

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

FY 2008 Request for Applications

Request for Determination Deadline: November 21, 2007
Application Deadline: December 14, 2007



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 Grants.gov by close of business (COB) on December 14, 2007 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally 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. Request for Determination must be received by COB November 21, 2007 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) (see Part III, A., 2. for details).

STAKEHOLDER INPUT:

The Competitive Programs staff utilizes the input of diverse stakeholder groups to develop program descriptions that will solicit the highest-quality applications to meet the needs of U.S. agriculture, food, forestry, the environment, and rural communities. Setting program priorities is an important means of facilitating the scientific and technological advances needed to meet the challenges facing U.S. agriculture. Program priorities are developed using several criteria, including 1) mission relevance; 2) scientific opportunity; 3) impact to science and society; 4) linkages to other Federal programs; and 5) stakeholder input. The stakeholder Web page can be viewed at www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/stakeholder.html.

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, Oversight, and Funds Management Branch 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 anticipates 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 \$5.9 million will be available in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 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.

IMPORTANT CHANGES TO THE FY 2008 OASDFR PROGRAM SOLICITATION

******* PLEASE READ *******

Electronic Application Submission Required:

In FY 2008, OASDFR will only accept electronic application submissions through Grants.gov. Be aware that additional time is required to complete the electronic application process. Applications must be submitted via Grants.gov by Close of Business, 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, on December 14, 2007. Applications received after the applicable deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Information about submitting an application using Grants.gov can be found in Part IV.

All attachments must be submitted in portable document format (PDF).

Note the attachment requirements (eg., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide available with the Application Package at Grants.gov. ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM CSREES REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from consideration. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business (COB) on the closing date in the RFA.

If you do not own PDF generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “[PDF Conversion Programs](http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs)” on (http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs).

Grants.gov does not currently support the Windows Vista operating system. The PureEdge software used by Grants.gov for forms may not be compatible with MS Vista.

Helpful Information for Submission	Website Address
News, information, and resources related to electronic submission.	www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic
All applications must be submitted through the Grants.gov Web site.	Grants.gov

If you have any questions related to preparing an application for electronic submission, contact:
Email: electronic@csrees.usda.gov
Phone: 202-401-5048, Business hours are M-F, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm ET.

If you have any questions related to Grants.gov, contact:
Email: support@grants.gov
Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726, Business hours are M-F, 7:00 am – 9:00 pm ET, excluding Federal holidays.

Budget Restrictions Require Strict Adherence to Funding Limits:

OASDFR has mandatory funding limits for all applications. **Applications requesting budgets exceeding the funding limit for the program will be returned without review.** Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire RFA and contact Dr. Dionne Toombs, National Program Leader, for additional information on the program (see Part VII).

Annual Project Directors Meeting:

If a project is funded, the Project Director will be required to attend an annual Project Directors meeting each year for the duration of the award. Reasonable travel expenses should be included as part of the project budget.

Multiple Submissions:

In FY 2008, the OASDFR Program encourages applicants to submit one comprehensive application rather than multiple applications.

Evaluation Criteria:

Please review the evaluation criteria located in Part V, B, of the RFA.

Electronic Subscription to OASDFR Announcements:

If you would like to receive notifications of all new announcements pertaining to the OASDFR RFA, you can register via Grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/search/subscribeAdvanced.do>.

- Enter the e-mail address at which you would like to receive the announcements
- Enter “10.443” for CFDA Number
- Select “Subscribe to Mailing List”

Other criteria may be selected; however, your e-mail address and the CFDA number are the only data required to receive OASDFR announcements. You do not need to be a registered user of Grants.gov to use this service. You may modify your email subscriptions or unsubscribe at any time.

