention and graduation rates by gender, racial groups, and ethnic groups for the past five years; (2) the mean standardized college entrance exam scores of minority students and of other students for the past five years; (3) placement of graduates during the past five years; and (4) the enrollment and graduation rates of first generation college students and/or past NNF Fellows.

## **Section 2**

Describe in detail the on-going and future planned activities for: (1) recruitment and selection of NNF Fellows; (2) academic advising, research training, career counseling, mentoring, and student support services for NNF Fellows; and (3) program evaluation and dissemination.

Include:

- (a) Plans for the recruitment of outstanding Fellows, especially from underrepresented groups, including a brief justification for centering recruitment efforts on any particular group(s);
- (b) Strategies and procedures for recruiting and selecting students to participate in NNF, including selection criteria for choosing Fellows who are outstanding and deemed likely to pursue degrees in national need areas and prepare for careers as food and agricultural scientists or professionals;
- (c) Specific colleges and universities targeted for recruitment efforts and the rationale for using proposed strategies and procedures;
- (d) Plans and procedures for assessing, monitoring, guiding, and sustaining Fellows' continued commitment and progress toward securing an education in preparation for a career in the food and agricultural sciences, including the nature of career counseling to be provided to Fellows;
- (e) A description of the institution's mentoring and other support services and how they promote multicultural and/or first-generation college student retention through graduation; and
- (f) Plans for evaluating project management and effectiveness, and for tracking Fellows' accomplishments after graduation. A discussion of how evaluation findings would be used to modify and improve future opportunities for NNF Fellows. Plans for disseminating project outcomes and achievements to a wide audience of educators and policy makers.

## **Section 3**

Substantiate clearly that: (1) the facilities and equipment, instructional and research support resources and other attributes (e.g., professional ranking of department, other funding sources, CSREES program evaluation) are excellent for providing outstanding teaching and research at

the forefront of science and technology related to the chosen discipline; and (2) the institution is committed to supporting the Fellows' education and research over and beyond the funds provided by USDA.

#### **Section 4**

Identify any innovative, special features of the proposed project that will be available *especially* to Fellows, or required as a part of their degree programs. Such features may include: (1) an interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, or cross-disciplinary approach; (2) a multi-university collaborative approach; (3) an emphasis on a collateral specialization or minor in a related discipline; (4) graduate research opportunities, internships, practicum, experiential learning opportunities, international research/educational experiences, and related work experiences.

#### **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 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**

If it will be necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of application, a 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 9.(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 program contact 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 year of requested support. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. The budget form may be reproduced as needed by applicants. 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 (b) below).

#### **(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 the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper and placed immediately behind the Budget form.

#### **(c) Indirect Costs**

Refer to Part I, D. for indirect cost restrictions.

### **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 personnel (i.e., individuals submitting a vitae in response to item 9.(b) of this part) identified in the application 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. If you propose to use human subjects in your project, 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 of Applications***

#### **1. When to Submit (Deadline Date)**

Applications must be received by COB on January 5, 2005 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

#### **2. What to Submit**

An original and six (6) copies of the application must be submitted. In addition, six (6) copies of the application's Project Summary should also be submitted. All copies of the application and the Project Summary must be submitted in one package.

#### **3. 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:

Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral  
Fellowship Grants Program  
c/o Proposal Services Unit  
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Room 1420, Waterfront Centre  
800 9<sup>th</sup> 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:

Food and Agricultural Sciences National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral  
Fellowship Grants 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

#### ***D. Acknowledgment of Applications***

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 the 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 program contact. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, please cite that number on all future correspondence.

## PART IV--REVIEW PROCESS

### *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 level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, 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 judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

### *B. Evaluation Criteria*

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

#### **1. Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education (30 Points)**

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the proposed program of graduate study will result in the development of outstanding graduates to meet the future needs of a globally interconnected, technologically advanced, rapidly diversifying and consumer driven food and agricultural industry. Elements include: quality of the chosen academic program, current and future demand for graduates in chosen discipline(s), strength of the curriculum, instructional approaches, strategies for developing critical thinking and problem solving skills and prior success in or potential for graduating Fellows.

#### **2. Proposed Approach (25 Points)**

**(a) Recruitment and selection:** The applicant's strategies and procedures for identifying and recruiting outstanding students who are committed to careers in food and agricultural sciences and who will increase the multicultural diversity of the workforce.

