

BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

FY 2009 Request for Applications

APPLICATION DEADLINE: **May 18, 2009**



U.S. Department of Agriculture



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

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

BEGINNING FARMER AND RANCHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.311.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on **May 18, 2009** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program, if applicable, and will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Written stakeholder comments on this RFA should be submitted in accordance with the deadline set forth in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Oversight 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.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES announces the availability of funds and requests applications for the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program (BFRDP) for fiscal year (FY) 2009. The BFRDP provides resources to support the development of education, outreach, curricula, workshops, educational teams, training, and technical assistance programs to assist beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States and its territories in entering, establishing, building and managing successful farm and ranch enterprises. This program will also provide a cooperative agreement to an online electronic and library clearinghouse to provide associated support to individually funded projects, educational enhancement projects and the overall BFRDP program. The estimated amount available for support of this program in FY 2009 is \$17,280,000.

This notice identifies the objectives for BFRDP projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for a BFRDP award. 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 7405(c) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Pub. L. 107-171) (7 U.S.C. 3319f(c)), as amended by section 7410 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (FCEA) (Pub. L. 110-246), requires the Secretary to establish a competitive grants program for the purpose of providing education, outreach, training and technical assistance to benefit beginning farmers and ranchers in the United States, including programs and services (as appropriate) relating to:

- (a) Mentoring, apprenticeships, and internships;
- (b) Resources and referral;
- (c) Assisting beginning farmers or ranchers in understanding how to acquire land from retiring farmers and ranchers;
- (d) Innovative farm and ranch transfer strategies;
- (e) Entrepreneurship and business training;
- (f) Model land leasing contracts;
- (g) Financial management training;
- (h) Whole farm planning;
- (i) Conservation assistance;
- (j) Risk management education;
- (k) Diversification and marketing strategies;
- (l) Curriculum development;
- (m) Understanding the impact of concentration and globalization;
- (n) Basic livestock and crop farming practices, forestry and range management;
- (o) The acquisition and management of agricultural credit;
- (p) Environmental compliance;
- (q) Information processing; and
- (r) Other similar subject areas of use to beginning farmers or ranchers.

Section 7405(d) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(d)) requires the Secretary to establish beginning farmer and rancher education teams to develop curricula and conduct educational programs and workshops for beginning farmers or ranchers in diverse geographical areas of the United States.

Section 7405(e) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(e)) requires the Secretary to establish an online clearinghouse that makes available to beginning farmers or ranchers education curricula and training materials and programs, which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.

The stakeholder input meeting was held on October 27, 2008. For information regarding the stakeholder meeting, please visit http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/in_focus/smallfarm_if_bfrcgp.html. Stakeholder comments can be found on [Regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). This stakeholder input was considered and used in the development of this RFA.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The primary purpose of CSREES' BFRDP is to provide U.S. beginning farmer and rancher producers and their families, as appropriate, with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to make informed decisions for their operations, with the goal of enhancing success of beginning farmers and ranchers.

Applications from partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include non-governmental and community-based organizations with expertise in new agricultural producer training and outreach will be given priority.

Target Audience: Not less than 25% of the program funds for standard BFRDP projects each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers, immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and /or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers. Therefore, if you want the application to be considered under this category, identify the target audience of any of the groups identified above and state what percentage of your budget will be allocated to serving these group(s). Please see Part VIII. E. for the definition of "limited resource beginning farmer or rancher" and "socially disadvantaged beginning farmer or rancher."

Priorities Areas for FY 2009:

Priorities for Standard BFRDP Projects in FY 2009

Applicants should carefully consider the topics which will be encompassed within the project activities of their application. Applicants shall clearly identify in their application the subject topics below (I through IV). To achieve the long term goals, projects will be expected to develop and disseminate educational curricula and training materials on one or more of the following 19 topics to beginning farmers and ranchers in rural and peri-urban areas, including prospective commercial farmers in urban areas:

I. Production and management strategies to enhance land stewardship by beginning farmers and ranchers.

- Mentoring, apprenticeship, and internship activities;
- Curriculum development;
- Whole farm planning;
- Conservation assistance (conservation planning or implementation, not funding of conservation projects);
- Basic livestock and crop farming practices, forestry and range management;
- Specific types of practices, (i.e., sustainable, organic, Best Management Practices, Integrated Pest Management); and
- Farm safety.