Table of Contents

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION	8
A. Legislative Authority and Background	8
B. Purpose and Priorities.....	8
PART II— AWARD INFORMATION.....	10
A. Available Funding.....	10
B. Types of Applications	10
C. Project Type	10
PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION.....	12
A. Eligibility	12
B. Cost Sharing or Matching	13
PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION	14
A. Electronic Submission Requirements	14
B. Content and Form of Application Submission.....	15
C. Submission Dates and Times	25
D. Funding Restrictions	25
E. Other Submission Requirements	25
PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS.....	27
A. General.....	27
B. Evaluation Criteria	27
C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality.....	28
D. Organizational Management Information.....	28
PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION	29
A. General.....	29
B. Award Notice	29
C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.....	30
D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements	31
PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT	32
PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION	33
A. Access to Review Information.....	33
B. Use of Funds; Changes.....	33
C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards	34
D. Regulatory Information.....	34
E. Definitions	34
F. Electronic Subscription to OASDFR Announcements.....	38

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

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, A2).

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 \$5.9 million will be available in Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 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. The funding limit is up to \$100,000 per year for a maximum project period of three years; multi-year projects are given preference. 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 2008, 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 Narrative, Part IV, B3 (j6)). 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 will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications and reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications (See Part V, B). Resubmission applications must be received by the due date. The revised application should clearly indicate the changes that have been made in the proposed project on **one extra page** placed in the application ((See Project Narrative, Part IV, B3 (g)). Applications, which appear to be resubmissions (regardless of the designation), are regarded as such by the program and the panel.

C. Project Type

For FY 2008, OASDFR will support Standard projects. 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 (for example, producer's ability to market fresh produce, specialty crops, and dairy); (2) commodity mixes in the area(s) of interest; (3) type 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 (5) 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 other existing regional projects, as well as 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 during the two-year period preceding the submission of the application;

(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) A 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 33 and 34), the potential applicant must submit a request to CSREES by COB on November 21, 2007 (5:00 p.m., Eastern Time). 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. Electronic Submission Requirements

For FY 2008, the OASDFR program will require all applications be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (www.grants.gov). Submission through Grants.gov requires the use of new forms contained within an Electronic Application Package. Applications not submitted electronically will not be accepted into the program and will be returned without review.

Prior to preparing an application, the applicant must determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. Review the Web site, http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp, for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

To access the electronic application package via Grants.gov, go to www.grants.gov under the “Apply for Grants” heading on the left-hand side of the page, click on “Step 1: Download Grant Application Package and Instructions”, enter the CFDA number “10.443” or Funding Opportunity Number “**USDA-CSREES-ICGP-001092**” and click “Download Package.” From the search results, select “download” to access the instructions and application.

Contained within the electronic application package is the “[CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov](#).” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms. If electronic assistance is needed, refer to Part III Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide for contact information. **If the application instructions in this RFA differ from those in the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide, the instructions in this RFA should be followed.**

Technical questions pertaining to the electronic submission process, including registration through Grants.gov, the PureEdge Viewer software required to download, complete, and submit electronic applications, or problems related to the Grants.gov website should be directed to Grants.gov staff. They can be reached by phone at 1-800-518-GRANTS or via email at support@grants.gov.

Online resources to help potential applicants with the new electronic application package and submission requirements are available at www.grants.gov. Additional online resources are provided by CSREES to help applicants, including tips for preparing an electronic application and electronic submission frequently asked questions at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic>.

Closing Date for Applications

Electronic applications must be submitted to Grants.gov by COB on December 14, 2007 (5:00 p.m., Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Requests for Determination must be e-mailed to the Agency Contact identified in Part VII by COB on November 21, 2007 (5:00 p.m., Eastern Time). Requests received after this deadline will not be considered. See Part III, A., 2., for instructions.

Application Receipt Notices

After an application is submitted, the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) will receive a series of four e-mails. It is extremely important that the AOR watch for and save each of the e-mails. The Grants.gov validation (email #2) may take up to two business days from application submission. Please plan accordingly and submit early. Receipt of e-mail Number 4 by the AOR indicates the application reached CSREES, USDA. To track a submission, use the Submission Receipt Number in e-mail Number 1. The titles of the four e-mails are:

Number 1 – Grants.gov Submission Receipt Number

Number 2 – Grants.gov Submission Validation Receipt for Application Number

Number 3 – Grants.gov Grantor Agency Retrieval Receipt for Application Number

Number 4 – Receipt of Grant Application Number for Review at USDA

Receipt of the four e-mails does not indicate the application has been accepted for review. The AOR and/or PD will be notified in up to two subsequent e-mails if the application has been accepted or declined for program review. If accepted, the application will be assigned a CSREES application number (i.e. 2008-XXXXX). This number should be cited on all future correspondence, see section E. of this Part for additional information.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared according to the document entitled “[CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov](#).” This guide is part of the corresponding electronic application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is additional information needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. **If any discrepancy between the two documents exists, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.**

1. General

Use the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide and the following guidelines to prepare an application. Proper preparation of application will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion:

a. Attachment Format

CSREES will only accept attachments in the portable document format (PDF).

Note the attachment requirements (eg., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide available with the Application Package at Grants.gov. **ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM CSREES REVIEW.** Partial applications will be excluded from consideration.

With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business (COB) on the closing date in the RFA.

If you do not own PDF generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “[PDF Conversion Programs](http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs)” on (http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs). **Submitted PDF documents must have one-inch margins and typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point regardless of line spacing. Number each page of the attachment sequentially. Please note any page limitations indicated for a given attachment in this RFA. Title each attachment in the document header and save each file with name listed below for each attachment.**

Note: Attachments must be converted to PDF prior to attachment in the application package. Grants.gov and the PureEdge Viewer will not convert the files automatically. Files should be checked after conversion for formatting, readability, and adherence to page limitations.

b. Grant Application Package

(1) “Competition ID” may not be auto-populated as the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide indicates. Please leave this field blank.

(2) Required field “Application Filing Name” is for applicant and/or institutional use. There are no specific guidelines for this field. However, it must be completed and the applicant may enter a name or number they deem appropriate.

c. In the process of submitting your application electronically, you will complete six components of the SF 424 Research and Related (R&R) Application Package:

- SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
- R&R Other Project Information
- R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)
- R&R Personal Data
- R&R Budget
- Supplemental Information Form

All forms must be submitted through Grants.gov.

2. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. *Field 5. Legal Name* – Enter the legal name of the organization to which the award should be made.

b. *Field 11. Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project* – The title should be concise (**140-character-maximum including spaces**).

c. *Field 13. Proposed Project* – Please select the start date of the project at least six months after the submission due date for the program. Choose the end date to correspond to the correct duration of the project.

d. *Field 16. Enter Estimated Project Funding* – In the Estimated Program Income field, enter \$0.00.

e. *Field 20. Pre-application* – Do not fill out this portion of the form. OASDFR is not accepting pre-applications in FY 2008.

3. R&R Other Project Information

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. For the purpose of this RFA, questions in Field 4 pertain to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Under 7 CFR Part 3407 (CSREES's implementing regulations of NEPA), CSREES must determine whether the proposed activity requires the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement, or whether such activity can be excluded from this requirement on the basis of several categories. Note that even though the applicant considers that a proposed project may or may not fall within a categorical exclusion, CSREES may determine that an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement is necessary for a proposed project should substantial controversy on environmental grounds exist or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present that may cause such activity to have significant environmental effect. **It is requested that Field 4 be completed in the following manner.**

b. *Field 4a.* – Check yes.

c. *Field 4b. If yes, please explain* – Type “See Field 4d below.”

d. *Field 4c. If this project has actual or potential impact on the environment, has an exemption been authorized or an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS) been performed?*

The applicant should review the categorical exclusions in the table on the next page and determine if the proposed project falls within one or more of the exclusions.

Check “Yes” if one of the categorical exclusion listed in the table on the next page applies. Also, check yes if an EA or EIS has been performed. Attach a copy of the EA or EIS, if performed, in Field 11. Other Attachments.

Check “No” if the proposed activity does not fall into one of the categorical exclusions listed in the table below OR if an EA or EIS has not been performed. If “No” is checked, attach an explanation of the potential environmental impacts

of the proposed activity in Field 11. Other Attachments. This may require completion of an EA or EIS.

e. *Field 4d.* If applicable, enter the appropriate USDA CSREES NEPA Exclusion Code (see below) in Field 4d. If an EA or EIS file is attached in “Field 11. Other Attachments,” also enter “Please see attached.” in Field 4d.

