

Renewable Resources Extension Act – National Focus Fund Projects

FY 2008 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: July 28, 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**

**RENEWABLE RESOURCES EXTENSION ACT – NATIONAL FOCUS FUND
PROJECTS**

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under **10.500**.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **July 28, 2008** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). **Electronic submission via Grants.gov is required for this program.** 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.

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 **Renewable Resources Extension Act-National Focus Fund Projects** RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES announces the availability of grant funds and requests applications for the **Renewable Resources Extension Act-National Focus Fund Projects (RREA-NFF)** for fiscal year (FY) 2008 to provide for expanded and comprehensive extension programs for forest and rangeland renewable resources programs at a national, regional, or multi-institutional scale. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2008 is approximately \$297,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for **RREA-NFF** projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a

RREA-NFF grant. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-306, 92 Stat. 349, 16 U.S.C. 1671 et seq.) provides for an expanded and comprehensive extension program for forest and rangeland renewable resources. The majority of the appropriated funds are distributed to eligible institutions based on a formula that considers the geographic extent, ecosystem productivity, economic contribution, and population for each state.

Since FY 2002, a small amount of these funds have been used to fund National Focus Fund Projects which have served to expand comprehensive extension programs for forest and rangeland renewable resources on a national, regional, or multi-institutional scale through better program coordination, innovative technologies, and extension models that can be easily duplicated.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the grant program is to provide funds for projects that: (1) develop and implement eXtension Communities of Practice (CoP); (2) have national or regional relevancy; or (3) develop new and innovative projects that can be replicated at other institutions.

Applications are being solicited for the **RREA-NFF** under the following *emphasis areas*:

eXtension Communities of Practice

General Information - A Community of Practice (CoP) is a virtual network of subject-matter content providers consisting of faculty, professional and para-professional staff, county educators, industry experts and government agency representatives who share knowledge or competence in a specific content area who are willing to work together over an extended period of time. The CoP shares knowledge gained in the form of educational products, programs and electronic interactions with customers (Community of Interest). The CoP will organize and work in accordance with established eXtension CoP processes and procedures as described at http://about.extension.org/wiki/RREA_CoP_Information and utilize the established formats for the eXtension website. The RREA-NFF will provide initial support for development of the CoP and its associated products and services. Additional funds may be made available through non-federal sources as described at: http://about.extension.org/wiki/RREA_CoP_Information

The eXtension Project Team will provide communication and technology support services to the CoP. The RREA-NFF funds may be used to support organization and development of the CoP. The CoP is expected to become “eXtension Certified” during the first 18 months of the project period. Progress reports will be due every six (6) months. CSREES will utilize the reports to monitor progress toward certification. Proposals for the following two Communities of Practice are requested:

**1) eXtension Community of Practice - (Rangeland Stewardship and Health):
Maximum Award of \$85,000**

Rangelands are of significant ecological, social and economic importance, representing approximately half of the terrestrial global landscape. Despite their importance and considerable diversity, U.S. rangelands are experiencing unprecedented rates of loss from the interaction of changing social attitudes, land use and technologies, altered fire regimes, invasive species, and climate change that disrupt the flow of ecosystem services. Sustaining rangeland ecosystems, resources and associated stakeholders requires effective communication of rangeland information and appropriate education to a variety of audiences. The Rangeland Stewardship and Health eXtension Community of Practice (CoP) is intended to fill some of the information and education gaps that exist. PROJECT PERIOD: 24 months.

2) eXtension Community of Practice – (Forest-Based Bioenergy): Maximum Award of \$85,000

The national dialogue about renewable energy; the threats to the nation’s forest from drought, insects and disease, and wildfire; the opportunity to vitalize rural economies through new industries and jobs; and the need for private forestlands to provide an economic return to the owners; all converge on the topic of forest-based bioenergy. There are many unanswered questions and much existing but un-transferred information regarding feedstock sustainability, harvesting, transportation and markets. PROJECT PERIOD: 24 months.

