

Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program

FY 2008 Request for Applications

LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE: January 10, 2008

APPLICATION DEADLINE: July 2, 2008



U.S. Department of Agriculture



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

***** PLEASE READ *****

A. Electronic Application Submission Required

In FY 2008, Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP) will only accept electronic application submissions through Grants.gov. Be aware that additional time is required to complete the electronic application process. Applications must be submitted via [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by Close of Business (COB) 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, on **July 2, 2008**.

If your institution is new to the electronic grant application process through Grants.gov, you will be required to complete several steps prior to submitting an application. There is a one-time registration process. It can take as much as one month to complete, so it is critical to begin as soon as possible. The “Get Registered” tab on Grants.gov (http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) provides information on registering your institution with Grants.gov and the steps necessary to apply for a grant. A quick reference guide listing these steps is available as a 4-page PDF document at the following website: <http://www.grants.gov/section910/Grants.govRegistrationBrochure.pdf>.

Information about the forms and submission requirements can be found in Part IV of this solicitation.

Helpful Information for Submission	Website Address
Information pertaining to the transition to electronic submission can be found at the CSREES website.	www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic This page will be updated frequently and should be checked for program-specific help.
Applications should be submitted through the Grants.gov website.	To access the electronic application via Grants.gov, go to www.grants.gov , under the “Apply for Grants” heading on the left side of page and click on “Download Grant Application Packages.” Enter the CFDA number 10.225 in the appropriate box to search by Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number.
The CSREES GRANTS.GOV Application Guide provides guidance for completing the forms required by Grants.gov and CSREES. Used in conjunction with the RFA, this guide will assist applicants with most field-specific questions.	Each applicant should use the CSREES document titled, “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov” also known as the “CSREES Application Guide,” that is part of this Request for Application (RFA) package located at Grants.gov . This document provides guidance for completing the required forms at Grants.gov. Applicants should also reference the RFA for

	additional guidance not found in the application guide.
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- Applications must be received at Grants.gov by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, on **July 2, 2008**. **Plan ahead. Do not wait until the last minute to submit your application.**
- Applicants who have problems with their submissions to Grants.gov are encouraged first to call the Grants.gov help desk to resolve any problems. Keep a record of any such correspondence.

For questions related to preparing application content, contact:

Email: electronic@csrees.usda.gov

Phone: 202-401-5048, Business hours are M-F, 7:00 am – 5:00 pm ET, excluding Federal holidays.

For questions related to Grants.gov content, contact:

Email: support@grants.gov

Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726, Business hours are M-F, 7:00 am – 9:00 pm ET, excluding Federal holidays.

Part IV of this RFA provides additional information specific to the CFPCGP application submission. Applicants are advised to refer to this section to determine if specific information is required during the submission of the forms on Grants.gov. If directed by this RFA to provide information that is different from the CSREES Application Guide, the information 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. On the Grants.gov Customer Support webpage (<http://grants.gov/CustomerSupport>) users will find a link to “Convert Documents to PDF” (<http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>).

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

COMMUNITY FOOD PROJECTS COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.225.

DATES: Letters of Intent (LOI) must be received by COB on January 10, 2008 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). LOI received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Invited applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB **July 2, 2008**. Invited applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this 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. Such comments 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. Comments should be submitted as provided for in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy, Oversight, and Funds Management Branch; 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, nor submitting an application.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES requests applications for the Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program (CFPCGP) for fiscal year (FY) 2008 to support: (1) the development of Community Food Projects with a one-time infusion of federal dollars to make such projects self-sustaining; (2) projects that provide Training and Technical Assistance on a nationwide or regional basis to entities interested in developing new Community Food Projects or assisting current grantees; and (3) Planning Projects to assess the food security needs and plan long-term solutions to help ensure food security in communities. CSREES anticipates that the amount available for support of this program in FY 2008 will be approximately 5,000,000.

A two-step process for applying for a CFPCGP grant is required in FY 2008. Eligible applicants must submit a LOI with no more than 750 words. Applicants of acceptable LOI will be invited to submit full applications.

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

Section 25 of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended by Section 4125 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No. 107-171) (7 U.S.C. 2034), authorized a program of federal grants to support the development of Community Food Projects at \$5,000,000 annually through FY 2012. For FY 2008, approximately \$ 5,000,000 million is available for the CFPCGP.

B. Purpose and Priorities

In FY 2008, CSREES intends to solicit applications for and fund Community Food Projects (CFP) awards, Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) awards, and Planning Project (PP) awards. For FY 2008 interested parties **must** submit Letters of Intent (LOI) detailing their interest in a CFP, T&TA, or PP award according to the deadline described in Part IV, A.

The primary objectives of the CFPCGP are to increase the food self-reliance of communities; promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; develop innovative linkages between the public, for-profit, and nonprofit food sectors; and encourage long-term planning activities and comprehensive multi-agency approaches. Projects are intended to bring together stakeholders from the distinct parts of the food system and to foster understanding of national food security trends and how they might improve local food systems.

1. Community Food Projects

The purpose of the CFPs is to support the development of projects with a one-time infusion of federal dollars to make such projects self-sustaining. CFPs should be designed to (1): (A) meet the food needs of low-income people; (B) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (C) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (A) infrastructure improvement and development; (B) planning for long-term solutions; or (C) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

Preference will be given to CFPs designed to: (i) develop connections between two or more sectors of the food system; (ii) support the development of entrepreneurial projects; (iii) develop innovative connections between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors; or (iv) encourage long-term planning activities and multi-system, interagency approaches with collaborations from multiple stakeholders that build the long-term capacity of communities to address the food and agricultural problems of the community, such as food policy councils and food planning associations.

