

Regional Aquaculture Center Program

FY 2008 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: July 1, 2008

U.S. Department of Agriculture



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

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

REGIONAL AQUACULTURE CENTER PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under **10.200**

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **July 1, 2008** (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 (6) months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and 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. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy, Oversight, and Funds Management 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 Regional Aquaculture Center Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the Regional Aquaculture Center Program for fiscal year (FY) 2008 to fund the Regional Aquaculture Center program as authorized under 7 U.S.C. 3322(d). The amount available for support of this program in FY 2008 is approximately \$3.6 million.

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

PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The Regional Aquaculture Center (RAC) Program is authorized under 7 U.S.C. 3322(d). The Regional Aquaculture Centers will provide for aquaculture-related research, development, and demonstration projects having a national or regional application as specified in subsection (b). Five regional centers are authorized for the performance of aquaculture-related research, extension education, and demonstration projects. The aquaculture research, development, and demonstration centers established shall be geographically located so that they are representative of the regional aquaculture opportunities in the United States.

Five Regional Aquaculture Centers (Center) were established in 1986. The mission of the Centers is to provide strong aquaculture research and extension programs to enhance the viability, profitability, and environmental compatibility of commercial aquaculture production in the United States to benefit consumers, producers, and the American economy. The Centers are regionally located administrative centers that are part of a national effort of cooperative and collaborative research and extension programming that addresses the critical needs of the aquaculture industry.

As used here, a “Center” refers to an administrative center. Centers will facilitate administration and implementation of cooperative regional research and extension educational programs in aquaculture. Centers will serve as focal points to assess needs, establish priorities, and to implement regional research and extension educational programs in aquaculture.

The Centers provide leadership and administrative support for planning, development, implementation, and performance tracking of multi-state research and extension programs targeted at the critical needs of the industry in each region. The Centers also ensure the relevancy, quality, and performance of these programs and that research findings and technologies are delivered to end-users through strong extension educational programs. The CSREES-funded Centers, linked to the National Aquaculture Centers of the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), serve as the focal points for USDA’s aquaculture research, technology, and extension programs.

Each Center consists of a Board of Directors (Board), a Director, an Industry Advisory Council (IAC), and a Technical Committee (TC). Regional research and extension needs are identified and prioritized by the IAC, reviewed for technical feasibility by the TC, and are approved by the Board. The Center then solicits proposals addressing these critical needs. All projects funded by the Centers must address the needs of two or more states or Territories and must be effectively planned and implemented on a regional level. Multi-state proposals are developed by teams of scientists and extension specialists within the region. Each proposal contains the project outline, including goals and objectives, methodologies, budgets, budget narrative, project leaders, participating institutions, subcontracts, and time frames for completion. Proposals are submitted to the Center and reviewed by the TC and IAC using a scientific peer-review, competitive

process. Proposals recommended for funding are then presented to the Board for final approval and inclusion in the Center's annual Plan of Work (POW).

Each year, CSREES administers the Regional Aquaculture Center Program through directed, Congressional appropriations. CSREES solicits from each of the five (5) Centers, a grant application to administer competitively the Center program in their respective regions. A portion of the funding is used to provide administrative and staff support for program and project development. The remainder of the funding is used to support research and extension projects administered by the Centers. The grant application contains the administrative and project development components of the program. The remaining funds will be used to fund regional research, education, and extension projects. Projects funded through the Centers should be multi-state and multi-institutional projects and funded through subcontracts administered by the Centers. All proposals funded by the Centers are critically reviewed by CSREES prior to release of funds. Each Center submits an annual accomplishment report to CSREES. Reports include a description of progress in meeting stated regional goals and project objectives.

The five (5) Centers are currently located at the following institutions:

The University of Maryland-College Park serves as the host for the Northeastern Regional Aquaculture Center (NRAC). NRAC serves Washington, DC and the following twelve states in the Northeastern Region: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia.

