

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program

FY 2005 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 30, 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

OUTREACH AND ASSISTANCE FOR SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS AND RANCHERS COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under number 10.443, Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Programs.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on November 30, 2004 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this 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. Requests for Determination must be received by COB October 21, 2004 (see Part III, A., 2. for details).

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 as provided for in the DATES portion of this RFA.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Program Liaison Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 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 Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program (OASDFR). This program provides outreach and technical assistance to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to own and operate farms and ranches and to participate equitably in agriculture programs. Contingent on Congressional action, CSREES anticipates that approximately \$5.935 million will be available in FY 2005 to support this program.

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

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—GENERAL INFORMATION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

Section 2501(a) of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101-624, November 28, 1990, (7 U.S.C. 2279(a)) authorizes the Secretary to make grants to eligible institutions and organizations so that they may provide outreach and technical assistance to encourage and assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to own and operate farms and ranches and to participate equitably in the full range of agricultural programs offered by the Department. This assistance shall (1) enhance coordination of the outreach, technical assistance, and education efforts authorized under various agriculture programs; and (2) include information on and assistance with commodity, conservation, credit, rural, and business development programs; application and bidding procedures; farm and risk management; marketing; and other activities essential to participation in agricultural and other programs of the Department.

OASDFR brings the existing knowledge base to bear on farm and ranch management issues faced by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers throughout the Nation.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The primary purpose of OASDFR is to deliver outreach and technical assistance, to assure opportunities for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to successfully acquire, own, operate, and retain farms and ranches; and assure equitable participation in the full range of USDA programs. OASDFR will support a wide range of outreach and assistance activities in farm management, financial management, marketing, application and bidding procedures, and other areas.

Applications must contain documentation of the socially disadvantaged group that is being targeted for assistance (see Part VIII, E., definitions 33 and 34.) and justification as to why the targeted group is appropriate for assistance under this program. If a targeted group is not defined as socially disadvantaged in Part VIII, E., then, a Request for Determination must be submitted to CSREES for consideration (see Part III, A., 2.).

Proposed projects might include one or more of the following: (1) the use of existing, and the formation of new, outreach and assistance networks focused on increasing participation in various USDA and other programs by socially disadvantaged agricultural producers; (2) further development or modification of farm and ranch management (including marketing) and financial management curricula and materials designed to enhance the potential for farm and ranch ownership by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers; (3) the development of innovative delivery systems that improve the effectiveness of these programs; and (4) the development or improvement in the means by which assistance is provided to the targeted audiences.

To assure equitable participation by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, OASDFR will give priority to projects that provide outreach and assistance in applying for and receiving aid under USDA programs administered by various agencies within the Department of Agriculture. In general, these include, but are not limited to, loan programs, guaranteed loan programs, allocations

of crop base in each program crop, and various conservation programs. Specifically, pertinent programs include, but are not limited to, the following, identified by the Federal Domestic Assistance title and number: Emergency Conservation Program (10.054); Production Flexibility Payments for Contract Commodities (10.055); Forestry Incentives Program (10.064); Conservation Reserve Program (10.069); Emergency Loans (10.404); Farm Ownership Loans (10.407); Great Plains Conservation (10.900); and Soil Survey (10.903). There may be other Federal and State agricultural programs that also could assist members of socially disadvantaged groups. Applicants should provide a brief, relevant synopsis on the program(s) they are incorporating in their proposed project.

PART II— AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

Contingent on Congressional action, CSREES anticipates that approximately \$5.935 million will be available in FY 2005 to support this program. To the extent that funds are available for this purpose, CSREES will award grants for applications found to be meritorious by a peer review panel. Generally, awards are expected to range from \$100,000 to \$300,000 total for project periods of one to three years; however, multi-year projects are encouraged. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

B. Types of Applications

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

- 1. New application** - This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to OASDFR. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.
- 2. Renewal application** - This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications, and, additionally, must contain a Progress Report (see Project Description, Part IV, B., 5.). Renewal applications must be received by the due date. They will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.
- 3. Resubmitted application** - This is an application that has previously been submitted to OASDFR, but was not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous reviews and panel summary. Resubmitted applications must be received by the due date, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications. The revised application should clearly indicate the changes that have been made in the proposed project on **an extra page** placed in the application after the Program Description. Applications which appear to be resubmissions (regardless of the designation) are regarded as such by the program and the panel, and compete on the same basis with all other applications (new, renewal, and resubmissions) submitted to the program at the same time.