II. Business management and decision support strategies that enhance the financial viability of beginning farmers and ranchers.

- Information processing;

- Resources and referrals (understanding asset based farming opportunities available, including external resources such as Farm Service Agency loan programs, Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation programs, and other appropriate private and/or public resources focused on beginning farmers and ranchers);
- Entrepreneurship and business training;
- Financial management training, including assessment and training for establishing Individual Development Accounts (no grant funds can be used to match IDA funds);
- Risk management education; and
- The acquisition and management of agricultural credit.

III. Marketing strategies that enhance the competitiveness of beginning farmers and ranchers.

- Diversification and marketing strategies; and
- Understanding the impact of concentration and globalization (production and/or marketing).

IV. Legal strategies that assist beginning farmers with acquisition and transfer.

- Technical assistance for beginning farmers or ranchers in acquiring land from retiring farmers and ranchers (excluding financial payments);
- Innovative farm and ranch transfer strategies, including training for absentee landowners to bring their land into production;
- Environmental compliance (understanding rules and regulations); and
- Development of model land leasing contracts (including alternative land acquisition contracts).

Priorities for Educational Enhancement Projects in FY 2009

Education Team proposals will be expected to demonstrate the ability to provide all of the following:

I. Assess, Develop, and Deliver Special Projects for Education, Training and Mentoring of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers

- Establish educational teams that encompass broad geographic, product and/or other appropriate scale. Educational teams should include, if possible, specialists (including Extension employees and others) with knowledge and expertise in programs serving beginning farmers or ranchers. The team should, if possible, use the expertise of officers and employees of the Department (**excluding CSREES**) with direct experience in programs of the Department that may be taught as part of the curriculum for the program or workshop. Employees of other federal agencies may also be appropriate for inclusion on Education Teams.
- Evaluate the impacts of the beginning farmer and rancher education, training, outreach and mentoring programs on specific audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers based on crop or regional diversity; including access to and suitability of programs to limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers, and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers.

- Support special projects for training, coordination, and communication networks, including outreach and assistance to disadvantaged or underserved customers and other clientele groups with particular beginning farmer and rancher education and training needs, as may be appropriate and necessary.
- Develop curriculum in either the Standard or Educational Enhancement Projects to ensure that they include modules designed for specific audiences of beginning farmers or ranchers based on their crop (or potential crops) or regional diversity. Details on the target audience should be included in the application; and
- Educational Enhancement Projects should identify the Project Director (PD) (or one of the Co-PD) who must serve on a Team to assist the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse. The Team may require monthly conference calls and one meeting to implement the activities of the Clearinghouse and the submitted budget should reflect this activity.

II Assist the Standard Beginning Farmer and Rancher Grantees to Enhance Impacts of the BFRDP

- Meet with new Standard BFRDP Project grantees in future funding cycles, bringing those new grantees within the educational community represented by the educational team.
- Coordinate and facilitate communication between the Standard BFRDP Projects and the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse for the collection and dissemination of information about the available beginning farmer and rancher education curricula and training materials and programs developed by the Standard Projects.
- Assist Standard BFRDP Project grantees in communicating project results.

III. Build Capacity of Beginning Farmers and Ranchers to be Self Sustaining.

- Conduct an appropriate number of focus group or stakeholder input sessions within the region or the geographic scope of the Educational Enhancement Project; compile outcomes and input from such meetings to help enhance the Standard BFRDP Projects; report impacts to CSREES; and ensure appropriate broad community communication concerning the existence of such focus group and/or stakeholder input session(s);
- Conduct train-the-trainer meetings and workshops, including online education, for beginning farmers and ranchers to enhance their access to all federal and state agency programs and funding for beginning farmers and ranchers, including grantsmanship training; and
- Enhance success for America's young and beginning agricultural producers, including support for the National Young Farmers Education Association National Forum and other youth programs (e.g., K-12) to identify issues and develop innovative programs.

Priorities for Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse in FY 2009:

Duties of the Clearinghouse are as follows:

I. Conduct a national scoping project in year one.

- Identifying ongoing beginning farmer and rancher education, training, outreach and mentoring activities in the US focusing on all of the identified disciplines or activities listed under “Priorities for Standard BFRDP Projects in FY 2009” in this RFA; and
- Identifying materials from ongoing regional activities or national activities which could be placed on the online Clearinghouse or linked thereto.