**(b) Academic advising, career counseling, mentoring, and student support services:** The applicant's plans and procedures for assessing, monitoring, guiding, and sustaining a Scholar's/Fellow's continued commitment and progress toward securing an education in preparation for a career in the food and agricultural sciences, and for providing appropriate career counseling, mentoring, and support services to Scholars/Fellows.

**(c) Program evaluation and dissemination:** The adequacy and reasonableness of the applicant's plans, as reflected in the proposal, for (1) evaluating project management and effectiveness, (2) tracking Scholars'/Fellows' accomplishments after graduation, and (3) disseminating project outcomes and achievements to a wide audience of educators and policy makers, in order to expand the pipeline of outstanding students interested in careers in food and agricultural sciences.

### **3. Institutional Commitment and Resources (20 Points)**

The degree to which the proposal substantiates clearly: (1) that the facilities and equipment, instructional support resources and other academic attributes are excellent for providing outstanding teaching and research at the forefront of science and technology related to the chosen discipline; and (2) the commitment to support the Scholars/Fellows education and research over and beyond the funds provided by USDA.

### **4. Key Personnel (15 Points)**

The qualifications and roles of key staff assigned to the project, particularly the project director and faculty or staff having the most frequent or influential contacts with Scholars/Fellows. Elements include such attributes as competence and/or experience in research, teaching, community service, working with diverse cultural groups, students at risk of not completing their degree programs, and leading similar projects.

### **5. Innovation (10 points)**

The degree to which the proposal describes any innovative, special features of the academic program(s) that will be available *especially* to Scholars/Fellows or required as a part of their degree program(s), including: an interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, or cross-disciplinary approach; a focus on innovative, multi-disciplinary education programs, material, or curricula; a multi-university collaborative approach; an emphasis on a collateral specialization or minor in a related discipline; research opportunities, internships, practicum, experiential learning opportunities, international research/educational experiences, and related work experiences.

## ***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 version of the 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 V--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 Document and Notice of Award***

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

1. Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has issued an award 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 award 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. Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and
10. Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

## **PART VI--ADDITIONAL 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 program 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. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements***

#### **1. Documentation of Progress on Funded Projects**

Project Directors are required to complete and submit a Fellowships/Scholarships Entry Form, Form CSREES-2010, and an annual progress report for each Fellow supported by NNF. This information must also be provided for replacement Fellows appointed under the program. Progress reports are used to assess the continuing progress of Fellows through their graduate programs of study and institutional adherence to program guidelines.

Project Directors must also complete and submit a Fellowships/Scholarships Exit Form, Form CSREES-2010, as soon as a Fellow either (1) graduates; (2) is officially terminated from the Fellowship or the academic program due to unsatisfactory academic progress or disciplinary action; or (3) voluntarily withdraws from the Fellowship or academic program. If a Fellow has not completed all degree requirements at the end of the five-year award duration, CSREES may request a preliminary Fellowships/Scholarships Exit Form (Form CSREES-2010). In such a case, a final Fellowships/Scholarships Exit Form would be required at a later date. When CSREES has accepted a final Fellowships/Scholarships Exit Form for each Fellow supported by a grant, the grantee has satisfied the requirement of a final performance report for the grant. Additional follow-up reports to track Fellows' career patterns also may be requested.

Grantees are also required to submit annual and summary evaluation reports via the CSREES Current Research Information System (CRIS). CRIS is an electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally funded projects. Contact CSREES for additional information on the contents of CRIS reports.

#### **2. Evaluation of Program**

Grantees should be aware that CSREES may, as a part of its own program evaluation activities, carry out in-depth evaluations of assisted activities through independent third parties. Thus, grantees should be prepared to cooperate with evaluators retained by CSREES to analyze both the institutional context and the impact of any supported project

### ***D. Applicable Federal Statutes and Regulations***

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. 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.

## ***F. 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.

## ***G. Definitions***

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

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

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

*Citizen or national of the United States* means (1) A citizen or native resident of a State, the District of Columbia, or any Insular Area; or, (2) a person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States.

*College or university* means an educational institution in any State which (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate, (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education, (3) provides an educational program for which a bachelor's degree is awarded, (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution, and (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.

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

*Education* means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters related thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and

equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by colleges and universities offering associate, baccalaureate, or higher degrees.