Wherever possible, CFPs should support food systems based on strategies that improve the availability of high-quality locally or regionally sustainably produced foods to low-income people. CFPs should build on these local experiences and encourage innovative long-term efforts. CFPs should be designed to become self-supporting or have a sustainable funding

source. Projects also should have the potential to be replicable models. Examples of previously funded CFPs may be viewed on the Internet in the CSREES Website at http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/food/sri/hunger_sri_awards.html.

And the Food Security Learning Center at:

<http://www.worldhungeryear.org/cfp/>

2. Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) Projects

Potential applicants to the CFPCGP may have outstanding ideas that could address community food security problems, but are reluctant to submit proposals because they may not be familiar with the USDA and other federal agency grant application and administration processes. T&TA Project proposals are being solicited in this RFA that will provide assistance to potential applicants to the program. T&TA Projects are also sought that assist current CFP grantees in order that they may operate their projects more effectively. Organizations that can demonstrate an involvement in community food security issues and programs are strongly encouraged to apply.

Examples of T&TA services offered may include project evaluation, leadership development, or assistance on a particular type of project, such as farm-to-institution methods. **T&TA Projects should be designed to have national and/or regional relevance.** No pilot projects will be considered in this category.

3. Planning Projects

The purpose of a Planning Project (PP) is to complete an assessment and to plan activities toward the improvement of community food security. PPs are to focus on a defined community and describe in detail the goals and objectives of the planning activity. The focus of the PP should be toward planning for the goals of the Community Food Projects program, which (1): (A) meet the food needs of low-income people; (B) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (C) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (A) infrastructure improvement and development; (B) planning for long-term solutions; or (C) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

C. Program Area Description

1. Community Food Projects

Community Food Projects are intended to take a comprehensive approach to developing long-term solutions that ensure food security in communities by linking the food production and processing sectors to community development, economic opportunity, and environmental enhancement. Comprehensive solutions should focus on: (i) improved access to high quality, affordable food among low-income households; (ii) expanded economic opportunities for community residents through business and economic development, improved employment opportunities, job training, youth apprenticeship, school-to-work transition, and (iii) support for

local food systems, from urban gardening to local farms, that provide high quality fresh foods with minimal adverse environmental impact.

Any solution proposed must tie into community food needs, directly connect outcomes to goals and objectives, and substantially involve and/or be generated by members of the low-income community, i.e. “community-based” not just “community-placed.” Low-income people must be the participants and direct beneficiaries of project activities and outcomes.

Project goals should integrate multiple objectives into their design. Proposed projects should seek to address impacts beyond a specific goal, such as increasing food produced or available for a specific group. Goals and objectives should integrate economic, social, and environmental impacts, such as job training, employment opportunities, small business expansion, neighborhood revitalization, open space development, transportation assistance, or other community enhancements.

Proposed projects should seek comprehensive and well-planned solutions to problems across all levels of the food system, not only short-term food relief. This point is emphasized because some previously submitted proposals expanded applicant efforts in food relief and assistance or connected established or partially established programs, such as community gardens and farmers' markets, with little evidence of strategic community planning and participation by low-income residents and other stakeholders in the proposed project design. Proposals should emphasize a food system and/or food security approach and show evidence of information sharing, coalition building, and substantial outreach to and involvement of the community.

2. Training and Technical Assistance Projects

T&TA Projects should be designed to assist potential applicants in one or more of the following areas: understanding the grant application process; understanding the purposes of the CFPCGP; assessing the food security needs of a community; being familiar with the necessary components of a competitive CFPCGP proposal; and understanding what constitutes an appropriate and eligible CFP under the CFPCGP. T&TA Projects also may provide technical assistance to successful applicants in carrying out and evaluating their projects. T&TA Projects will need to provide the USDA with a performance report at the conclusion of the grant that delineates the relative successes of their various technical assistance activities.

Regional projects may address a particular region of the nation or of a state, or target a particular type of activity, e.g. gardening, or particular low-income/food insecure constituency, e.g. African American or Native American organizations or sustainable agriculture groups. Examples of T&TA services offered may include: general capacity-building for CFP applicants or grantees in areas such as project evaluation, leadership development, or coalition building; or assistance on a particular type of project, such as farm-to-institution methods, food system assessment, food system planning, or local or regional food system development. T&TA Projects should be designed to have national and/or regional relevance. No pilot projects will be considered in this category.

A T&TA Project proposal should demonstrate an applicant's technical expertise in the above noted areas. The proposal also should show that the applicant organization has the capacity to provide training and technical assistance to applicants and/or grantees on a regional or national basis, through workshops, electronic media, or other appropriate means. Additionally, the applicant should also demonstrate capacity or experience in being able to assist successful applicants in carrying out their projects.

3. Planning Projects

PPs are intended to take a comprehensive approach to planning for long-term solutions that ensure food security in communities by linking the food production and processing sectors to community development, economic opportunity, and environmental enhancement. PPs may explore the community's assets, opportunities, and challenges in terms of discovering food security status and may include elements such as: improved access to high quality, affordable food among low-income households; expanded economic opportunities for community residents through local businesses or other economic development, improved employment opportunities, job training, youth apprenticeship, school-to-work transition; and support for local food systems, from urban gardening to local farms, that provide high quality fresh foods with minimal adverse environmental impact.