C. Project Types

For FY 2005, OASDFR will support Standard Projects and not Conference Grants. OASDFR projects should provide technical assistance and outreach to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers with the ultimate aim of increasing and retaining ownership. Standard projects that incorporate multiple collaborators, particularly community-based collaborators, are encouraged. It

is incumbent upon applicants (1) to adequately define and justify the needs of targeted groups; and (2) to document the potential impact of their project upon socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

Proposed projects should, as appropriate, address needs as determined by: (1) producer audiences; (2) commodity mixes in the area(s) of interest; (3) types of outreach and assistance needs associated with available and appropriate USDA and other agricultural programs; (4) production, marketing, financial, legal and human resource conditions in the area(s) being addressed; and/or (4) other factors that hold great potential for assisting producers in gaining and maintaining ownership of their farms and ranches, or enhance their opportunities for ownership.

Applicants should provide information about the degree to which partnerships and collaborations enhance (1) the services to be delivered; and (2) the areas and numbers of the targeted audience that the applicant expects to assist. Applicants should explicitly discuss outreach designed to inform the targeted audience of the assistance available through a project, and the expected outcomes in terms of increased ownership of farms and ranches. While applicants may develop a needs assessment, applications that use existing needs assessments to justify proposed projects are often more competitive than those that include the development of an assessment as one of the project objectives. Applicants can strengthen their submission by documenting how certain methodologies or results can be transferred to another geographical area.

Applicants are encouraged to coordinate with any existing regional projects and complement pertinent and relevant cross-regional activities. Projects that build on existing information networks and offer innovative or expanded activities are encouraged. Applicants are encouraged to closely examine the evaluation criteria noted in Part V, B. as they prepare their applications.

In addition to the above, applications should address or target one or more of the specific items below:

1. Meet a specialized OASDFR need that is local, State-specific, regional or national in scope, (e.g., national coordination of OASDFR efforts) and that has common characteristics that can be addressed in a single project. Projects that are local or State-specific need to provide evidence that the need being addressed also exists elsewhere and that the methodologies and results may apply in these other areas; and
2. Be willing to share findings with USDA and other interested entities and organizations by providing information on methodologies, data, analytical techniques, findings, etc.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligibility

1. Applications may be submitted by:

(a) Any community-based organization, network, or coalition of community-based organizations that:

(1) Has demonstrated experience in providing agricultural education or other agriculturally related services to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers;

(2) Has provided to the Secretary documentary evidence of work with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers during the two-year period preceding the submission of an application for assistance under this program (documentary evidence shall include a narrative with specific information regarding: the scope of past projects; the number of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers served or located in the area served by the organization; activities conducted; community involvement; and copies of prior agreements, press releases, news articles, and other contemporaneous documents supporting the narrative); and

(3) Does not engage in activities prohibited under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Therefore, only non-profit organizations may apply.

(b) An 1890 institution or 1994 institution (as defined in the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601)), including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State University.

(c) An Indian Tribal Community College or an Alaska Native Cooperative College.

(d) An Hispanic-serving institution (as defined in section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3103)).

(e) Any other institution of higher education (as defined in the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)) that has demonstrated experience in providing agriculture education or other agriculturally related services to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in a region.

(f) An Indian tribe (as defined in the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b)) or a national tribal organization that has demonstrated experience in providing agriculture education or other agriculturally related services to socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in a region.

(g) An organization or institution that received an award under this program before January 1, 1996, but only with respect to projects that the Secretary considers similar to projects previously carried out by the organization or institution under this program.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project; however, the subcontracted amount may not exceed one-third of the total grant award.