II. Develop an online accessible library for beginning Farmer and Rancher education, training, mentoring and outreach materials produced from projects funded through the BFRDP program and through other sources.

- Develop in year one, a national “one-stop” source of beginning farmer and rancher education and training materials and information that can be accessed online. Eventually (or more specific in year two) the online database needs to provide access or linkages to beginning farmer and rancher education and training materials developed by projects funded through the BFRDP program and those developed through other funding sources and may have been in existence for a long time. These materials could have been developed by Extension and land-grant universities, Community Based Organizations, nongovernmental organizations, other Federal and state agencies, and/or Federally funded activities (such as the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education library, National Agricultural Library, etc.) containing content useful to beginning farmers and ranchers;
- By the end of year two, develop an electronic accountability or verification system to verify results of BFRDP projects. This system will provide public access to reports and accomplishments of BFRDP projects funded by CSREES as well as projects already in existence. The system should allow Educational Enhancement Projects, non-profit organizations and other interested parties to learn from existing projects and build upon successful programs and materials;
- Throughout the project, collaborate with all funded Educational Enhancement Projects in identifying content for the Online Clearinghouse, knowledge gaps, needs, and other appropriate issues; and
- The Online Clearinghouse should be provided in an easily accessible web format.

III. Assist in Enhancing Outcome Based Reporting

- Develop in year one, a plan for how to develop outcomes measures, in coordination with and under guidance of CSREES program leadership;
- Collaborate with all BFRDP grantees to assist in identifying proper ways to document outcomes of funded projects and in data collection concerning outcomes and results of BFRDP-supported activities; and
- Develop appropriate communication tools to disseminate information on successful BFRDP programs, Educational Enhancement Project activities and other items of interest to the BFRDP national community; working in close coordination with CSREES leadership, all Standard BFRDP projects and Educational Enhancement Projects.

Other Key Program Information Applicable to Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse

Educational Enhancement Projects should identify a PD or Co-PD to serve on a Team to assist the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or make a specific number of awards. For FY 2009, approximately \$17,280,000 will be available to fund applications of which approximately \$1,500,000 will be used for the cooperative agreement for the Online Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse, approximately \$3,780,000 total for grants for the Educational Enhancement projects, and approximately \$12,000,000 total for grants for Standard BFRDP Projects.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2009, applications may be submitted to the BFRDP Program as New application. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

C. Project Types

Applications will be accepted for one of three project types: (i) Standard BFRDP Projects; (ii) Educational Enhancement Projects; and (iii) Online Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse.

For FY 2009, grants will be available for support of Standard BFRDP Projects and Educational Enhancement Projects and it is anticipated that one cooperative agreement will be available for the Online Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse award. For Standard BFRDP Projects and Educational Enhancement Projects Proposals, applicants must not request more than \$250,000 per year for a maximum grant period of three years. For the online Clearinghouse in FY 2009, proposals must not request more than \$300,000 per year for a maximum award period of five years. Requests exceeding these budgetary guidelines will be at risk of being excluded from CSREES review.

(i) Standard BFRDP Projects:

The long term goals of the Standard BFRDP Projects are to enhance the sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers through: (I) production and management strategies that enhance land stewardship by beginning farmers and ranchers; (II) business management and decision support strategies that enhance the financial viability of beginning farmers and ranchers; (III) marketing strategies that enhance the competitiveness of beginning farmers and ranchers; and (IV) legal strategies that assist beginning farmers and ranchers with farm transfer and acquisition.