Proposed plans must include assessing community food needs and substantially involve and/or be generated by members of the low-income community; i.e., it must be "community-based" not just "community-placed." Low-income participants must be the participants and direct beneficiaries of planning projects.

Proposed PPs should seek to address impacts beyond a specific goal such as increasing food produced or available for a specific group. Goals and objectives should integrate economic, social, and environmental impacts such as job training, employment opportunities, small business expansion, neighborhood revitalization, open space development, transportation assistance, or other community enhancements.

Proposed PPs should be comprehensive and address all levels of the food system, not only short-term food relief. Assessing existing assets in the food system is as important as showing deficiencies and need. Proposals should emphasize a food system and/or food security approach and show evidence of information sharing, coalition building, and substantial outreach to and involvement of the community.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. CSREES anticipates that the amount of funds available in FY 2008 for support of grant awards under this program will be approximately \$5,000,000. Of that amount, approximately 10 percent may be awarded for T&TA Projects and approximately five percent may be awarded for Planning Projects.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2008, applications may be submitted to the CFPCGP program as one of the following two types of requests:

(1) New application. This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the CFPCGP Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

(2) Resubmitted application. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the CFPCGP Program but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV, C.2.c.). Resubmitted 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.

C. Project Types

1. Community Food Project Grants

Applicants should request a budget commensurate with the proposed project. However, no single grant for a CFP shall exceed \$125,000 in any single year or more than \$300,000 over three years. Applications that exceed the budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed. Applicants may request one, two, or three years of funding, but in all cases, the grant term may not exceed three years for any one CFP. A CFP may be supported by only one grant under this program. All CFP awards will be made based on the merit of the proposed project with budgets considered only after the merits of the project have been determined. USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with successful applicants.

2. Training and Technical Assistance Awards

For T&TA Projects, applicants should request a budget commensurate with the proposed project. No single T&TA award shall exceed \$125,000 in any single year or \$300,000 over three years. Applications that exceed the budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed. All T&TA Project awards will be made based on the merit of the proposed project with budgets considered only

after the merits of the project have been determined. USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with successful applicants.

3. Planning Project Awards

No single PP award shall exceed \$25,000 in any single year. The maximum project period shall not exceed three years with a budget limit of a total of \$25,000. Applications that exceed the budgetary guidelines will not be reviewed. All PP awards will be made based on the merit of the proposed project with budgets considered only after the merits of the project have been determined. USDA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with successful applicants.

PART III-ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

1. CFP and PP Eligibility

Only private, nonprofit entities meeting the following three requirements are eligible to receive a CFP or PP grant: (a) have experience in the area of (i) community food work, particularly concerning small and medium-size farms, including the provision of food to people in low-income communities and the development of new markets in low-income communities for agricultural producers; or (ii) job training and business development activities for food-related activities in low-income communities; (b) demonstrate competency to implement a project, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation; and (c) demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, including a plan for dissemination of results.

2. T&TA Eligibility

Private, nonprofit or other entities meeting the following three requirements are eligible to apply for and receive a T&TA grant under this program: (a) have the capacity to provide, on a regional or national basis, training and technical assistance in community food security, including the assessment of community food needs, appraisal of existing community assets pertaining to food security issues, coalition building, project development, evaluation and completion, proposal preparation, and/or fundraising; (b) demonstrate competency to implement a T&TA Project, provide fiscal accountability, collect data, and prepare reports and other necessary documentation; and (c) demonstrate a willingness to share information with researchers, evaluators, practitioners, and other interested parties, including a plan for dissemination of results.

3. Partners and Collaborators

Applicants for CFP, PP, or T&TA Project awards are encouraged to seek and create partnerships with public or private, nonprofit or for-profit entities, including links with academic institutions (including minority-serving colleges and universities), and/or other appropriate professionals, community-based organizations, and local government entities. ***Only the applicant must meet the eligibility requirements.*** Project partners and collaborators need not meet the eligibility requirements. Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the successful completion of the project. See Part IV, E., Funding Restrictions.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

Successful CFP applicants and PP award applicants MUST provide matching on a dollar-for-dollar basis for all federal funds awarded.

CFP and PP grantees may provide matching funds through cash and/or in-kind contributions, including third-party in-kind contributions, fairly evaluated, including facilities. The non-federal share of the funding may come from State government, local government, other non-profit entities, or private sources. Examples of qualifying matching contributions may include direct costs such as: rent for office space used exclusively for the funded project; duplication or postage costs; and staff time from an entity other than the applicant for job training or nutrition education.

Matching funds are not required for T&TA grants, and therefore will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria for these grants.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Submit a Letter of Intent

Applicants wishing to apply to the CFPCGP for FY 2008 **must** submit a LOI to the Community Food Projects program via e-mail at comfood@csrees.usda.gov by COB on January 10, 2008 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). LOIs received after **COB WILL NOT BE REVIEWED**. E-mail messages containing the LOI should state “Letter of Intent” in the subject line of the message. The responsibility of ensuring and substantiating that a Letter of Intent was **sent and received prior to the deadline rests with the applicant**. **Please note that the email address above is for the submission of Letters of Intent only.**

LOIs **must** declare which type of project, i.e. CFP, T&TA Project, or PP, and should contain: (1) the name and location of the applicant organization; (2) a descriptive title of the proposed project; (3) names and roles of the Project Director(s) and other key personnel, along with their institutions; and (4) a brief statement of purpose, approaches, and objectives. If all requested information is not included in the LOI, it will not be reviewed and will not result in an invitation to submit a full application.