2. Request for determination

If a potential applicant proposes to fund a program targeted to a socially disadvantaged group not specifically identified in the Definitions section of this RFA (see Part VIII, E., definition nos. 33 and 34), the potential applicant must submit a request to CSREES by October 21, 2004. The request must contain documentation to support the target group being considered socially disadvantaged. The Secretary or designated individual will determine whether the group identified is eligible under this Program. The Request for Determination should be e-mailed to the Agency Contact identified in Part VII. The subject of the email must read "REQUEST FOR DETERMINATION." In addition, the following information must be provided in the order specified below:

- (a) Description of racial or ethnic group submitted for determination; and
- (b) Data or studies supporting designation of racial, ethnic or socially disadvantaged group.

Each applicant in this category will be notified as to the outcome of the determination. If the determination is positive, the applicant will be invited to submit an application as outlined in this RFA.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

CSREES does not require matching support for this program 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 CSREES Funding Opportunities web site <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/forms.html>. If you do not have access to the web page or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hardcopy, you may contact the Proposal Services Unit, 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 Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive 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. State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated application forms for the OASDFR Competitive Grants Program.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

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 8 copies of the application (9 total) must be submitted in one package.
- (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
 - (5) Project Description
 - (6) References
 - (7) Appendices to Project Description
 - (8) Key Personnel
 - (9) Collaborative Arrangements (including Letters of Support)

- (10) Budget (Form CSREES-2004)
- (11) Budget Narrative
- (12) Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)
- (13) Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)
- (14) Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)
- (15) Certification of Compliance to Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986
- (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 four 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 that is the legal recipient named in Block 1. Only one box should be checked. For Block 6.b., please check as many boxes as 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 “OASDFR” or Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program. The reference to Program Area (i.e., name of the program component) and Number should be ignored in this block.

(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) Type of Request (Block 14). Check the block for New or Renewal.

(f) 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.

(g) 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 OASDFR Program. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. If there are more than four 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).

5. Project Description

A description of the project must not exceed 20 pages of written text and up to five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (25 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Renewal applications should contain a Progress Report. The Progress Report must be within the 25-page limit established for the Project Description. The Project Description must include all of the following:

(a) Introduction: A clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed activities should be included. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities which substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project should be included. In addition, this section should include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

- (1) Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders, including growers, processors, buyers, and consumers and to ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research. What is the pay-off of this project to producers? To other stakeholders?
- (2) Role of the stakeholders in problem identification, planning, and implementation and evaluation as appropriate.
- (3) Reasons for having the work performed at the proposing institution.

(b) Objectives: Clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort must be included in all applications.

(c) Methods: The procedures or methodology to be applied to the proposed effort should be explicitly stated. This section should include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- (1) A description of stakeholder involvement in problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation, including documentation of participation, or reference to documentation, where appropriate;
- (2) A description of the proposed project activities in the sequence in which it is planned to carry them out;
- (3) Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project;
- (4) Kinds of results expected;
- (5) Means by which data will be analyzed or interpreted;
- (6) Pitfalls that might be encountered;
- (7) Limitations to proposed procedures; and
- (8) Plans to commercialize the results, if within this project; or, anticipated steps and outlook for commercialization, if beyond the scope of this project.

(d) Cooperation and Institutional Units Involved: Cooperative, multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary applications are encouraged. Identify each institutional unit contributing to the project and designate the lead institution or institutional unit. When appropriate, the project should be coordinated with the efforts of other State and/or national programs. Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each institutional partner of the project team.

(e) Facilities and Equipment: All facilities which are available for use or assignment to the project during the requested period of support should be reported and described briefly. All items of major equipment or instrumentation available for use or assignment to the proposed project should be itemized. In addition, items of nonexpendable equipment needed to conduct and bring the project to a successful conclusion should be listed, including dollar amounts and, if funds are requested for their acquisition, justified.

(f) Project Timetable: The application should outline all important phases as a function of time, year by year, for the entire project, including periods beyond the grant funding period.

(g) Evaluation Component: Applications need to incorporate a project evaluation component that will permit a qualitative and quantitative assessment of expected project impacts. How will success of the proposed project be measured? Such assessments need to relate to increases in participation rates in USDA programs and in increasing the ownership of farming and ranching operations by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

(h) Renewal Applications: If the application is a renewal of an existing project supported under the same program, include a clearly identified summary progress report describing the results to date. The progress report should contain the following information:

- (1) A comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the active grant;
- (2) The reasons for slippage if established goals were not met; and
- (3) Other pertinent information, including, when appropriate, cost analysis and explanation of cost overruns or unexpectedly high unit costs.