National Network Projects

1) Forest Resource Education for Municipal Officials (FREMO): Maximum Award of \$50,000

The conversion of forests to other land uses, the isolation of existing tracts of forestland (fragmentation), and the division of single-owner large tracts into numerous small ownerships (parcelization) all have deleterious effects on the economic and ecological viability of forest resources. To expand the understanding of public officials, continued development of the FREMO program is desired. This includes: providing innovative forestry training and education workshops for the existing network of Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) coordinators; developing forestry education materials and programs for NEMO coordinators and extension professionals; and planning and conducting pilot projects that will help to advance the further development of the FREMO program. Understanding and conveying the impacts of these forest changes requires the integration of several areas of work including, but not limited to: forest ecology, geospatial technology, economics, land use planning, community development and public policy. PROJECT PERIOD: 24 months.

**2) National Web-Based Learning Center for Forest and Rangeland Owners:
Maximum Award of \$77,000**

The objective is to continue the development, expansion, marketing and evaluation of a web-based learning center focused on the needs of forest and rangeland owners and managers. The learning center's format and functionality must incorporate principles and guidelines for distance teaching and learning. An advisory group should be utilized to develop overall guidance, policy and content for the learning center. A method for developing learning modules should be developed in such a way as to acquire innovative and relevant learning materials that meet the needs of the intended audience. The learning center must also develop, promote, and make available teaching materials that may be used by extension and other educators. PROJECT PERIOD: 24 months.

C. Program Area Description

Successful RREA-NNF applications will:

- Clearly document the experience level of key personnel working within a comprehensive extension program for forest and rangeland renewable resources on a national, regional, or multi-institutional scale;
- Demonstrate the ability to participate in a comprehensive nationally coordinated effort;
- Demonstrate the capacity to conduct efficient and successful forest and rangeland extension programs;
- Demonstrate the ability to develop new technologies and innovations that improve extension services related to forest and rangeland ecosystems; and
- Demonstrate the ability to provide information to better inform policy makers in developing the most equitable multi-state and/or regional strategies for forest and rangeland enhancement.

Project Directors are expected to attend and present their projects as submitted papers at the 2010 Biennial Conference of the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (ANREP). Reasonable travel expenses relative to participating in the 2010 Biennial ANREP Conference may be claimed as part of the project budget.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

Approximately \$297,000 is available in FY 2008 to support RREA-NFF awards. There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or make a specific number of awards.

CSREES intends to make up to four awards, with no more than one award in each of the four program areas found in Part I.B. of this announcement.

B. Type of Applications

In FY 2008, applications may be submitted to the RREA-NFF Program as one of the following requests:

(1) New Application (eXtension Communities of Practice and National Network Projects).

These are project applications that have not been previously submitted to the RREA-NFF Program. New applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

(2) Renewal Application (National Network Projects). 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). Renewal applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

The start date for all projects will be September 1, 2008.

C. Project Types

The following are CSREES funding estimates for FY 2008, number of awards anticipated, maximum project budgets, and acceptable project periods for the RREA-NFF program area.

Program Area	Funding Estimate FY 2008	Number of Awards Anticipated FY 2008	Maximum Project Budget	Acceptable Project Period
RREA-NFF Projects – eXtension Communities of Practice	\$170,000	1 - 2	\$85,000	24 months
RREA-NFF Projects – National Network Projects	\$127,000	1 - 2	\$50,000 or \$77,000	24 months

Applications that include requests for annual project budgets in excess of the maximum project budgets established above, or propose project periods outside the acceptable project periods above, for the applicable Program Area, will be at risk of being excluded from CSREES review.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline will result in CSREES returning the application without review or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude CSREES from making an award.

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 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 PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR), (also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.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 Pure Edge 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-001665** 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 Pure Edge forms, using Pure Edge 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: Monday through Friday 7:00 am – 9:00 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 a discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III, section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM CSREES REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from CSREES review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business 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 “Convert Documents to PDF” on <http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>.

1. 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.

2. 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 also include the relevance of the project to the goals of the RREA-NFF program, (Part I.B).

