

environmental sciences in the following categories: Single investigators or coinvestigators in the same disciplines; teams of researchers from different disciplines; multidisciplinary teams for long-term applied research problems; multidisciplinary teams whose research has the eventual goal of technology transfer; institutions for improvement of research, development, technology transfer and education capacity through the acquisition of special research equipment and improvement of teaching and education, including fellowships; single investigators or coinvestigators who are beginning their research careers; and, faculty of small and mid-sized institutions not previously successful in obtaining competitive grants under this subsection. The National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program (NRICGP) Board of Directors was established by the Assistant Secretary for Science and Education to advise the Assistant Secretary on policy issues concerning NRICGP. The Board is comprised of the Assistant Secretary for Science and Education; the Administrators of the Cooperative State Research Service, the Agricultural Research Service, the Extension Service, and the Economic Research Service; the Deputy Chief for Research of the Forest Service; the Chief Scientist of the NRICGP; and the Director of the National Agricultural Library. Any determinations made by the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences, including recommendations made by the Agricultural Science and Technology Review Board, and the National Agricultural Research and Extension Users Advisory Board, will be taken into consideration by the Board in recommending policies and priorities for the NRICGP. The advice of other individuals is also encouraged; that advice also is provided to the Board of Directors. The Administrator of CSRS shall determine and announce, through publication of a Notice in such publications as the FEDERAL REGISTER, professional trade journals, agency or program handbooks, the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, or any other appropriate means, high-priority research areas and categories to improve research capabilities for which pro-

posals will be solicited and the extent that funds are available therefor.

(b) The regulations of this part do not apply to grants awarded by the Department of Agriculture under any other authority.

[56 FR 57952, Nov. 14, 1991. Redesignated and amended at 60 FR 63368, 63369, Dec. 8, 1995]

§ 3411.2 Definitions.

As used in this part and in annual program solicitations issued pursuant to this part:

(a) *Administrator* means the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS) and any other officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to whom the authority involved may be delegated.

(b) *Department* means the Department of Agriculture.

(c) *Principal investigator* means a single individual who is responsible for the scientific and technical direction of the project, as designated by the grantee in the grant application and approved by the Administrator.

(d) *Grantee* means the entity designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to whom a grant is awarded under this part.

(e) *Grant* means the award by the Administrator of funds to a grantee to assist in meeting the costs of conducting, for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to establish, discover, elucidate, or confirm information or the underlying mechanisms relating to a research program area identified in the program solicitation; it also means the award by the Administrator of funds to a grantee to strengthen its research capabilities relating to a research program area identified in the program solicitation;

(f) *Project* means the particular activity within the scope of one or more of the research program areas or the categories to improve research capabilities identified in the program solicitation that is supported by a grant under this part.

(g) *Project period* means the total time approved by the Administrator for conducting the proposed project as outlined in an approved grant application.

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

(i) *Awarding official* means the Administrator and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority to issue or modify grant instruments has been delegated.

(j) *Peer review group* means an assembled group of experts or consultants qualified by training and experience to give expert advice on the scientific and technical merit of grant applications or the relevance of those applications to one or more of the research purposes as contained in § 3411.15 of this part.

(k) *Ad hoc reviewers* means experts or consultant qualified by training and experience to render special expert advice, through written evaluations, on the scientific and technical merit of grant applications or the relevance of those applications to one or more of the research purposes contained in § 3411.15 of this part.

(l) *Research* means any systematic study directed toward new or fuller knowledge and understanding of the subject studied.

(1) *Fundamental research*, as referred to annually in the program solicitation, means research that tests scientific hypotheses and provides basic knowledge which allows advances in applied research and from which major conceptual breakthroughs are expected to occur.

(2) *Mission-linked research*, as referred to annually in the program solicitation, means research on specifically identified agricultural problems which, through a continuum of efforts, provides information and technology that may be transferred to users and may relate to a product, practice, or process.

(3) *Multidisciplinary research*, as referred to annually in the program solicitation, means research in which investigators from two or more disciplines are collaborating closely. These collaborations, where appropriate, may integrate the biological, physical, chemical, or social sciences.

(m) *Methodology* means the project approach to be followed and the resources needed to carry out the project.

(n) *Small and mid-sized institution* means an academic institution with a total enrollment of 15,000 or less. An institution in this instance is an organization that possesses a significant degree of academic and administrative autonomy, as specified in the annual program solicitation.

(o) *USDA-EPSCoR States (Experimental Program for Stimulating Competitive Research)* means States which have had a funding level from the USDA NRICGP no higher than the 38th percentile of all States, based on a three-year rolling average, and all United States territories and possessions. A list of eligible States is published annually in the program solicitation.

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§ 3411.3 Eligibility requirements.

(a) Except where otherwise prohibited by law, State agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, Federal agencies, private organizations or corporations, and individuals, shall be eligible to apply for and to receive a competitive grant award under this part, provided that the applicant qualifies as a responsible grantee under the criteria set forth in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) To qualify as responsible, an applicant must meet the following standards as they relate to a particular project:

(1) Adequate financial resources for performance, the necessary experience, organizational and technical qualifications, and facilities, or a firm commitment, arrangement, or ability to obtain some (including by proposed sub-agreements);

(2) Ability to comply with the proposed or required completion schedule for the project;

(3) Satisfactory record of integrity, judgment, and performance, including, in particular, any prior performance under grants and contracts from the Federal government;

(4) Adequate financial management system and audit procedures that provide efficient and effective accountability and control of all funds, property, and other assets; and