The progress report should be placed immediately after the "Project Summary."

6. 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.

7. Appendices to Project Description

Appendices to the Project Description are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project and are limited to a total of two of the following: reprints (papers that have been published in peer reviewed journals) and preprints (manuscripts in press for a peer reviewed journal; these must be accompanied by a letter of acceptance from the publishing journal). Letters of support from members of the scientific community, commodity groups or other stakeholders can also be appended. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.

8. 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) The 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, including 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 representative publications in **refereed journals** during the past **four (4) years**, including those in press, must be provided for each project member for whom a 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.

9. 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.

10. 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). If a project is funded, beginning in the second year of funding, at least one member of the project team will be required to attend annual meetings. Reasonable travel expenses may be included in the requested budget. 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 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. See Part IV, D. for indirect cost and other budgetary restrictions.

11. 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 8.(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.**

12. 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. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. Certification of Compliance with Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986

Applicants that are not recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a Section 501(c)(3) organizations must include, on a separate sheet of paper, a statement that they have not, and will not, engage in any of the prohibited activities contained in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Requests for Determination must be submitted by COB, October 21, 2004.

Applications must be received by COB on November 30, 2004 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

CSREES has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for 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.

The FY 2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 108-199) limited indirect costs to 20 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. CSREES anticipates that the FY 2005 Appropriations Act will include a similar limitation. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 20 percent of total Federal funds awarded. Another method of calculating the maximum allowable is 25 percent of the total direct costs. Please note that if the 2005 Appropriations Act contains a different indirect cost limitation CSREES will contact each successful applicant to apply the correct rate prior to the award of a grant.

No more than one-third of the total award amount may be subcontracted to a third party.

E. Other Submission Requirements

1. What to Submit

An original and 8 copies of each application must be submitted. All copies of the application 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:

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants 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, SW

Washington, DC 20024

Telephone: (202) 401-5048

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

Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program

c/o Proposal Services Unit

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture

STOP 2245

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 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 the Form CSREES-2002. If the applicant's e-mail address is not indicated, CSREES will acknowledge receipt of the application by letter.

If an applicant does not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline, he should contact the program contact. Once the application has been assigned an application number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

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. A number of expert reviewers will conduct a merit review based on the evaluation criteria. The views of the individual reviewers will be used by CSREES to determine which applications will be recommended to the Administrator for funding. Evaluated applications will be ranked based on merit. Final approval of those applications recommended for award will be made by the Administrator.

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 or has been engaged in providing outreach and assistance to disadvantaged groups; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant community based and/or scientific, education, or extension fields that provide outreach and assistance to disadvantaged groups; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., members of community-based organizations, producers, range or forest managers/operators, processors and/or 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 gender representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness of outreach and assistance programs for socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

B. Evaluation Criteria

To assure equitable participation by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, OASDFR will give priority to projects that provide outreach and assistance in applying for and receiving aid under USDA programs administered by various agencies within the Department of Agriculture. In general, these include, but are not limited to, loan programs, guaranteed loan programs, allocations of crop base in each program crop, and various conservation programs. Specifically, pertinent programs include, but are not limited to, the following, identified by the Federal Domestic Assistance title and number: Emergency Conservation Program (10.054); Production Flexibility Payments for Contract Commodities (10.055); Forestry Incentives Program (10.064); Conservation Reserve Program (10.069); Emergency Loans (10.404); Farm Ownership Loans (10.407); Great Plains Conservation (10.900); and Soil Survey (10.903). There may be other Federal and State agricultural programs that also could assist members of socially disadvantaged groups. Applicants should provide a brief, relevant synopsis on the program(s) they are incorporating in their proposed project.

The evaluation criteria noted below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA. Points provide an indication of the relative importance of each criterion and will be used by reviewers to evaluate applications.