USDA CSREES NEPA Exclusion Codes Table

Exclusion Code	Description
<i>Department of Agriculture Categorical Exclusions (found at 7 CFR 1b.3 and restated at 7 CFR 3407.6(a)(1)(i) through (vii))</i>	
(a)(1)(i)	Policy development, planning, and implementation which are related to routine activities such as personnel, organizational changes, or similar administrative functions
(a)(1)(ii)	Activities that deal solely with the functions of programs, such as program budget applications, disbursement, and transfer or reprogramming of funds
(a)(1)(iii)	Inventories, research activities, and studies such as resource inventories and routine data collection when such actions are clearly limited in context and intensity
(a)(1)(iv)	Educational and informational programs and activities
(a)(1)(v)	Civil and criminal law enforcement and investigative activities
(a)(1)(vi)	Activities that are advisory and consultative to other agencies and public and private entities, such as legal counseling and representation
(a)(1)(vii)	Activities related to trade representation and market development activities abroad
<i>CSREES Categorical Exclusions (found at 7 CFR 3407.6(a)(2)(i) through (ii))</i>	
The following categories of research programs or projects of limited size and magnitude or with only short-term effects on the environment:	
(a)(2)(i)(A)	Research conducted within any laboratory, greenhouse, or other contained facility where research practices and safeguards prevent environmental impacts
(a)(2)(i)(B)	Surveys, inventories, and similar studies that have limited context and minimal intensity in terms of changes in the environment
(a)(2)(i)(C)	Testing outside the laboratory, such as in small isolated field plots, which involves the routine use of familiar chemicals or biological materials
(a)(2)(ii)	Routine renovation, rehabilitation, or revitalization of physical facilities, including the acquisition and installation of equipment, where such activity is limited in scope and intensity

f. *Field 6. Project Summary/Abstract* – **PDF Attachment**. The Project Summary is limited to **250 words**. Title the attachment as ‘Project Summary’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Summary’.

A suggested template for the Project Summary/Abstract can be found at: http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/templates/project_summary.doc.

The Project Summary must indicate which specific FY 2008 Program Priority(ies) the proposed project addresses. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized.

g. *Field 7. Project Narrative* (formerly Project Description) – **PDF Attachment. 25-Page Limit**. Title the attachment as ‘Project Narrative’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Narrative’.

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative section may not exceed a total of 25 single- or double-spaced pages, including figures and tables. These page limitations apply regardless of whether figures or tables are included. All pages, including those with figures and tables, should be numbered sequentially. Applications exceeding the applicable page limitation will be returned without review. These maximums have been established to ensure fair and equitable competition.

Project Narrative must include all of the following:

(1) *Response to Previous Review* (if applicable) – This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” and “Resubmitted Renewal Applications” as described in Part II. B., Types of Applications. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary on **no more than one page**, titled “RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW.” If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative, subject to the page limitations of that section. When a Response to Previous Review is included in the Project Narrative, the attachment page limitation is increased to 26 total pages to include the 1-page response. Note, the Project Narrative itself, with or without the Response to Previous Review, must not exceed 25-pages.

(2) *Introduction* – Include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that 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. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed research. Include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

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

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

(4) *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:

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

(5) *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.

(6) *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.

(7) *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. *Field 9. Facilities & Other Resources* – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Facilities & Other Resources’ in the document header and save file as ‘Facilities & Other Resources’.

All facilities which are available for use or assignment to the project during the requested period of support should be reported and described briefly.

i. *Field 10. Equipment* – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Equipment’ in the document header and save file as ‘Equipment’.

All items of major equipment or instrumentation available for use or assignment to the proposed project should be itemized. In addition to describing available equipment, items of nonexpendable equipment necessary to conduct and successfully complete the proposed project should be listed in Field C. of the R&R Budget and described in the Budget Justification (Field K of the R&R Budget).

j. *Field 11. Other Attachments, Appendices to Project Narrative of this section.* Appendices are not counted toward the 25-page Project Narrative limit.