Michigan State University serves as the host for the North Central Regional Aquaculture Center (NCRAC) Program. NCRAC serves the twelve states in the North Central Region including: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

The Oceanic Institute serves as the host for the Center for Tropical and Subtropical Aquaculture (CTSA). CTSA administers the center program for Hawaii and the American Insular Pacific region.

Mississippi State University serves as the host for the Southern Regional Aquaculture Center (SRAC). SRAC administers aquaculture research and extension programs in thirteen states and two territories including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Virginia. The Administrative Office is located at the Delta Research and Extension Center in Stoneville, Mississippi.

The University of Washington serves as the host for the Western Regional Aquaculture Center (WRAC). WRAC administers aquaculture research and extension programs in twelve western states including Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

The RAC must have: 1) demonstrated commitment and competency in aquaculture research and extension; 2) the ability to provide broad programmatic leadership for regional research and

extension activities administered by the Center; 3) demonstrated competency in grant and subcontract management; and 4) the ability and willingness to provide administrative support for the Center.

National Coordinating Council: The National Coordinating Council (NCC) is composed of Directors of the Centers and the USDA National Program Leaders for Aquaculture. The NCC provides a mechanism to enhance inter-regional cooperation and collaboration and improve linkages to other aquaculture programs across the Federal government.

B. Purpose and Priorities

Applications are being solicited for the Regional Aquaculture Center Program, Section 1475 from each of the five Centers to fund priority research, education, and extension projects in their respective regions that will support the development of a globally competitive U.S. aquaculture industry to: 1) improve the efficiency of U.S. aquaculture production; 2) improve aquaculture production systems; 3) improve the sustainability and environmental compatibility of aquaculture production; 4) ensure and improve the quality, safety, and variety of aquaculture products for consumers; 5) improve the marketing of U.S. aquaculture products; and 6) improve information dissemination, technology transfer, and access to global information and technology in aquaculture.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

The total amount of funds available is approximately **\$3.6** million in FY 2008 for project periods up to three (3) years in length.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2008, only **new** applications are to be submitted in response to this request for applications (RFA). Proposals are to be for three (3) years duration. Please prepare a proposed budget for each of the three (3) years, including a budget justification. The cumulative budget page must also be submitted.

C. – Reserved.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

In accordance with 7 U.S.C. 3322(d), grant applications are requested from institutions housing the respective Administrative Centers identified in PART I(A). Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

CSREES does not require cost-share or matching support for the Regional Aquaculture Center Program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to CSREES in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the Project Director (PD/PI) first contact an Authorized Representative (AR), also referred to as an Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR), to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AOR should see http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. Download and install PureEdge Viewer, a small, free program that provides access to the grant application. See http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#pureedge.
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on “**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions**,” enter the funding opportunity number [USDA-CSREES-OP-001545] in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the 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 assistance is needed to access the application package (e.g., downloading or navigating PureEdge forms, using PureEdge with a Macintosh computer), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

- Grants.gov customer support
Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726
Business Hours: M-F 7:00 am – 9 pm Eastern Standard Time
Email: support@grants.gov

See <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Parts V and VI of the document entitled “[A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.](#)” This guide is part of the corresponding 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 there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

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](#)” on (http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#pdf_conversion_programs).

1. R&R Other Project Information Form

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. Project Summary/Abstract (Field 6. on the Form). The summary should include the relevance of the project to the goals of the RAC program.

b. Project Narrative (Field 7. on the Form).

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative (**formerly Project Description**) must include all of the following:

a. **Introduction:** A clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed activities should be included. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities which substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed

significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project should be included. In addition, this section should include in-depth information on the following, when applicable:

- (1) Estimates of the magnitude of the issues and their relevance to stakeholders and to ongoing State-Federal food and agricultural research, education and extension programs.
- (2) Role of the stakeholders in problem identification, planning, and implementation and evaluation, as appropriate.
- (3) Reasons for having the work performed at the proposing institution.