1. The degree to which the proposed project addresses the major purposes of OASDFR to reach socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers, (20 points);
2. The degree to which the statement of work reflects effective strategies for providing outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged groups and the potential for achieving project objectives, (30 points);
3. The experience and expertise of key personnel in working with socially disadvantaged clientele, adequacy of facilities and institutional commitment and collaborations, (20 points);
4. The quality of stakeholder/participant involvement in the proposed project, (10 points);
5. Adequacy of managing the project, (10 points);
6. The soundness of the plan for assessing and evaluating the accomplishment of project goals, (10 points).

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, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions, 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 USDA 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 grant is awarded;
8. Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
9. Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.ree.usda.gov/crgam/oep/awardterms.htm> to view CSREES award terms and conditions);
10. Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the grant award; and
11. Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective granting activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular grant.

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. For CSREES, 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

Funded projects will be expected to verify program accomplishments according to reporting formats quarterly. Evidence of actual or intended beneficial changes in the degree of ownership, and improved operation and participation in USDA programs by socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers are particularly desirable, in addition to documentation of producer involvement in program activities. Evidence is expected to include participants' assessments of the value of program outreach and assistance activities and suggestions for improvement.

Grantees must prepare quarterly reports that document significant activities or events that show movement toward achieving goals and objectives of the project. The reports should specify performance targets for that period and contain evidence that verifies the extent to which these targets have been met. Approximately one month after the anniversary start date, an annual report format will be provided to the Project Director. This report will compare accomplishments against stated goals, and highlight those assistance and outreach methods that prove to be highly successful.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Elizabeth Tuckermanty; Program Director; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U. S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2241; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2241; telephone: (202) 205-0241; fax: (202) 401-6488; e-mail: etuckermanty@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 grant state otherwise, the grantee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of grant funds.

2. Changes in Project Plans

(a) The permissible changes by the grantee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project grant 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 grantee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the USDA 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 grantee 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 grantee 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 grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the grant.

(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 grantee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of a grant.

(f) Changes in Approved Budget: Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the grantee 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, USDA regulations, or grant award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in a grant, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES' transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that CSREES 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 a grant will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. 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:

1. 1890 Land-Grant College means one of those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of August 30, 1890, as amended (7 U.S.C. 321 *et seq.*), including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State University. This term includes a research foundation maintained by such an institution.
2. 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.
3. Agriculture Programs means those activities established or authorized by: the Agricultural Act of 1949 (7 U.S.C. 1421 *et seq.*); the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1921 *et seq.*); the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 (7 U.S.C. 1281 *et seq.*); the Soil Conservation Act; the Domestic Allotment Assistance Act; the Food Security Act of 1985; and other such acts as determined by the Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA, on a case-by-case basis either at the Administrator's initiative or in response to a written request with supporting explanation for inclusion of an Act. Covered programs include, but are not limited to, agricultural conservation program, programs comprising the environmental conservation acreage reserve program (ECARP), conservation technical assistance program, emergency conservation program, forestry incentives program, Great Plains

Conservation Program, integrated farm management option program, price support and production adjustment program, rural environmental conservation program, soil survey program, water bank program, and the farm loan programs (farm ownership, operating soil and water, and emergency loans).

4. Alaska Native means a citizen of the United States who is a person of one-fourth degree or more Alaska Indian (including Tsimshian Indians not enrolled in the Metlaktla Indian Community), Eskimo, or Aleut blood, or combination thereof. It also includes, in the absence of proof of a minimum blood quantum, any citizen of the United States who is regarded as an Alaska Native by the Native Village or Native group of which he claims to be a member and whose father or mother is (or if deceased, was) regarded as Native by any village or group.

5. Alaska Native cooperative colleges means any post-secondary education institution that at the time of application, has an enrollment of undergraduate students that is at least 20 percent Alaska Native students.

6. Assistance means providing hands-on assistance through workshops, site visits and other means of contact with socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers to enable them to understand the application process and to apply for or to take advantage of USDA and other relevant and pertinent programs. Assistance is also defined as providing guidance and help in understanding the process and procedures for applying for grants, loans, mortgages, or other financial resources that assist socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in gaining ownership of their farming and ranching operations.

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

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

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

10. Community-based organization means a nongovernmental organization with a well-defined constituency that includes all or part of a particular community; e.g., communities consisting of socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers.