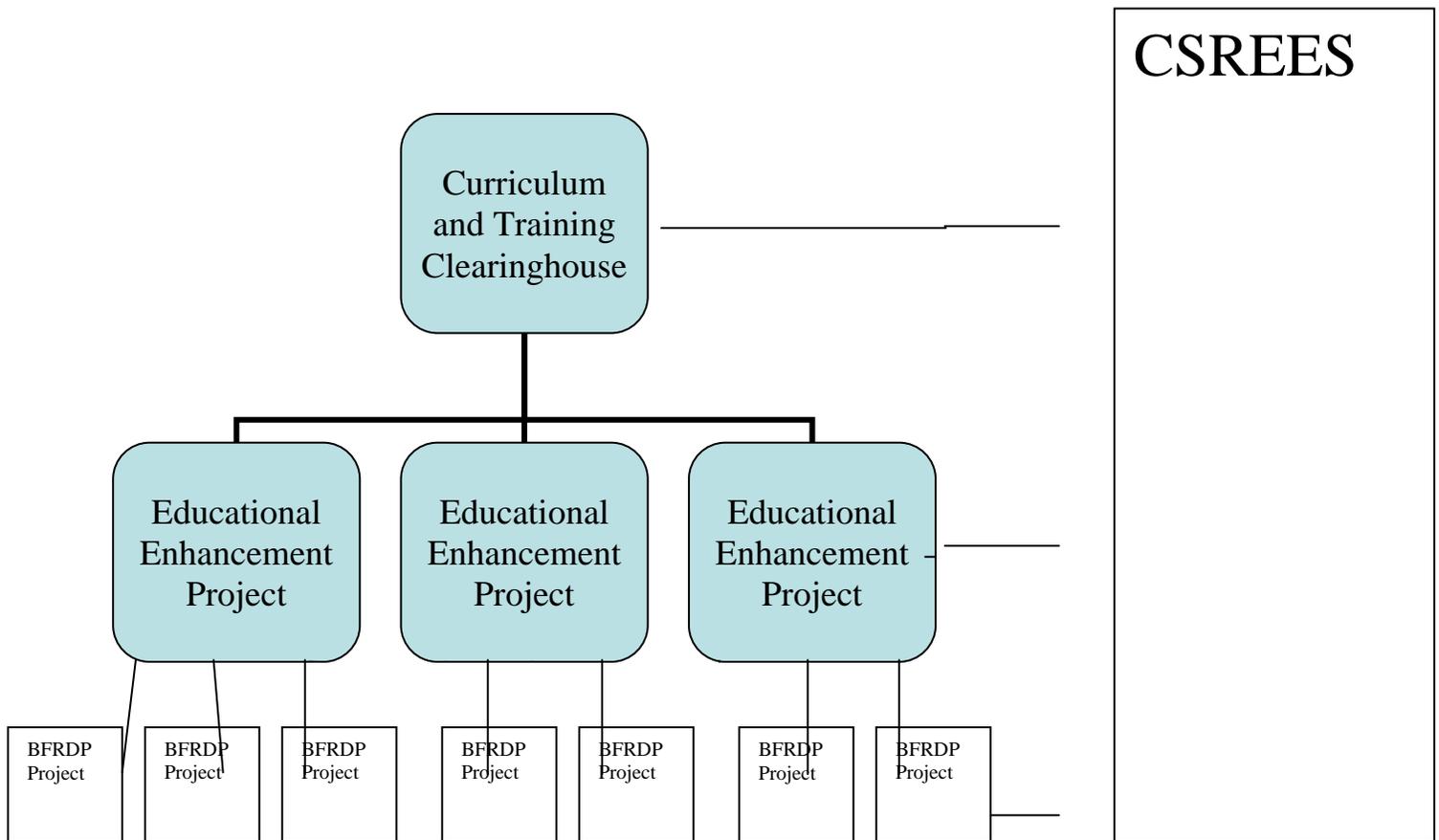
(ii) Educational Enhancement Projects:

Identify gaps in beginning farmer and rancher training by evaluating all existing programs; and develop special projects for education, training, technical assistance and outreach to address these gaps. The Educational Enhancement Projects will periodically collect information on the

impacts of the Standard BFRDP Projects funded by this program on specific audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers based on crop or regional diversity; including access and suitability of programs to limited resource and/or socially disadvantaged beginning farmers and ranchers, and farm workers desiring to become farmers or ranchers. The Team also may support special projects for training, coordination, and communication networks, including outreach and assistance to socially disadvantaged and/or underserved customers and other clientele groups with particular beginning farmer and rancher education and training needs, as may be appropriate and necessary.

(iii) Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse (CTC)

The purpose of the Online Clearinghouse is to serve as an online platform and library for curricula, training materials, technical assistance materials and any other appropriate information for beginning farmers and ranchers. In addition, the Online Clearinghouse will be responsible for organization and coordination of an annual national conference on BFR Education and Training. The Online Clearinghouse will assist CSREES leadership in developing and providing an outcome based results verification system appropriate for use by the BFRDP program, provide archival support for all materials and curricula on beginning farmer education and training organize appropriate meetings under the direction of CSREES leadership and collaborate with BFRDP grantees as needed.



