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Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program

Grantsmanship Workshop Webinar
April 6, 2009

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Purpose and Procedures

- Explain the requirement for BFRDP applications and the review process
- To answer questions of interested applicants
- This session is being recorded
- Please type in your comments in the chat room window.



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Basic Description of the Program

- The Farm Bill has made available \$17.2 million in FY 2009 to fund a Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP)
- The recipient must be a collaborative, State, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities, which may include: state cooperative extension service; community-based and nongovernmental organization; college or university (including institutions awarding associate degrees); or any other appropriate partner
- Funding only for education, training, outreach and mentoring of beginning farmers and ranchers.



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Three Types of Grants

- Standard Projects - to develop and disseminate educational and training materials on about 19 topics
 - \$250,000 / year for 3 years
- Educational Enhancement Teams – for evaluation, assistance and enhancement of Standard Projects
 - \$250,000 / year for 3 years
- Curriculum and Training Clearing House – develop a scoping projects of all BFR activities, develop and online clearing house and help enhance outcome - based reporting
 - \$300,000 / year for 5 years.





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Standard Projects could relate to any one or more of the following:

- Mentoring, apprenticeships and internships
- Resources and referrals
- Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers
- Innovative farm and ranch transfer strategies
- Entrepreneurship and business training
- Model land leasing contracts





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Standard Projects could relate to any one or more of the following:

- Financial management training
- Whole farm planning
- Conservation assistance
- Risk management education
- Diversification and marketing strategies
- Curriculum development





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Standard projects could relate to any one or more of the following:

- Understanding the impact of concentration and globalization
- Basic livestock and crop farming practices, including forestry
- Acquisition and management of agricultural credit
- Environmental compliance
- Information processing
- Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.





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Educational Enhancement Projects should relate to ALL of the following:

- Assess, Develop, and Deliver Special Projects for Education, Training and Mentoring of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers
- Assist the Standard Beginning Farmer and Rancher Grantees to Enhance Impacts of the BFRDP
- Build Capacity of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers to be Self Sustaining.





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Proposal Submission Requirements

- Applications require 25% matching
- Only electronic applications through grants.gov are accepted
- Need to follow all guidelines published in the Request for Applications
- Deadline of May 13th @ 5 p.m. eastern time.



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Restrictions on Funding

Funding can not be used:

- To purchase land, large machinery, animals
- For the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility
- To begin farming
- Set up Individual Development Accounts.



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Question # 1

Is this grant for you?

- Is this what you want to do?
- Are you eligible?
- Can you provide the matching?
- Can you submit through [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)?
- Can you submit by the deadline?



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If you decide to apply...

- **Register with Grants.Gov - ASAP**
http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp
 - This process can take weeks to complete
- **Check on Computer essentials**
 - Adobe Reader – only .pdf is accepted
 - High speed connection – universities, county extension or libraries.
 - Read the Request for Applications on our website
- **Contact the NPL's if you have questions regarding program**



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What is the Competitive Grant Process?

- **Application Process**
- **Review Process**
- **Post-Review Administration Process for Awards and Declines**



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Application Process

- **Download the Application Package**
<http://www.grants.gov>
- **Complete the Mandatory Documents**
 - Looks like forms, but some also need pdf attachments (e.g., project narrative, project summary)
 - Annual and cumulative budgets need to be provided
 - Separate budget forms for partners; budget narrative; required justification for matching; indirect cost limited to 22%
 - Submit all information requested in RFA –
 - Grants.gov is for all federal agencies
 - RFA is for BFRDP.



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Application Process – Contd.

Develop the Logic Model

- diagram that lays out a project
- <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/pdf/LMfront.pdf>

Prepare the project summary

- Crucial - helps reviewers grasp the essence of your proposal



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Application Process – Contd.

- **Write components of the narrative**
 - See RFA – Page 19 - 25
 - Introduction – need for the project, prior experience,
 - Rationale and significance - other projects
 - Approach - activities, outcomes, pitfalls, timeline
 - Target Audience
 - Bibliography
 - Facilities, equipment
 - Management Plan
 - Collaboration
 - Personnel data.



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Application Process – Contd.

- **Write components of the narrative**
 - Budget
 - separate form for each year & cumulative
 - Separate for each partner
 - Indirect cost = 22%
 - Matching – documentation
 - Conflict of Interest list
 - Use application submission checklist – pg 25-27.



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Application Process – Contd.

- **Submit electronically through www.grants.gov**
 - All attachments MUST be submitted in PDF
 - Check all documents after conversion to PDF
 - Attachments must be converted to PDFs prior to attaching to Adobe
 - Submit at least a week ahead
 - Grants.gov customer support:
 - 1-800-518-4726; M-F 7:00 am – 9 pm Eastern Time;
 - Email: support@grants.gov .
 - Get a Case ID # if you are having submission problems.