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

12. Enrollment of needy students means an enrollment at an institution with respect to which: (a) at least 50 percent of the degree students so enrolled are receiving need-based Federal financial assistance, including the Federal Work-study Program, in the second year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made (other than loans for which an interest subsidy is paid pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 1708); or (b) a substantial percentage of the students so enrolled are receiving Federal Pell Grants in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which

determination is made, compared to the percentage of students receiving Federal Pell Grants at all such institutions in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made.

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

14. Farmer/Rancher means an owner and /or operator who has a vested interest in the operation of the farm or ranch.

15. 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.

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

17. Hispanic serving post-secondary educational institution means a post-secondary educational institution that: (a) at the time of application, has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students; and (b) provides assurances that not less than 50 percent of the institution's Hispanic students are low-income individuals.

18. Indian Tribe or national tribal organization means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688) (43 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians.

19. Indian Tribal Community Colleges means a post-secondary education institution which: (a) is formally controlled, or has been officially sanctioned, or chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes, except no more than one such institution shall be recognized with respect to any such tribe; and (b) includes an institution listed in the Equity in Educational Land Grant Status Act of 1994, as amended (7 U.S.C. 301 note). The 1994 Land-Grant Institutions are: Bay Mills Community College, Blackfeet Community College, Cankdeska Cikana Community College, College of Menominee Nation, Crownpoint Institute of Technology, D-Q University, Dine Community College, Chief Dullknife Memorial College, Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College, Fort Belknap College, Fort Berthold Community College, Fort Peck Community College, Haskell Indian Nations University, Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development, Lac Courte Orielles Ojibwa Community College, Leech Lake Tribal College, Little Big Horn College, Little Priest Tribal College, Nebraska Indian Community College, Northwest Indian College, Oglala Lakota College, Salish Kootenai College, Sinte Gleska University, Sisseton Wahpeton Community College, Si Tanka/Huron University, Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, Sitting Bull College, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Stone Child College, Turtle Mountain Community College, United Tribes Technical College, and White Earth Tribal and Community College.

20. Institution of Higher Education means an educational institution in any State that (a) 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; (b) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; (c) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; (d) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and (e) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted preaccreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education for the granting of preaccreditation status, and the Secretary of Education has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

21. Junior or Community College means an institution of higher education: (a) that admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located and who have the ability to benefit from the training offered by the institution; (b) that does not provide an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree (or an equivalent degree); and (c) that (i) provides an educational program for not less than 2 years in duration that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; or (ii) offers a 2-year program in engineering, mathematics, or the physical or biological sciences, designed to prepare a student to work as a technician or at the semiprofessional level in engineering, scientific, or other technological fields requiring an understanding and application of basic engineering, scientific, or mathematical principles of knowledge.

22. Low-income individual means an individual from a family whose taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level determined using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census.

23. Outreach means the use of formal and informal educational presentations, materials, website materials, etc., that are designed to inform socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers about USDA programs, other relevant and pertinent programs, and improvements in farm and ranch management in its many dimensions with the purpose of increasing participation in USDA programs and rates of ownership and operation of farms and ranches by members of socially disadvantaged groups.

24. Partnering means a joint effort among two or more institutions, organizations and/or other entities with the capacity to conduct projects intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program.

25. 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 project.

26. Peer review panel means a group of experts qualified by training and/or experience in particular fields to evaluate eligible proposals in those fields submitted under this RFA.

27. Performance target means expected measurable accomplishments that can be used to document the extent of change brought about by the project.
28. Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer as defined in 7., above.
29. Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by a grant award.
30. Project period means the period, as stated in the award document, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.
31. Project Director means the individual responsible for the technical direction and management of the project, as designated by the awardee in the application and approved by the Authorized Departmental Officer.
32. Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.
33. Socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group.
34. Socially disadvantaged group means a group whose members have been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. Socially disadvantaged groups include, but are not limited to, African Americans, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hispanics, Asians, and Pacific Islanders. The Secretary will determine on a case-by-case basis whether additional groups qualify under this definition, either at the Secretary's initiative or in response to a written request with supporting explanation.

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 were 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 the submission of applications in response to this RFA. See Part IV, E. for information about the format (i.e., hard copy or electronic) for the submission of applications 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://grants.gov>. 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 <http://grants.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.