The figure above demonstrates the organizational relationship among the three project types. Multiple Standard projects will work with an Educational Enhancement Project depending on subject area of concern. All Educational Enhancement Projects will work on communications and dissemination of results to the Clearinghouse. All projects will have direct post award management relationship with CSREES program personnel. The number of projects funded for the Standard and Educational Enhancement Project types will depend on number and merit of applications received.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted by a collaborative state, tribal, local, or regionally-based network or partnership of public or private entities. These collaborations may include the following entities: State cooperative extension services; Federal, State, or tribal agencies; community based and nongovernmental organizations; junior and four-year colleges or universities or foundations maintained by a college or university; private for-profit organizations; and other appropriate partners. Inclusion of beginning and/or non-beginning farmers and ranchers as part of the collaborative group is strongly encouraged. Individuals are not eligible for consideration under any category applicable to the BFRDP program.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project. An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the time of an application deadline will result in CSREES failing to review or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude CSREES from making an award.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

CSREES, pursuant to the authorizing legislation for the BFRDP program, requires that in order to receive any of the 3 types of awards under this program, the recipient must provide a match in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to 25 percent of the funds provided by the award. The matching funds must be from non-Federal sources except when authorized by statute.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

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

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR)(also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.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. In order to access, complete and submit applications, applicants must download and install a version of Adobe Reader compatible with Grants.gov. This software is essential to apply for CSREES Federal assistance awards. For basic system requirements and download instructions, please see http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp. To verify that you have a compatible version of Adobe Reader, Grants.gov established a test package that will assist you in making that determination. Grants.gov Adobe Versioning Test Package: <http://www.grants.gov/applicants/AdobeVersioningTestOnly.jsp>.
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-BFR-002115** 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 Adobe forms), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

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

B. 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 A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Note the attachment requirements (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.

Field 5. Legal Name – Enter the legal name of the organization to which the award should be made.

Person to be contacted on matters involving this application – Enter the information for the contact person related to this application preferred by the institution.

Field 11. Descriptive Title of Applicant’s Project – The title should be a brief (**140-character-maximum including spaces**), clear, and concise description of the proposed project.

Field 13. Proposed Project – For the start date of the project, select a date at least six months after the submission due date for the program. Choose the end date to correspond to the correct duration of the project.

Field 18. Complete Certification – By submitting the application, the applicant has certified to all applicable assurances and certifications. **Please read the Certifications before submitting the application.**

Field 20. Pre-application – Do not fill out this portion of the form. The BFRDP is not accepting pre-applications in fiscal year 2009.

2. SF 424 Project/Performance Site Location(s)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 3. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

3. R&R Other Project Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 4. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

(a) For the purpose of this RFA, questions in Field 4 pertain to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Under 7 CFR Part 3407 (CSREES' implementing regulations of NEPA), CSREES must determine whether the proposed activity requires the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement, or whether such activity can be excluded from this requirement on the basis of several categories. Note that even though the applicant considers that a proposed project may or may not fall within a categorical exclusion, CSREES may determine that an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement is necessary for a proposed project should substantial controversy on environmental grounds exist or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present that may cause such activity to have significant environmental effect. **It is requested that Field 4 be completed in the following manner.**

Field 4a. – Check yes or no.

Field 4b. If yes, please explain – Type “See Field 4d below.”

Field 4c. If this project has actual or potential impact on the environment, has an exemption been authorized or an environmental assessment (EA) or environmental impact statement (EIS) been performed?

The applicant should review the categorical exclusions in the table on the next page and determine if the proposed project falls within one or more of the exclusions.

Check “Yes” if one of the categorical exclusion listed in the table on the next page applies. Also, check yes if an EA or EIS has been performed. Attach a copy of the EA or EIS, if performed, in Field 11. Other Attachments.

Check “No” if the proposed activity does not fall into one of the categorical exclusions listed in the table below OR if an EA or EIS has not been performed. If “No” is checked, attach an explanation of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed activity in Field 11. Other Attachments. This may require completion of an EA or EIS.

Field 4d. If applicable, enter the appropriate Exclusion Code in Field 4d. If an EA or EIS file is attached in “Field 11. Other Attachments,” enter “Please see attached.”