*First generation* means an individual neither of whose parents completed a baccalaureate degree, or in the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree.

*Food and agricultural sciences* means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities concerned with the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, and inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, family and consumer sciences, rural economic, community, or business development, and closely allied disciplines.

*Graduate degree* means a master's or doctoral degree.

*Graduate Fellow* means a master's or doctoral degree student in food and agricultural sciences who is recruited into the program, under the aegis of a specific National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program grant.

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

*Insular Area* means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

*Land-grant colleges and universities* means those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862 (12 Stat. 503-505, as amended; 7 U.S.C. 301-305, 307 and 308), including the land grant institutions in the Insular Areas or the Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 417-419, as amended 7 U.S.C. 321-326 and 328), including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State College.

*Matching or Cost-sharing* means that portion of project costs not borne by the Federal Government, including the value of third party in-kind or cash contributions.

*Minority* means Alaskan Native, American Indian, Asian-American, Black (African-American), Hispanic American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, or any other group underrepresented in undergraduate and first professional degree study in the food and agricultural sciences as indicated in standard statistical references, or as documented on a case-by-case basis by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary.

*Multicultural* means the variety of interests, talents, and cultural backgrounds of students that enhance the overall educational experience of all students.

*Need Area* means the specific area(s) of educational, applied research, or community development activities identified in the solicitation for applications and addressed by the applicant's proposal. Need Areas are derived from statutory language authorizing the grants program and specific Need Areas are targeted for funding support in the solicitation for applications.

*Newly recruited* means (i) must not have completed two semesters or equivalent hours of full-time study as defined by the institution, or after passing of candidacy/qualifying examinations, which ever is later; and (ii) must not have been enrolled previously in the academic program at the same degree level.

*Nonprofit* as applied to a school, college, university, agency, organization, or institution means a school, college, university, agency, organization, or institution owned and operated by one or more nonprofit corporations or associations, no part of the net earnings of which inures, or may lawfully inure, to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

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

*Postdoctoral Fellow* means a USDA Graduate Fellow who has completed a doctoral degree and is receiving additional training and mentoring in research, education, and/or extension under the aegis of a specific National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program grant.

*Prior approval* means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer as defined in this section.

*Private sector* means all non-public entities, including for-profit and non-profit commercial and non-commercial entities, and including private or independent educational institutions.

*Project* means the particular activity within the scope of one or more of the targeted need areas identified in the annual program solicitation supported by a grant awarded under this program.

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

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

*Replacement Fellow* means a student who is recruited into the program, under the aegis of a specific National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program grant, to take the place of a Fellow who left the program prematurely, e.g., due to academic difficulty, disciplinary

action, transfer to another institution, personal necessity, or early graduation. The tenure of such a replacement Fellow is limited to whatever time is remaining on the grant before it expires; however, an institution may not appoint a replacement Fellow unless there is time for the student to complete at least one semester/quarter of study before the expiration date of the grant. Replacement Fellows must meet all of the eligibility criteria and other requirements established for Fellow selection and are subject to the same provisions as other Fellows during their tenure in the program. Replacement Fellows are entitled, during their tenure, to the same benefits that other Fellows receive from the grant award and National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program. Institutions may, but are not required to, continue a replacement Fellow's tuition and other benefits beyond the expiration date of the grant using institutional or other funds. A student who has been a replacement Fellow may not be appointed as a Fellow under any other National Needs Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowship Grants Program grant.

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

*State* means any one of the fifty States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

*Teaching* means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience specific to the food and agricultural sciences at the undergraduate level of study, and matters relating thereto, conducted by colleges and universities offering a baccalaureate or higher degrees.

*Traditionally underrepresented in the food and agricultural sciences* means groups that have been historically, and are currently, underrepresented among recipients of undergraduate and first professional degrees in the food and agricultural sciences.

*Underrepresented* means proportionate representation as measured by degree recipients that is less than the proportionate representation in the general population--(i) As indicated by (A) The most current edition of the Department of Education's Digest of Education Statistics; (B) The National Research Council's Doctorate Recipients from United States Universities; or (C) Other standard statistical references, as announced annually in the Federal Register notice inviting applications for new awards under this program; or (ii) As documented by national survey data submitted to and accepted by the Secretary on a case-by-case basis.