The complete LOI containing all of the information above should be no more than 750 words in length. LOI must be submitted in the body of the e-mail. **No attachments will be opened.** LOIs that do not adhere to these word limits and restrictions will not be reviewed and will not result in an invitation to submit a full application. Accepted Letters will be reviewed for relevance to the program’s goals. **An invitation to submit a full application** will be issued by e-mail to applicants whose LOI meet minimum program requirements. Both successful and unsuccessful LOI applicants will be notified by COB on January 24, 2008. If applicants have not received notification of acceptance or decline by January 29, 2008, they should contact Elizabeth Tuckermanty at etuckermanty@csrees.usda.gov.

B. 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) in their organization to determine if their organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grants.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AR 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-CFP-001190 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.

C. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Part 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 B. 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 (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 (Required 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. Field 6. Project Summary/Abstract. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of the CFPCGP program.

b. Field 7. Project Narrative.

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

i. Community Food Project The Project Narrative for CFPs should include the heading followed by the response for each of the points noted below.

(a) *The Community to Be Involved in the Project and the Needs to Be Addressed.*

Identify and succinctly describe the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food system, including demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area or community to be served. Beyond a recitation of statistics, applications should describe local capabilities, such as those identified in a community food assessment, and involvement of low-income communities in the context of project activities and operations.

Most relevant is an explanation of why the applicant and its partners selected the activities proposed in the application. Note the main targets or beneficiaries of the project and the community needs and opportunities being addressed. The needs addressed should directly relate to project goals and objectives described below. It is recommended that this section be no more than one and one-half pages.

(b) *The Organizations and Communities Involved in the Project.* List the organizations and communities to be involved in carrying out the proposed project and the segments of the local food economy or system they link. Include a description of the relevant experience of each community group or organization, including the applicant organization that will be involved, and any related project history. Proposals should demonstrate extensive community linkages and coalitions.

Ensure that low-income residents are actively involved in planning project goals, objectives, and outcomes. In particular, describe how the communities being served – particularly the targeted residents and organizations – were involved in planning the project and will be engaged in its implementation. Reference planning activities,

assessments, meetings, or other activities that demonstrate community input into key decision-making.

Letters from the key organizations involved in the project, acknowledging their support and contributions, must be provided in an appendix to the proposal. A limited number of additional support letters – such as those from farmers or schools – where appropriate, are encouraged to provide evidence of broad community involvement in both planning and future decision-making. It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages. See Part IV, C.(c), below, Key Organization Support.

(c) *Project Goals and Intended Outcomes.* List the goals and intended outcomes of the project. Outcomes should describe specific changes or results that will occur as a consequence of the project and that will constitute “success” for the initiative. These may include benefits caused by program activities such as changes in participants’ skills, behaviors, or qualities of life, and positive changes in conditions in the community served or reductions in negative conditions. Outcomes should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely, describe what will be accomplished and who and how many people, e.g., residents, participants, will benefit. It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages.

(d) *Activities to Achieve the Goals.* Discuss how the goals and intended outcomes will be achieved. Discuss how the proposed project outcomes will be realized by providing a systematic description of how the most important steps or milestones will be accomplished. In addition to these descriptions, it is recommended that a table of up to three pages be provided with implementation details for these activities, including: (a) specific steps and achievements in planning and implementation; (b) timetables for milestones, and, as relevant; (c) expected numbers of participants involved in each step of the process.

(e) *Relationship to Program Objectives.* Discuss how the project and its proposed outcomes will address the objectives of the CFPCGP as described in Part I., B.1. Discuss the specific changes that will result among participants or in the communities served that address these CFPCGP priorities. It is recommended that this section be no more than one page.

(f) *Evaluation.* CFP proposals should contain a strong evaluation component. Innovative evaluation strategies are especially encouraged. Evaluations should focus on “logic models” and the measurement of success in meeting the legislative goals and objectives of the CFPCGP. (See Part VIII, E., Definitions.) Through CFPCGP project operations and an evaluation of them, USDA also hopes to learn more about what happens to make such projects succeed, partially succeed, or fail. Therefore, proposals are encouraged that include both process evaluations (developing and monitoring indicators of progress towards the objectives) and outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met).

In order to allow for sufficient evaluation of projects as described, it is recommended that applicants set aside between five and ten percent of the total project budget for

evaluation. Applicants should seek the help of academic or other experts in evaluation design and implementation, as appropriate and available. A logic model or chart may also be used.

It is recommended that this section be no more than one page.

(g) *Self-Sustainability.* Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the project period. Discuss how a one-time infusion of Federal funds will be sufficient for the proposed CFP to advance local capacity-building and achieve sustainability. Applicants should differentiate between how the basic elements of the project will be continued versus how the low-income community will be changed and its capacity advanced.