USDA CSREES NEPA Exclusion Codes Table

Exclusion Code	Description
<i>Department of Agriculture Categorical Exclusions (found at 7 CFR 1b.3 and restated at 7 CFR 3407.6(a)(1)(i) through (vii))</i>	
(a)(1)(i)	Policy development, planning, and implementation which are related to routine activities such as personnel, organizational changes, or similar administrative functions
(a)(1)(ii)	Activities that deal solely with the functions of programs, such as program budget proposals, disbursement, and transfer or reprogramming of funds
(a)(1)(iii)	Inventories, research activities, and studies such as resource inventories and routine data collection when such actions are clearly limited in context and intensity
(a)(1)(iv)	Educational and informational programs and activities
(a)(1)(v)	Civil and criminal law enforcement and investigative activities
(a)(1)(vi)	Activities that are advisory and consultative to other agencies and public and private entities, such as legal counseling and representation
(a)(1)(vii)	Activities related to trade representation and market development activities abroad
<i>CSREES Categorical Exclusions (found at 7 CFR 3407.6(a)(2)(i) through (ii))</i>	
The following categories of research programs or projects of limited size and magnitude or with only short-term effects on the environment:	
(a)(2)(i)(A)	Research conducted within any laboratory, greenhouse, or other contained facility where research practices and safeguards prevent environmental impacts
(a)(2)(i)(B)	Surveys, inventories, and similar studies that have limited context and minimal intensity in terms of changes in the environment
(a)(2)(i)(C)	Testing outside the laboratory, such as in small isolated field plots, which involves the routine use of familiar chemicals or biological materials
(a)(2)(ii)	Routine renovation, rehabilitation, or revitalization of physical facilities, including the acquisition and installation of equipment, where such activity is limited in scope and intensity

(b) Field 6. Project Summary/Abstract – **PDF Attachment**. The Project Summary is limited to **250 words**. Title the attachment as ‘Project Summary’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Summary’.

A suggested template for the Project Summary/Abstract can be found at:
http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/templates/project_summary.doc.

The Project Summary must indicate which specific FY 2009 Project Type for which you are applying and for the Standard BFRDP Projects which specific program priority(ies) the proposed project addresses (see Part I, B). Identify the target audience (region, geography, crop,

commodity, race, gender, age, or other characteristics). The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized.

(c) Field 7. Project Narrative – **PDF Attachment. 12-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Project Narrative’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Narrative’. This page limitation applies regardless of whether figures or tables are included. All pages, including those with figures and tables, should be numbered sequentially. Applications exceeding the applicable page limitation will be returned without review. The page limit has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition.

Project Narrative must include all of the following:

(1) Introduction. The introduction should include a clear statement of the long-term goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Justify the need for the program by identifying the target audience and explaining their needs (size, region, value of sales, etc); and by briefly summarizing all the other similar beginning farmer and rancher education and training programs that are available for the identified target audience. Describe in detail the applicant’s experience in serving the identified or other audiences of beginning farmers and ranchers.

If this application is for the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse, briefly describe the technology that will be used to develop the online library and the applicant’s experience in developing and maintaining such a system.

Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. All works cited should be referenced (see item (d) Bibliography & Reference Cited of this section).

(2) Rationale and Significance. Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project. Explain the specific relationship of the project’s objectives to the selected Project Type and its priority(ies); and discuss the potential long-range impacts of the project on the sustainability of U.S. beginning farmers and ranchers. Any novel ideas or contributions that the proposed project offers should also be discussed in this section.

If the project type is Educational Enhancement Projects, present the rationale for the geographic, product or other appropriate focus of the team and its composition.

(3) Approach. The activities proposed or problems being addressed must be clearly stated and the approaches being applied clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:

- A description of the activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed;
- How and where will the activities be provided;
- For Standard BFRDP Projects, how will the beginning farmers and ranchers be recruited for this training;
- For Education Enhancement Projects, how will the coordination with Standard BFRDP grantees take place;

- Expected outcomes, (for Standard BFRDP grants, where appropriate, include estimates of numbers of beginning farmers served, how many beginning farmers and ranchers purchase land, enter into land leases, begin farming/ranching, change behavior to enter new markets, or other appropriate changes in behavior);
- Means by which the outcomes will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted;
- How will the project be sustained beyond the life of the grant;
- Pitfalls that may be encountered;
- Limitations to proposed procedures;
- A full explanation of any materials, procedures, situations, or activities related to the project that may be hazardous to personnel, along with an outline or precautions to be exercised to avoid or mitigate the effects of such hazards; and
- A brief timeline of the proposed project.