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

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

- (1) A description of stakeholder involvement in problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation;
- (2) A description of the proposed project activities in the sequence in which it is planned to carry them out;
- (3) Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project;
- (4) Kinds of results expected;
- (5) Means by which extension and education activities will be evaluated;
- (6) Means by which data will be analyzed or interpreted;
- (7) Details of plans to communicate results to stakeholders and the public;
- (8) Pitfalls that might be encountered; and
- (9) Limitations to proposed procedures.

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

Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the page limit.

2. 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.

3. R&R Personal Data – As noted in Part V.5., the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. **PLEASE DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF PROJECT DIRECTOR / PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**

4. 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.

CSREES does not require cost-share or matching support for the Regional Aquaculture Center Program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process.

5. 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. Program Code (Field 2. on the Form). Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “**Aquaculture Centers, section 1475**”) and the program code (i.e., enter “**CA**”).
- b. Conflict of Interest List (Field 8. on the Form). A conflict of interest list is not required under this RFA. Do not complete and submit a conflict of interest list.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on **July 1, 2008** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

Correspondence regarding submitted applications will be sent using e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received correspondence **from CSREES** regarding a submitted application within 30 days of submission of the application, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application.

Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.

D. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Costs

Pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 3319, **indirect costs and tuition remission are not allowable** and no funds will be approved for this purpose.

2. Building Construction or Renovation

Funds made available for the operation of regional centers may be used for the rehabilitation of existing buildings or facilities to house such centers, but may not be used for the construction or acquisition of new buildings or facilities.

E. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.”

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

All Regional Aquaculture Centers research and extension aquaculture project proposals and POW will be reviewed by the CSREES National Aquaculture Program staff for relevancy, scientific merit, research rationale and methodology, suitability of budget requests and justifications, performance reports, submission of required documentation, and relevance to the USDA Aquaculture Program and CSREES’ mission. Centers are required to submit annual accomplishment reports to CSREES. Reports should include a description of progress in meeting stated regional goals and objectives, an analysis of program strengths and opportunities in meeting priorities in the National Aquaculture Research and Technology Development Plan, and steps to be taken, if any, to strengthen program planning and execution.

B. through D. – Reserved.

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Administrative grant: The initial CSREES-approved funding request will obligate the entire amount and release those costs related to and allowed for the administration of the Regional Aquaculture Center Program. In cases where the POW is not submitted with the initial proposal, funds will be withheld, pending receipt and approval of the POW.

Plans of Work: An annual POW must be submitted to CSREES National Aquaculture Program staff outlining information relative to individual projects and should include: Title; Project Duration; Funding Requested by Subcontracting Institution; Funding Requested by Individual Grant Number; Program Development Process; Executive Summary; Project Work Group; Background and Project Justification; Related Current and Previous Work; Project Goals and Specific Objectives; Work Statement and Procedures; Timetable; Facilities by Institution; Extension and Outreach Components; Literature Cited; Budget Pages by Institution; Budget Narrative by Institution; One-page Vitas of Participating Collaborators; and the Role of Participating Collaborators.

All additional information and forms required in the initial grant application relative to subcontracts made to fund regional Plans of Work are required to be submitted to and retained by the host institution.

B. – Reserved.

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. 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 (Non-procurement) and 7 CFR Part 3021—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 non-profit 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 initial project information and annual and summary reports to CSREES' Current Research Information System (CRIS). The CRIS database contains narrative project information, progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparing and submitting of project documentation will be provided to the applicant by the agency contact. Documentation must be submitted to CRIS before CSREES funds will be released. Project reports will be requested by the CRIS office when required. For more information about CRIS, visit <http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Gary Jensen, National Program Leader-Aquaculture, Animal Section, Plant and Animal Systems, USDA, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; Mail Stop 2220, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-2220; telephone: (202) 401-6802; fax: (202) 401-6156; e-mail: gjensen@csrees.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. – Reserved.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

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

2. Changes in Project Plans

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved

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

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

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

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

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

f. Changes in Approved Budget: 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 an award, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of 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. – Reserved.