Entrepreneurial projects should provide evidence, e.g., a market analysis or the outline of a business plan, to demonstrate that it is likely to become self-sustaining and provide employees with important job skills. Business plan outlines of no more than five pages should be included as an appendix. It is recommended that this section be no more than one page.

ii. T&TA Projects

The Project Narrative for T&TA Projects should include the heading followed by a response for each of the points noted below.

a. *Community Food Security Issues and Programs.* The proposal should provide a succinct description of community food security issues and programs and the scope of involvement of the applicant entity. Such items as the food economy or food system should be noted as should pertinent information regarding demographic and geographic characteristics of the area(s) or type(s) of organizations previously served and/or to be served.

b. *Organizations Involved.* List all collaborating organizations and individuals who will be assisting and their respective roles in the provision of training and technical assistance. Provide documentation that these organizations and individuals have agreed to collaborate if the proposal is funded by CSREES.

c. *Project Goals and Objectives.* List the goals and objectives of the project and a justification for the goals in terms of the types of services that will be provided.

d. *Activities to Achieve the Goals.* Discuss how the goals will be achieved. Provide a systematic description of the approach by which the goals will be accomplished. A chart may be added to outline specific timeframes for activities leading to the accomplishment of goals and objectives.

e. *Timeline.* On an annual basis, identify the major milestones that will indicate progress toward achieving the project goals and objectives. Provide a standardized timeline or systematic description of the approach for accomplishing these major outcomes. A chart

may be added to outline specific timeframes for activities leading to the accomplishment of goals and objectives.

The proposed work plan can be for a period of up to three years. Training and technical assistance should be scheduled so that potential applicant organizations will have ample opportunity to take advantage of the assistance offered with sufficient time to construct and submit a CFP proposal in the foreseeable near future. T&TA for existing grantees should be timed so that grantees can utilize the assistance provided to improve their projects during the grant period.

f. *Evaluation.* T&TA proposals should contain an internal evaluation component so as to provide enough timely information over the course of the project to improve the training and technical assistance. A plan for the dissemination of project results should be included.

The Project Narrative for T&TA Projects does not have to address self-sustainability, as such projects are not expected to become self-sustaining following the expenditure of Federal funds. However, T&TA Project applicants may want to address how their training and assistance activities will help sustain CFP-type activities in future years in the areas to be served.

iii. Planning Projects

The Project Narrative for PPs should include the heading followed by the response for each of the points noted below.

(a) *The Community to Be Involved in the Project and the Needs to Be Addressed.*

Identify and succinctly describe your approach to determining the critical elements and needs of the local food economy or food system, including demographics, income, and geographic characteristics of the area or community to be served. It is strongly recommended that assets of low-income communities be included in the analysis. The needs addressed should directly relate to project goals and objectives described below. It is recommended that this section be no more than one and one-half pages.

(b) *The Organizations and Communities Involved in the Project.* List the organizations and communities to be involved in carrying out the proposed PP and the segments of the local food economy or system they link. Include a description of the relevant experience of each community group or organization, including the applicant organization, that will be involved, and any related project history. Proposals should demonstrate extensive community linkages and coalitions. Letters from the key organizations involved in the project, acknowledging their support and contributions, must be provided in an appendix to the proposal. A limited number of other support letters – such as those from farmers or schools – where appropriate, are encouraged to provide evidence of broad community involvement. It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages. See Part IV, C.(c), below, Key Organization Support.

(c) Project Goals and Objectives. List the outcome-based goals and objectives of the project and a justification for the goals in terms of the identified need(s). Be specific. Ensure that low-income residents are actively engaged in planning project goals, objectives, and outcomes and include a description of low-income input and decision-making in the formulation of the goals and objectives. It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages.

(d) Activities to Achieve the Goals. Discuss how the goals and intended outcomes will be achieved. Discuss how the proposed project outcomes will be realized by providing a systematic description of how the most important steps or milestones will be accomplished. In addition to these descriptions, it is recommended that a table of up to three pages be provided with implementation details for these activities, including: (a) specific steps and achievements in planning and implementation; (b) timetables for milestones; and, as relevant, (c) expected numbers of participants involved in each step of the process. It is recommended that this section be no more than two pages, although a table may be added as an additional page (limit to three total pages) to relate specific activities to goals and outcomes.

(e) Relationship to Program Objectives. Discuss how project outcomes will address the objectives of the CFPCGP as described in Part I., B.3., and how the project will make a difference for the low-income community. It is recommended that this section be no more than one page.

c. Field 11. Other Attachments. Must be PDF format

- **Response to Previous Review.** This requirement only applies to "Resubmitted Applications." Part II, B., "Types of Applications" identifies the type of application(s) that may be submitted in response to this RFA. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page titled "RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW." If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative subject to the page limitations of that section.
- **Results from Prior CFPCGP Support.** This requirement only applies to applicants that have received prior grant award(s) under this program. If the PD or a co-PD has received CFPCGP support in the past five years, information on results from that prior funding is required. This information will be used in the review of the application. PDs should summarize prior results from funding and limit the response to one page per award. For each award, list the CSREES award number, the amount and period of support, the title of the project and a summary of the results of the completed work.
- **Key Organization Support.** Attach letters from key organizations involved in the project acknowledging their support and contributions. Provide evidence of broad community involvement in both planning and further decision-making. This section is limited to two pages. (See Part IV, C.2.b.i.(b) and Part IV, C.2.b.iii.(b)).