(4)Target Audience: Not less than 25% of the program funds each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers, immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and /or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers. Therefore, if you want the application to be considered under this category, identify the target audience of any of the groups identified above and state what percentage of your budget will be allocated to serving these group(s).

(d) Field 8. Bibliography & References Cited – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Bibliography & References Cited’ in the document header and save file as ‘Bibliography & References Cited’.

All work cited in the text, including that of key personnel, should be referenced in this section of the application. All references must:

- Be complete;
- Include titles and all co-authors;
- Conform to an acceptable journal format; and
- Be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author or listed by number in the order of citation.

See the example provided in Part III, 3.8. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide. References are not considered in the page-limitation for the Project Narrative.

(e) Field 9. Facilities & Other Resources – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Facilities & Other Resources’ in the document header and save file as ‘Facilities & Other Resources’. If the project includes face-to-face training or other on-farm mentoring activities, describe in detail the facilities that are available to provide this training.

(f) Field 10. Equipment – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Equipment’ in the document header and save file as ‘Equipment’. Equipment purchased (defined as in excess of \$5,000 for each item) must be fully justified under this section. Other purchases (e.g., computers, laboratory materials,...etc.) are described, instead, in the Budget Justification section under the ‘Materials and Supplies’ line item. If this application is to develop

a Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse, please provide details on computer and technology requirements that are available for the project and what is required by those who will be accessing your online library.

In addition to describing available equipment, items of nonexpendable equipment necessary to conduct and successfully complete the proposed project should be listed in Field C. of the R&R Budget and described in the Budget Justification (Field K of the R&R Budget).

(g) Field 11. Other Attachments

- **Logic Model – PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Logic Model’ and save file as ‘Logic Model’. For guidance, see http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/strat_plan_logic_models.html
- **Management Plan – PDF Attachment. 3-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Management Plan’ and save file as ‘Management Plan’. Because of the complexity of the BFRDP projects, it is important to have a clearly articulated management plan. Relate the experience your organization and key staff have in designing and operating activities similar to those described in this application. Explain the selection of partner institutions by describing their roles and activities in the proposed project. Explain how the partnership will be managed. Describe the commitment of your organization and your partners to this project and how the project will be sustained beyond the period of the award. Include a strategy to enhance coordination, collaboration, communication, and data sharing and reporting among members of the project team and stakeholder groups.
- **Collaborative Arrangements – PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Collaborative Arrangements’ in the document header and save file as ‘Collaborative Arrangement’. If it is necessary to enter into formal consulting or collaborative arrangements with others, such arrangements should be fully explained and justified. If the consultant(s) or collaborator(s) are known at the time of the application, a vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support signed by the AR of the consultant/collaborating organization) should be provided that the collaborators involved have agreed to render these services. The applicant also will be required to provide additional information on consultants and collaborators in the budget portion of the application.
- **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as ‘Appendices’ in the document header and save file as ‘Appendices’.

Appendices are strictly limited to two (2) examples of materials from previous projects similar to those proposed in this project.

- Reprints (papers that have been published in peer-reviewed journals); and
- Preprints (only manuscripts in press for a peer-reviewed journal will be accepted and must be accompanied by letters of acceptance from the publishing journals).

Preprints attached in support of the application should be single-spaced. Each preprint must be identified with the name of the submitting organization, the name(s) of the PD(s), and the title of the application.

Each Project Narrative is expected to be complete; however, additions to the Project Narrative (appendices) are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. Information may not be appended to an application to circumvent page limitations prescribed for the Project Narrative. Extraneous materials will not be used during the peer review process.

- **Matching Funds Documentation.** This program requires applicants to match Federal funds at an amount equal to at least 25% in the form of cash or in-kind contributions 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 are described below in item #5, R&R Budget.

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 5. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide. A Senior/Key Person Profile should be completed for the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel.

(1) Attach Biographical Sketch Field – **PDF Attachment. 2-Page Limit (excluding publications listings) per PD, co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel.** Title the attachment as ‘Biographical Sketch’ in the document header and save file as ‘Biographical Sketch’.

A biographical sketch (vitae) of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel should be included.

(2) Attach Current and Pending Support Field – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Current and Pending Support’ in the document header and save file as ‘Current and Pending Support’.

A suggested template for the Current and Pending Support can be found at:

http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/templates/current_pending.doc.