(1) See item g. Project Narrative of this section for the Response to Previous Review. The Response to Previous Review will now be located within the Project Narrative attachment. Do not attach the Response to Previous Review in this section.

(2) Key Personnel Roles – PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit. Title the attachment as ‘Key Personnel’ and save file as ‘Key Personnel’.

Clearly describe the roles and responsibilities of the PD, co-PD(s), and/or collaborator(s). Biographical sketches for key personnel should be attached in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile. 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 biographical sketch should be provided in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (see Part IV. B4). Collaborators simply providing services or materials should not be listed in the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile and a biographical sketch is not required. Evidence (letters of support) for this type of collaboration should be provided in the ‘Documentation of Collaboration’, see item (4) below.

(3) Management Plan – PDF Attachment. 3-Page Limit. Title the attachment as ‘Management Plan’ and save file as ‘Management Plan’.

Clearly articulate the management plan for the project. Include a coordination strategy to enhance communication, data sharing, and reporting among members of the project team, as well as a time line for project implementation and delivery of project products.

(4) *Documentation of Collaboration* – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Documentation of Collaboration’ in the document header and save file as ‘Documentation of Collaboration’.

Evidence, e.g. letter(s) of support, should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.

(5) *Results from Prior OASDFR Support* – **PDF Attachment. 1 Page Limit per award.** Title the attachment as ‘Results from Prior OASDFR Support’ in the document header and save file as ‘Results from Prior OASDFR Support’.

If the PD or a co-PD has received OASDFR support in the past 5 years, information on results from that prior funding is required. This information will be used in the review of the application. For renewal applications, provision of the Progress Report (see Part IV B3 (j6) below) is sufficient and information need not be repeated in this section. For each award, list the CSREES award number, the amount and period of support, the title of the project, and a summary of the results of the completed work.

(6) *Progress Report on Previous Grant* – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Progress Report on Previous Grant’ in the document header and save file as ‘Progress Report on Previous Grant’.

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:

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

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

A Senior/Key Person Profile should be completed for the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel, including collaborators playing an active role in the project. Collaborators only providing services or materials should not be listed in

the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile. Evidence (letters of support) for this type of collaboration should be provided in the Documentation of Collaboration, see section B.,3. j.(4) of this part.

a. *Attach Biographical Sketch Field – PDF Attachment. 2 Page Limit (excluding publications listings) per PD, co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel.* Title the attachment as ‘Biographical Sketch’ in the document header and save file as ‘Biographical Sketch’.

A biographical sketch (vitae) of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel should be included.

b. *Attach Current and Pending Support Field – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.* Title the attachment as ‘Current and Pending Support’ in the document header and save file as ‘Current and Pending Support’.

A suggested template for the Current and Pending Support can be found at: http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/templates/current_pending.doc.

Current and pending support information is now required only for personnel with PD or co-PD(s) indicated as Project Role on the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile. All applications must contain a list of Current and Pending Support detailing public or private support (including in-house support) to which personnel 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 note that the project being proposed should be included in the pending section of the form. Total project time listed for each PD should not exceed 100% for concurrent projects.

5. R&R Personal Data

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide. PLEASE DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF PROJECT DIRECTOR / PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.

6. R&R Budget

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 6. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. *Budget Periods.* Applications must contain a budget for each budget period for the entire duration of the proposed project. Annual and cumulative budgets are required. Applicants must complete the mandatory fields on each page of the first budget period and attach the Budget Justification (see item (4) Field K. Budget Justification, of this section) to enable the “Next Period” button to become active.

b. *Subcontract Arrangements.* If it will be necessary to enter into a formal subcontract agreement with another institution, financial arrangements must be detailed in the “R&R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form.” Annual and

cumulative budgets and a budget justification are required for each subcontract agreement. Refer to Part V, 7. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions on completing this form.

c. *Field H. Indirect Costs* – See Section D., Funding Restrictions, of this Part for indirect cost information.

d. *Field K. Budget Justification* – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Budget Justification’ in the document header and save file as ‘Budget Justification’.

