First Nationwide Formula Grants Teleconference

Sponsored by the Office of Extramural Programs, CSREES/USDA

Wednesday, February 27, 2008
3:00 pm to 4:30 pm

Welcome and Introductions

- CSREES/USDA Attendees:
  - Office of Extramural Programs
    - Andrea Brandon, Deputy Administrator, Office of Extramural Programs
    - Shawn Bennett, eGrants Liaison
    - Ellen Danus, Chief, Policy, Oversight, and Funds Management Branch
    - Edward Nwaba, Leader, Oversight Section
    - Wanda Edwards, Leader, Funds Management Section
    - Barry Sims, Staff Accountant (Formula)
  - Information Systems and Technology Management
    - Jason Hitchcock, Director, Information Policy, Planning, and Training

Background

- Need for Nationwide Teleconferences
  - Increasing Focus on Accountability
  - Need for Updated Administrative Manuals (i.e., Policies and Procedures)

Background

- Accountability Requirements
  - Recent USDA Office of Inspector (OIG) Audits
    - Focus on Programmatic Oversight
    - Focus on Financial and Administrative Monitoring and Oversight

Background

- Accountability Requirements
  - Improper Payments Information Act of 2002
    - Required Annual IPIA Reviews by OEP Oversight Staff
      - Outcome of a USDA OIG Audit

Background

- Accountability Requirements
  - Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA)
    - All Federal agencies are required to report to the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) all Federal assistance awards that were made within the last 30 days.
      - DUNS Number and other data must be accurate.
    - Info available on a publicly-accessible website (www.usaspending.gov)

Background

- Accountability Requirements
  - OMB Circular A-123 Requirements
    - Annual Assessment of CSREES Internal Controls
      - Grants Cycle
      - Annual Assurance Statement by the USDA OCFO
      - Monthly Corrective Action Plans for any deficiencies

Background

- Accountability Requirements
  - Lean Six Sigma Effort led by the USDA Office of the Chief Financial Officer
    - Drive to standardize and streamline Federal assistance processes within USDA
    - Drive to provide accurate, appropriate, and timely USDA Annual Financial Statements

Background

- Need for Updated Administrative Manuals
  - Incorporate legislative changes
  - Reflect government-wide and USDA-wide Federal assistance regulations and policies
  - Solicit public comments on program-specific (administrative provisions)
  - Reflect current business practices (e.g., electronic)

Background

- Need for Updated Administrative Manuals
  - Need for clear, consistent policies and procedures
    - Critical for both program and administrative staffs due to retirements and staff turnovers
    - Need to refer to "Formula Funds" as "Formula Grants"
    - Minimize disallowed costs identified during audits

Status Of Formula Grant Policies and Procedures

- Extension Formula Grants
  - Administrative Manual for Cooperative Extension Work and Extension Formula Grant Terms and Conditions
    - Draft vetted within the Agency (comment period closed)
    - Manual will be vetted for a 60-day period (4/1/2008 – 5/31/2008) with Partnership

Status Of Formula Grant Policies and Procedures

- **Research Formula Grants**
  - **Administrative Manual for McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Research Program**
    - Draft vetted within the Agency (comment period closed)
    - Manual will be vetted for a 60-day period (4/1/2008 – 5/31/2008) with Partnership

Status Of Formula Grant Policies and Procedures

- **Administrative Guidance for Multistate and Integrated Activities**
  - Discussed at next teleconference (March 26, 2008; 3:00 – 4:30 pm)

Administration of the FY 2008 Formula Grants

- Status of FY 2008 Funding Authorizations

- Implementation of Grants.gov for all Formula Grant Programs

- Publication of Formula Grant Opportunities

- Formula Grant Policy Questions

Administration of the FY 2008 Formula Grants

- Status of Funding Authorizations:
  - If all requirements are met (excluding the eGrants requirements):
    - First and second quarters will be released based on an estimate
    - Third quarter will be released based on the actual allocation
  - Fourth quarter will be released based on submission and approval of all requirements including the eGrants requirements (SF-424-M pkg)

Administration of the FY 2008 Formula Grants

- **Implementation of Grants.gov for all Formula Grant Programs**
  - Ensures accurate FFATA reporting
  - Will eliminate paper-based business processes (e.g., various certification forms via fax or email)
  - Will enable more timely release of funds
  - Includes the annual certification statement regarding compliance with applicable grant regulations and policies

Administration of the FY 2008 Formula Grants

- Publication of Formula Grant Opportunities (FGOs)
  - Only available under apply section of Grants.gov
  - Will include final formula allocation amounts
  - Will only require information not collected through POW, CRIS, or other program reporting requirements

Administration of the FY 2008 Formula Grants

- Publication of Formula Grant Opportunities (FGOs)
  - Timeline
    - March 14, 2008: FGOs posted to Grants.gov
    - March 26, 2008: Instructional Teleconference (3:00 – 4:30 pm EST)
    - April 9, 2008: Instructional Teleconference (3:00 – 4:30 pm EST)
    - April 22, 2008: SF-424M pkgs due via Grants.gov
    - June 2, 2008: Institutions are notified that applications are approved

Administration of the FY 2008 Formula Grants

- Formula Section of the CSREES web site is being redesigned and updated.

- Formula Policy Questions
  - Separate mailbox established at formulagrantquestions@csrees.usda.gov
  - Barry Sims is the Agency contact for these questions.

Grants.gov Implementation for Formula Grants

- Need to contact Authorized Representative (AR)

- Similar process as the McIntire-Stennis pilot conducted in FY 2007

- Forms will be submitted using Adobe versus Pure-Edge
  - Need Adobe version 8.1.1 or 8.2
  - Most technical inforamtion available via Grants.gov

Grants.gov Implementation for Formula Grants

- Components of the SF-424M:
  - Application Form (Cover Page with certification) (required for all programs)
  - CSREES Supplemental Information Form (required for all programs)
  - Key Contacts Form (required for all programs)
  - Budget Information (not required for all programs)

2008 CSREES Administrative Officers' Conference (May 4-8, 2008)

- Separate track for the administration of the formula grants
  - Will discuss policies and procedures in detail
  - Need institutional speakers for sessions:
    - Effort Reporting (2)
    - State Administration of Extension Funds (3)
    - State Administration of Research Funds (3)
    - Email edanus@csrees.usda.gov

Next Nationwide Formula Grants Teleconference

- Wednesday, March 26, 2008
- 3:00 – 4:30 pm EST
- Call 888-437-1458
- Passcode is 3863985
- Agenda Suggestions? Please email Barry Sims at bsims@csrees.usda.gov

Any Questions

- Thank you for your participation this afternoon