- **Matching Funds Documentation.** This grants program requires applicants to match Federal funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources. Signed letters from each source of matching funds are required, and should be attached in this Field #11. Recommended contents of these letters is described below in item #5, R&R Budget Federal & Non-Federal (a2).

3. SF 424 (R&R) Senior/Key Person (Expanded)

Complete all applicable fields. Consult the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions. Remember to attach the required Biographical Sketch for at least the Project Director, as well as any additional individual who will receive Federal support from this project.

Also, **you must attach** 'Current and Pending Support' information (see CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 30 & 31, item 4.3, for guidelines and information format) for each senior/key person identified above. **Note: Even if no other funding is currently reported under the 'Active' section of this attachment, you must still list information for this grant application under the 'Pending' section of this attachment for each senior/key person identified above.**

4. SF 424 (R&R) Personal Data

Complete all applicable fields. Consult the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions. If you choose to submit this optional form, please **DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**

5. R&R Budget Federal & Non-Federal

This form (accompanied by the required Budget Justification attachment) contains the itemized listing and description of your project's budget. Complete all applicable fields. Consult the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

a. Matching or Cost Sharing

1. Applicant's Contribution. As stated in Part III, B., matching funds are mandatory for CFPs and PPs. **Matching funds are not required for T&TA Project grants.** The R&R Budget ("Federal (\$) and "Non-Federal (\$)") must be utilized. The **applicant's matching** (contribution) support should be shown on the budget in the appropriate categories (salary, materials and supplies, equipment, etc.) A budget justification (Field K. on the Form) for these items must also be included.

2. Third-party Contributions. Each **third party contributor** should be listed separately under Other Direct Costs (Field F. on the Form) and the amount contributed placed in the "Non-Federal (\$)" column. A detailed breakdown of third-party contributions by donor and budget category should be submitted as an attachment as part of the budget justification (Field K. on the Form). See below.

Proposals should include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. (Letters of commitment for third party

matching for the 2nd and 3rd years of multi-year projects must be secured prior to the grant award. Awards will not be issued until all matching has been verified.) Written verification means:

(i) For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation; (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period; and (6) whether the applicant can designate cash as the applicant deems necessary or the cash contribution has been designated to a particular budget item; and

(ii) For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement (letter of commitment) for each contribution, signed by the authorized representatives of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) a good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the third party in-kind contribution; and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

The sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant organization should be summarized on a separate page and attached in the SF 424 (R&R) Other Project Information, Field 11 (title the attachment as “Matching Support”). In addition, each source of non-Federal matching funds must be accompanied by written verification of commitment of matching support (i.e., a signed letter from the AR of the source of matching funds; including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Include each of these signed matching letters, as well, as attachments in Field 11 of the SF 424 (R&R) Other Project Information form.

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to the following for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs: 7 CFR part 3019, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations; OMB Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions; OMB Circular A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations; Federal Acquisition Regulations (48 CFR subpart 31.2, Principles for determining costs with profitmaking firms and those nonprofit organizations that are specifically excluded from the provisions of OMB Circular No. A-122); and 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. These documents may be downloaded from the following Web sites: www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/index.html; www.gpo.gov/nara.cfr.index.html; and www.arnet.gov/far, as applicable.

b. Field H. Indirect Costs.

If available, the current rate negotiated with the cognizant Federal negotiating agency should be used. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a negotiated rate is used, the percentage and base should be indicated. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. CSREES will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be written in this space.

c. Field D. Domestic Travel.

During the tenure of a grant, Project Directors must attend a meeting each year. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. The location of the meeting will be announced shortly after the award is made. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in the application's budget under travel expenses.

6. CSREES 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 "Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program") and the program code (i.e., enter "LN").

b. Conflict of Interest List (Field 8. on the Form). A conflict of interest list is not required under this program. Do not include a conflict of interest list.

Application Submission Checklist

The following checklist contains suggested guidelines to verify prior to application submission:

- Have all attachments been submitted in the portable document format (PDF)?** Only PDF attachments will be accepted. See Part III of the CSREES Application Guide.
 - Do all submitted PDF documents have one-inch margins and are typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point regardless of line spacing? Are all PDF documents numbered sequentially on each page of the attachment? Are all page limitations for a given attachment followed? Submitted applications that do not meet these requirements for PDF attachments will be returned without review.
- Have all five required components of the SF 424 Research and Related (R&R) Application Package been completed? Did you use the "Check Package for Errors" feature of the PureEdge viewer (see section 1.8 of the CSREES Application Guide)?
 - SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

- SF 424 R&R Other Project Information
- SF 424 R&R Senior/Key Person (Expanded)
- SF 424 R&R Personal Data (Optional)
- SF 424 R&R Budget Fed & Non-Fed
- Supplemental Information Form

◆ **SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**

- Have all required fields been completed? Field 5 must contain the name of the eligible applicant.

◆ **SF 424 R&R Other Project Information**

- Have the fields describing project potential or actual environmental impact been properly completed?
- Project Summary/Abstract**
 - Has the Project Summary PDF been attached to this form in Field 6?
 - Does this section adhere to the format?
- Project Narrative**
 - Has the Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 7?
 - Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations?
- Response to Previous Review (for resubmitted applications)**
 - Has the Response to Previous Review PDF been attached to this form in Field 11?
 - Has the application been clearly and meaningfully revised and are the revisions briefly described?
 - Are comments from the previous review addressed?
- Results from Prior CFPCGP Support (for PD or co-PD receiving support in the past five years)**
 - Has prior CFPCGP support been attached to this form in Field 11?
- Key Organizational Support**
 - Have the letters from key organizations involved been attached to this form in Field 11?
- Matching Funds Documentation (for CFPs and PPs)**
 - Has each signed letter to verify matching support been attached to this form in Field 11?