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Questions # 2

- Are there questions on the application process?



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What is the Pre-Acceptance Review Process?

Grants.gov screening

- Check package for errors before submitting using screen tool in grants.gov
- Expect acknowledgment within 2 days.

CSREES screening

- Screening for Pdf, program priorities, mandatory forms, time periods, duration, budget, page limits, etc.
- Late submission will be rejected without review
- Contact NPL if you do not receive an email within 4 weeks of proposal acceptance by grants.gov or submission deadline
- Keep program updated of any change in email address.



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What is the Competitive Review Process?

- **Review process is designed to be fair and unbiased**
 - Review by peers and other experts
 - provide written and/or verbal evaluations
 - Evaluation factors are very important
 - Only information submitted with application is used
- **Understanding the review process helps with preparation of a successful proposal.**



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Review Process – Contd.

- **Panel Manager and Member Selection:**
 - Active in Research, Education or Outreach on BFR topics
 - Balanced to represent breadth of proposals and applicants:
 - Discipline
 - Geography
 - Institution Size and Type
 - Gender & Ethnicity
 - Representation from CBOs, NGOs, and farmers.
 - Experience in the review process



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Review Process – Contd.

■ **Role of Panelist**

- Review 15-20 proposals
- Provide constructive and unbiased evaluation
- Protect confidentiality
- Avoid Conflicts of Interest

■ **Confidentiality**

- Proposal content and identity of applicant
- Reviewer identity
- Reviews (shared with PD only)
- Panel proceedings



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Review Process – Contd.

Panel Meeting

- Primary reviewer summarizes proposals
- Primary, secondary, tertiary and ad hoc reviews are presented and discussed by entire panel
- Panelists recommend rankings
 - Outstanding, High Priority, Medium Priority, Low Priority, and Do-not-fund
- Prepare panel summaries to be sent with written reviews
- On the Final day – Re-ranking of proposals to assure fairness and consistency



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Review Process – Contd.

- **Recommended Awards**
 - Phone call – about 3 months after submission
 - Request for additional information, CRIS Forms
 - Needs your IMMEDIATE ATTENTION
 - Reviews and panel summaries need to be addressed when program is developed
- **Official Award Notification – Post Award**
 - Follow instructions – about coordinating with other projects, PD meetings, acknowledgments, etc.
 - CRIS Forms need to be updated annually.



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Review Process – Contd.

- **Declined Proposals**
 - Emails - about 4 months after submission
 - Reviews and Panel summaries can be used to improve application for next year
 - For most competitive programs funding rate is approximately 20%
 - Resubmitted proposals that address the reviewer questions are more successful.



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Evaluation Criteria

- Priority - to partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental and community-based organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach
- At least 25 percent of funds awarded to the standard projects for a fiscal year shall support programs and services that address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers or ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers; and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers.



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Evaluation Criteria – pages 30 & 31

- Relevancy
- Technical merit – necessity, innovation, alternatives available, expected outcome, sustainability beyond grant period
- Probability of success
- Expertise and track record of 1 or more applicants
- Adequacy of personnel, facilities, equipment
- Adequacy of management plans.



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Evaluation Criteria – pages 30 & 31 for different part of the grant

- Organizational Effectiveness in Designing and Operating an Electronic Library of Beginning Farmer and Rancher Education Programs and Materials



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Question # 3

- Are there questions on the application review process?



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Elements Common To Successful Proposals

- Well written, succinct and logical
- Has all the information requested – letters, documentation of matching, management plan, etc.
- Includes thorough review of other projects
- Addresses important problem – target audience
- Innovative approach
- Well designed and detailed plan of identifying, recruiting and delivering education
- If successful, would have a big impact on farming
- Strong management plan



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Common Proposal Criticisms

- Missing forms; not in pdf; matching not documented; etc.
- Poorly written and presented
- Too vague and unfocused
- PD lacks necessary experience/expertise
- Insufficient review of other projects
- Insufficient justification for project
- Can not be completed in time frame
- Lacks letters from consultants, partners, etc.
- Target audience not identified, justified, no prior experience serving this audience, etc.
- Weak management plan
- Unlikely to have an impact.



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Question #4

- General questions and comments:
 - Regarding FY 2009 application???
 - Stakeholder input on the FY 2010 RFA is always accepted and can be emailed to the National Program Leaders
 - Please check website for regular updates:
<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/beginningfarmerandrancher.cfm>



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Thank you

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Contact Information for Grants.gov

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