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

PLEASE NOTE: This Project Narrative shall not exceed 10 pages of written text and up to 5 additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (15 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. For each project type, the Project Narrative must include all of the following:

eXtension Communities of Practice

a. CoP lead contact information including name, title, eXtension ID, address, e-mail, telephone numbers, and other contact details. The CoP lead contact must be a land grant faculty member or professional staff with an Extension appointment.

b. List of CoP Core Leadership Members, titles, institutions or business affiliation and e-mail addresses and a description of how the leadership team was formed. Please include the name and contact information of the CoP Administrative Advisor. It is strongly suggested that each proposed CoP identify a partnership with a Land Grant Communications unit that will work with the CoP on development and execution of a marketing plan for the CoP, plus have a representative on the CoP Leadership Team.

c. Description of the proposed Community of Practice (CoP), including the plan to make the CoP national in scope and increase total CoP membership. Please include CoP leadership and management plan, anticipated number of face-to-face, audio and/or Web meetings planned and methods to achieve the CoP's continued productivity.

d. Description of the Community of Interest (CoI) to be served and methods the CoP will use to engage the CoI with educational products and programs.

e. Scope of Work for the proposed CoP from September 1, 2008 through August 31, 2010. This Scope of Work must include:

1. Projected number of published Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) (minimum of 100)
2. Plans to develop a protocol for "Ask the Expert" answers
3. Curriculum outline for content
4. Projected number of basic information pages (minimum of 250)
5. Other content.

f. Applicants should provide an outline indicating how the CoP is expected to become "eXtension Certified" during the first 18 months of the project period and the anticipated date of CoP certification and inclusion in [eXtension public site](#) (public release) should be stated.

g. Additional resources that will be available to this proposed CoP at the recipient institution, including but not limited to: information technology hardware, software and staff; sufficient office space; communications technologies such as webinar video and audio; and other resources that the recipient will provide. This section should also describe the plans for sustaining the CoP after the project period has ended.

National Network Projects

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 forest and rangeland extension programs.
- (2) Role of the stakeholders in problem identification, planning, 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 the proposed project activities in the sequence in which it is planned to carry them out;
2. Techniques to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project;
3. Kinds of results expected;
4. Means by which extension activities will be evaluated;
5. Means by which data will be analyzed or interpreted;
6. Pitfalls that might be encountered; and
7. Limitations to proposed procedures.

d. Project Timetable: The proposal should outline all important phases as a function of time, for the entire project.

e. Progress Report: See CSREES Supplemental Information (Part IV.6) for further details regarding page limitation.

3. 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.

4. R&R Personal Data – As noted in Part V.5. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. If completing the information, **do not enter any data in the field requesting the social security number.**

5. 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.

Project Directors are expected to attend and present their projects as submitted papers at the 2010 Biennial Conference of the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (ANREP). Reasonable travel expenses relative to participating in the 2010 Biennial ANREP Conference may be claimed as part of the project budget.

6. CSREES Supplemental Information Form

a. Program Code. (Field 2. on the Form). Enter the appropriate program code name (i.e., enter “**Renewable Resource**”) and the Program Code (i.e., enter “**ME**”).

b. Conflict of Interest List. (Field 8. on the Form). A conflict of interest list is required under this program.

c. Cooperation and Institutional Units Involved: (Field 11 on the Form). 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.

d. Progress Report: (Field 11 on the Form). For renewal applications (as defined in Part II.B.), a progress report must be included within the page limitation set for the Project Narrative portion of the application.

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 28, 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

Pursuant to Section 1473 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 3319, indirect costs and tuition remission are not allowable and no funds will be approved for this purpose.

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

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.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

For eXtension Communities of Practice:

1. (15 pts) Qualifications of Project Personnel
 - The degree to which: the key personnel have sufficient experience to lead the proposed project; and
 - The identification of an appropriate contingent of Core Leadership Members, including a university-based Administrative Advisor and a CSREES Liaison who will provide timely and relevant information about eXtension processes and procedures; and all pertinent contact information for the leadership team.
2. (20 pts) Description and Operation of the Community of Practice
 - The adequacy of the plan to make the CoP national in scope and to increase total CoP membership; and
 - A management plan for the CoP that describes the approach to organizing and managing the Community of Practice.
3. (20 pts) Description of the Community of Interest
 - Evidence of the identification of the appropriate Community of Interest to be served by the CoP and justification for its selection; and
 - Adequacy of plans to engage the CoI with the educational products and programs.

4. (30 pts) Scope of Work
 - Covers the timeframe of September 1, 2008 through August 31, 2010; and
 - Contains sufficient detail for accomplishing all work products.
5. (10 pts) Resources – Description of additional resources available to this proposed CoP
6. (5 pts) CoP Sustainability – Adequate description of plans for sustaining the CoP after the funding period.