◆ **SF 424 R&R Senior/Key Person Profile**

- Biographical Sketch**
 - Has the biographical sketch (vitae) PDF for the PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel been attached?
- Current and Pending Support**
 - Has the current and pending support PDF for all PD(s) been attached?
 - Have all current and pending projects been listed and summarized, including this application?

◆ **SF 424 R&R Personal Data (Optional) DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**

- Have all of the fields been completed except for the social security number?

◆ **SF 424 R&R Budget Fed & Non-Fed**

- Have all fields been completed?
- Budget Justification**
 - Has the Budget Justification PDF been attached to this form in Field K?
 - Are budget items individually justified?

◆ **Supplemental Information Form**

- Does Field 2 indicate the Program Code Name and Program Code to which you are applying?

D. Submission Dates and Times

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

LOI must be received by CSREES by COB on January 10, 2008. LOIs must be sent to the e-mail address stipulated in Part IV, A. LOI applicants will be notified by email regarding the acceptance and decline of their LOIs by COB on January 24, 2008 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time).

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on **July 2, 2008** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by 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 a confirmation message from CSREES within 30 days of submission of the application, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of this RFA.

Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel a delay in the issuance of an award. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.

E. Funding Restrictions

1. Construction and Renovation

With prior approval, and in accordance with applicable Federal cost principles, grant funds may be used to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility, or to acquire land; and for improvements, alterations, renovations, or repairs to land or buildings, necessary to carry out a funded project under this program. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must demonstrate that such expenditures are essential to achieving the major purpose for which the grant request is made.

2. Subcontract Restriction

The grantee shall perform a substantive portion of the project and no more than one-third of a CFP, T&TA Project or PP, as determined by budget expenditures, may be subawarded to for-profit organizations. (For additional knowledge or expertise that is not available within the applicant organization, funds for expert consultation may be included in the “All Other Direct Costs” section of the proposed budget.)

3. Multiple Submissions

In FY 2008, the CFPCGP Program encourages applicants to submit one comprehensive proposal rather than multiple proposals.

F. 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 expert reviewers.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) the level of relevant formal education, or outreach experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts, e.g. producers, processors, community development specialists, 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 geographic locations and organizational types, e.g. colleges, universities, industry, state and federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and gender 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 of CFP proposals by expert reviewers will be based on the following criteria, listed in priority order of importance:

1. How well the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in understanding the statutory objectives of the CFPCGP which are to: (1)(a) meet the food needs of low-income people; (b) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (c) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (a) infrastructure improvement and development; (b) planning for long-term solutions; or (c) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers;
2. How significant are the low-income food security issues that will be addressed by the proposed project and is there an informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs;
3. The appropriateness of the goals, purposes, and outcomes of the project and how these goals will be achieved to invest in building the capacity of the applicant and its partners to effectively engage low-income residents in food security efforts and policies. Proposed project activities should be designed to address one or more of the following preferences, which will be given equal weight: (a) developing connections between two or more sectors of the food system; (b) supporting the development of entrepreneurial activities; (c) developing innovative connections

between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors; or (d) encouraging long-term planning activities and multi-system, interagency approaches.

4. The relevance of the organization's experience that are involved in the proposed project, including the applicant entity, and the type and extent of support that other organizations will be providing. Applicant organizations should demonstrate a history of commitment to and direct involvement in food security projects in low-income communities or in communities with low-income groups, as well as success in reaching low-income participants. The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership should reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard;

5. The viability of plans for realistically achieving self-sufficiency with a one-time infusion of federal funds. Entrepreneurial projects should provide evidence to demonstrate that it is likely to become self-sustaining, e.g., a market analysis or the outline of a business plan. Other projects should identify actual or potential funding sources for continuation of the project after federal funding has ended;

6. The strength of the proposed project's evaluation component and how it will contribute to CFPCGP evaluations on a national basis, including sharing project results in a "best practices" format; and

7. The timeline for accomplishing project goals, objectives and outcomes is realistic and achievable.

The evaluation of T&TA Project proposals by expert reviewers will be based on the following criteria, listed in priority order of importance:

1. How well the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in understanding the statutory objectives of the CFPCGP which are to: (1)(a) meet the food needs of low-income people; (b) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (c) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (a) infrastructure improvement and development; (b) planning for long-term solutions; or (c) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

2. The appropriateness of goals and purposes of the project and how those goals will provide T&TA activities that will assist organizations and individuals regionally and nationally in addressing the goals of the CFPCGP;

3. The experience of the applicant and other organizations to be involved in the proposed project. Applicants should demonstrate a history of or the capability for involvement in T&TA on CFPs or other similar programs. The relevant qualifications of staff involved in the proposed project should be provided; and

4. The timeline for accomplishing the planning, scheduling, delivery, and dissemination of results of T&TA is realistic and achievable.