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. If consulting, collaborative, or subcontractual arrangements are included in the application, these arrangements should be fully explained and justified. The rate of pay for any consultant must be included, if known at the time of application. Please include a cost breakdown for the consultant. Letters of consent or collaboration or other evidence should be provided to show that collaborators have agreed to participate. A proposed statement of work, vitae, and a budget for each arrangement involving the transfer of substantive programmatic work or the provision of financial assistance to a third party must be supplied. In multi-institutional applications, a budget and budget narrative must be included for each institution involved. The lead institution and each participating institution must be identified.

e. *Matching* – The OASDFR program does not require matching support and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

7. Supplemental Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. *Field 1. Funding Opportunity* –Field 1 is pre-populated and “Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program” appears under Funding Opportunity Name and “USDA-CSREES-ICGP-001092” for Funding Opportunity Number.

b. *Field 2. Program to which you are applying* – Enter “OASDFR” or “Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants Program” for Program Code Name and “2501” for Program Code.

c. *Field 8. Conflict of Interest List* – **OASDFR Program does not require a Conflict of Interest list.**

C. Submission Dates and Times

Electronic applications must be submitted to Grants.gov by COB on December 14, 2007 (5:00 p.m., Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Requests for Determination must be e-mailed to the Agency Contact identified in Part VII by COB on November 21, 2007 (5:00 p.m., Eastern Time). Requests received after this deadline will not be considered. See Part III, A., 2., for instructions.

D. Funding Restrictions

The FY 2007 Revised Continuing Appropriations Resolution (Public Law 110-05) limited indirect costs to 20 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. CSREES anticipates that the FY 2008 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 2008 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.

Funds may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research spaces (including energy retrofitting); purchase or installations of fixed equipment in such spaces; or planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

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

E. Other Submission Requirements

1. Submission and Receipt of Applications

Applications must be submitted electronically via Grants.gov. The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in "CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov" and the additional information provided in this RFA. **Note instructions in this RFA supersede those in the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.**

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail (see Section A. of this Part for description of the four e-mails that will acknowledge receipt). Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses where designated.

If an applicant has not received within 30 days of the submission an e-mail either providing a CSREES application number (i.e. 2008-XXXXX) or indicating the application was not accepted for review, the applicant must contact the agency contact (see Part VII) immediately and ask for the status of the application. Failure to do so may result in the

application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned an application number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.

2. Multiple Submissions

In FY 2008, the OASDFR Program encourages applicants to submit one comprehensive application rather than multiple applications.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel. 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) level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or outreach and 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) 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) 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) experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g. colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, or private and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) maintaining a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and gender representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) 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 as described in Part I. B., (25 points); Note: Applications that do not directly address at least one of the major purposes of the OASDFR program will not receive consideration for funding.
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. Adequacy of managing the project; and the experience and expertise of key personnel in working with socially disadvantaged clientele, adequacy of facilities and institutional commitment and collaborations, (25 points);
4. The quality of stakeholder/participant involvement in the proposed project, (10 points);
5. The soundness of the plan for assessing and evaluating project outcomes and 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.

D. 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 pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors that 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).

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. 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.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view CSREES award terms and conditions);
10. Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the 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.

C. 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, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220 and 230) 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 Government wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and Government wide 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).

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are 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.

If a project is funded, beginning in the first year of funding, the project director will be required to attend annual investigator meetings. Reasonable travel expenses should be included as part of the project budget.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Dionne Toombs; National Program Leader; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U. S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2241; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2241; telephone: (202) 401-2138; fax: (202) 401-6488; e-mail: dtoombs@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 that 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: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in 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 educational and technical 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 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, Chief Dull Knife Memorial College, College of Menominee Nation, Crownpoint Institute of Technology, D-Q University, Dine' Community 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, Tohono O'odham Community 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 pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education for the granting of pre-accreditation 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 applications 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. Electronic Subscription to OASDFR Announcements

If you would like to receive notifications of all new announcements pertaining to the OASDFR RFA, you can register via Grants.gov at <http://www.grants.gov/search/subscribeAdvanced.do>.

- Enter the e-mail address at which you would like to receive the announcements
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