For *National Network Projects*:

1. (35 pts.) Project Merit
 - Proposed objectives and outcomes are clearly described, adequate and appropriate;
 - Proposed approach, procedures, or methodologies are innovative, original, clearly defined and feasible; and
 - Expected outcomes are clearly stated, measurable and achievable.
2. (35 pts.) Project Relevance
 - Adequacy of proposal response to items required in the Project Narrative;
 - Stakeholders and partners play an active role in setting project direction;
 - Planning and implementing methods for evaluating success of project activities and documenting potential impact against measurable short and mid-term outcomes; and
 - Demonstration of feasibility through preliminary and current data.
3. (30pts.) Qualifications of Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities, and Project Management
 - Roles of key personnel are clearly defined;
 - Key personnel have sufficient expertise to complete the proposed project;
 - Extensive, documented experience in developing, leading, managing and evaluating nationally coordinated projects involving multiple institutions and disciplines, as applicable; and
 - Evidence of institutional capacity, competence and experience in the proposed area of work is provided.

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 and individuals, 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, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

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 award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has issued an award 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 award 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 award is issued;
- (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 award; and

(11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

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 Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and 7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non-profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

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 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>.

Annually, each grantee must submit a CRIS AD-421 Progress Report (OMB No. 0524-0042) and a one-page “popular” accomplishment report, prepared in Word or PDF format. The format and guidelines regarding the content of the popular report will be provided by the RREA Program Managers to the Project Directors of funded projects.

Additionally, when the project is complete, the grantee is required to submit a Final Technical Report to the CSREES National Program Leaders, Renewable Resources Extension Act. The Final Technical Report should summarize all work conducted and detail the outcomes, accomplishments and outputs of the funded project. This report should not exceed 15 single-spaced, typed pages.

Project Directors are expected to attend and present their projects as submitted papers at the 2010 Biennial Conference of the Association of Natural Resources Extension Professionals (ANREP). Reasonable travel expenses relative to participating in the 2010 Biennial ANREP Conference may be claimed as part of the project budget.

Additional annual reports may be requested to provide timely information for the Secretary of Agriculture and Congress. The agency contact below will request additional reports as needed.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Eric R. Norland, National Program Leader, Forest Resource Management; Natural Resources and Environment Unit; Telephone: (202) 401-5971; E-mail: enorland@csrees.usda.gov (for forest resource projects); Dr. James Dobrowolski, National Program Leader, Rangeland and Grassland Ecosystems; Natural Resources and Environment Unit; Telephone: (202) 401-5016; E-mail: jdobrowolski@csrees.usda.gov (for rangeland resource projects); or Dr. Daniel Cassidy, Program Specialist, Natural Resources and Environment Unit; Telephone: (202) 401-6444; E-mail: dcassidy@csrees.usda.gov

Mailing Address for all above contacts : Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2210; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2210
Fax: (202) 401-1706

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 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. Definitions

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

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.

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.

Authorized Representative means the president or chief executive officer of the applicant organization or the official, designated by the president or chief executive officer of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

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

Cash contributions means the applicant's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the applicant by non-Federal third parties.

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Education means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and other related matters such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies.

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.

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

Matching means that portion of allowable project costs not borne by the Federal Government, including the value of in-kind contributions.

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 proposal.

Popular Report means a one-page synopsis of program accomplishments written for the general public. It contains the institutions' logos, photographs of program activities, quotations from program participants, and contact information for the Project Director. The report is submitted in Word or .pdf format to the RREA Program Managers.

Project Director means the single individual designated by the grantee in the grant application and approved by the Secretary who is responsible for the direction and management of the project, also known as a principal investigator for research activities.

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer as defined above.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by a grant award.

Project period means the period, as stated in the award document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

Range embraces rangelands and also many forest lands which support an understory or periodic cover of herbaceous or shrubby vegetation amenable to certain range management principles or practices.

Rangeland is land on which the native vegetation (climax or natural potential) is predominantly grasses, grass-like plants, forbs or shrubs suitable for grazing or browsing use. Rangelands include natural grassland, savannas, most deserts, tundra, alpine plant communities, coastal marshes, wet meadows and introduced plant communities managed like Rangeland.

Research activity means a scientific investigation or inquiry resulting in the generation of knowledge.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.