The evaluation of PP proposals by expert reviewers will be based on the following criteria, listed in priority order of importance:

1. How well the proposed project assists applicants, eligible entities, and others in understanding the statutory objectives of the CFPCGP which are to: (1)(a) meet the food needs of low-income people; (b) increase the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; and (c) promote comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; or (2) meet specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for (a) infrastructure improvement and development; (b) planning for long-term solutions; or (c) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers;

2. How significant the low-income food security issues are that will be addressed by the proposed project and is there an informative description of the community, its characteristics, assets, and needs;

3. The appropriateness of the goals, purposes and outcomes of the project and how these will be achieved to invest in building the capacity of the applicant and its partners to effectively engage low-income residents in food security efforts and policies. Proposed project activities should be designed to address one or more of the following outcomes, which will be given equal weight: (a) developing linkages between two or more sectors of the food system; (b) supporting the development of entrepreneurial activities; (c) developing innovative linkages between the for-profit and nonprofit food sectors; and (d) encouraging long-term planning activities and multi-system, interagency approaches;

4. The relevance of the organization's experience that are involved in the proposed project, including the applicant entity, and the type and extent of support that other organizations will be providing. Applicant organizations should demonstrate a history of commitment to and direct involvement in food security projects in low-income communities or in communities with low-income groups, as well as success in outreach to low-income participants. The qualifications of staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership should reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed activities or similar types of activities. Experience in and connections with the community will be considered as important as academic or professional credentials in this regard; and

5. The timeline for accomplishing project goals, objectives and outcomes is realistic and achievable.

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

Upon the award of a grant, applicants will be requested to finalize goals and objectives against which progress will be measured on an annual basis. Grantees must submit an annual report narrative and budget summary detailing activities and expenditures on the project. A format for these reports will be provided on an annual basis by CSREES.

Grantees are required to submit initial project information, annual and final comprehensive technical reports to CSREES' Current Research Information System (CRIS) at <http://cwf.uvm.edu/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 submission 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>.

During the tenure of a grant, Project Directors must attend a meeting each year. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. The location of the meeting will be announced shortly after the award is made. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in the application's budget under travel expenses.

PART VII-AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact: Dr. Elizabeth Tuckermanty, National Program Leader, Community Food Projects Competitive Grants Program; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Mail Stop 2241; Washington, DC 20250-2241; telephone: (202) 205-0241; fax: (202) 401-6488; email: etuckermanty@csrees.usda.gov.

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 three 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 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, director, or chief executive officer or other designated official 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.

Community Food Project is a community-based project that requires a one-time infusion of Federal assistance to become self-sustaining and is designed to increase food security in a

community by: (a)(i) meeting the food needs of low-income people; (ii) increasing the self-reliance of communities in providing for their own food needs; (iii) promoting comprehensive responses to local food, farm, and nutrition issues; and/or (b) meeting specific State, local, or neighborhood food and agriculture needs for; (i) infrastructure improvement and development; (ii) planning for long-term solutions; or (iii) the creation of innovative marketing activities that mutually benefit agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Expert reviewers means individuals selected from among those recognized as uniquely qualified by training and experience in their respective fields to give expert advice on the merit of grant applications in such fields who evaluate eligible proposals submitted to this program in their respective area(s) of expertise.

Food planning association means a state, regional, or local entity that conducts long-term planning activities related to food, nutrition, or agriculture issues and addresses the needs of low-income people in a manner that is comprehensive and self-sustaining and mutually benefits agricultural producers and consumers.

Food policy council means a representative, multi-stakeholder, inter-agency body at the state, regional, or local level that is sanctioned by a government entity to address a broad range of food, nutrition, or agriculture issues in a manner that is comprehensive and self-sustaining and mutually benefits agricultural producers and low-income consumers.

Grant means the award by the Secretary of funds to an eligible entity to assist in meeting the costs of conducting, for the benefit of the public, an identified Community Food or Training and Technical Assistance Project.

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

Infrastructure improvement and development means the purchase or lease of equipment necessary for the production, handling, or marketing of locally-produced food.

Logic model means a systematic and visual way to present and share an understanding of the relationships among resources available to operate a program, and includes: planned activities and anticipated results; and the presentation of the resources, inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

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

Outcomes:

Planning project means an activity initiated by an eligible organization to assess food security in a defined community and develop plans aimed to improve community food security.

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

Private non-profit entity means any nongovernmental corporation, trust, association, cooperative or other organization which: (i) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest; (ii) is not organized primarily for profit; and (iii) uses its net proceeds to maintain, improve, and/or expand its operations.

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

Project director (PD) 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.

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

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

Sustainably produced foods means foods that are produced in ways that limit “food miles,” and address social and economic justice issues as well as land stewardship. USDA’s definition of sustainable development is defined as, “Economic, environmental, and social sustainability of diverse food, fiber, agriculture, forest, and range systems.” USDA will balance goals of improved production and profitability, stewardship of the natural resource base and ecological systems, and enhancement of the vitality of rural communities. [*Special Reference Briefs Series no. SRB 99-02, Updates SRB 94-05 September 1999, [Alternative Farming Systems Information Center](#)*, National Agricultural Library, Agricultural Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Third party in-kind contributions means non-cash contributions of property or services provided by non-Federal third parties, including real property, equipment, supplies and other expendable property directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to a funded project or program.

Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) Project means a project of regional or national scope that requests Federal assistance to help community-based entities develop proposals for funding under the CFPCGP and/or to provide information, education, and skills training to CFP applicants, potential applicants, and grantees.