Current and Pending Support information is only required for personnel with PD or co-PD indicated as their Project Role on the R&R Senior/Key Person Profile. All applications must contain a list of all Current and Pending Support detailing public or private support (including in-house support) to which personnel identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for person(s) involved is included in the budget, see template. Please note that the project being proposed should be included in the pending section of the form. Total project time listed for each PD should be indicated as a percent effort and not exceed 100% for concurrent projects.

5. R&R Personal Data – As noted in Part V, 6. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide, the submission of this information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award. If completing the information, **do not enter any data in the field requesting the social security number.**

6. R&R Budget

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. The following, additional information may be helpful:

(1) Complete one R&R Budget Form for each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget for the entire project. There should be reasonable costs on the Clearinghouse budget that reflect the cost of the monthly conference calls and on the Educational Enhancement budget that reflect the cost of attending a meeting to facilitate the activities of the Clearinghouse. In addition, the budget should include cost to attend the annual investigator meeting.

(2) Subcontract Arrangements. If it will be necessary to enter into a formal subcontract agreement with another organization(s), the “R&R Subaward Budget Attachment(s) Form” Annual and cumulative budgets and a budget justification are required for each subcontract agreement. Refer to Part V, 7. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions on completing this form.

(3) Field H. Indirect Costs – Refer to section IV. D. of this RFA for a discussion of the limitations on claiming indirect costs.

(4) Field K. Budget Justification – **PDF Attachment. No Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Budget Justification’ in the document header and save file as ‘Budget Justification’.

All budget categories, with the exception of Indirect Costs, for which support is requested must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget. If consulting, collaborative, or subcontractual arrangements are included in the application, these arrangements should be fully explained and justified. The rate of pay for any consultant must be included, if known at the time of application. Please include a cost breakdown for the consultant, including the number of days in service, travel, and per diem, as well as the rate of pay.

Matching: Note: All applicants are required to provide from non-Federal sources (unless otherwise specified by law) cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to twenty-five percent (25%) of the federal funds requested. **The sources and amount of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application as part of the Budget Justification attachment (see Field K on the Form SF 424 (R&R) Budget). Include the matching amount, the budget category for the match, and detail how the matching support, from each source, will be used (e.g., salary and position supported). See instructions directly above, Field H, for restrictions on how to report indirect costs as matching contributions.**

Cash and non-cash contributions from the institution and any third parties should be identified.

Each source of non-Federal matching funds must be accompanied by written verification of commitments 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. Written verification means:

For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation submitted on Donor Organization letterhead and signed by the AR 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; and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

For any third party in-kind contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution submitted on Donor Organization letterhead and signed by the AR 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 (please provide the basis for the good faith effort (i.e., duties and position being paid)); and (5) a statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

If the contribution is to be split between cash and in-kind, the exact dollar amount for each category must be clearly stated. The letter should also clearly state the budget categories that the contributed dollars should be applied to and clearly state the individual items of in-kind contributions. All pledge agreements must be placed in the application immediately following the summary of matching support. Any cost sharing commitments specified in the application will be referenced and included as a condition of an award resulting from this announcement.

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, A-87, Cost Principles for State, Local, and Tribal Governments, A-122, Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations, and the cost principles in the Federal Acquisition Regulation at 48 CFR 31.2 for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

7. 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. Field 2. Program Code. Enter the program code name (i.e., enter “Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program”) and the program code (i.e., enter “BFRDP”).

b. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. **A Conflict of Interest List is required for all applications submitted to the BFRDP.**

A suggested template for the Conflict of Interest List can be found at:

http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/templates/conflict_of_interest.doc.

A Conflict of Interest List must be provided for all individuals who have submitted a Biographical Sketch. Collate all Conflict of Interest lists into a single document. The lists can only be submitted as a single PDF attachment.

For all individuals who have submitted a Biographical Sketch, list alphabetically by last name (and with last name first) the full names of individuals and indicate which categorical conflict(s) listed below applies:

- (a) All co-authors on publications within the past three years, including pending publications and submissions;
- (b) All collaborators on projects within the past three years, including current and planned collaborations;
- (c) All thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors; and
- (d) All persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting/financial arrangement/other conflict-of-interest in the past three years.

Note: Other individuals working in the applicant's specific area are not in conflict with the applicant unless those individuals fall within one of the listed categories. The National Program Leaders responsible for the BFRDP program must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

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)? 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 at risk of being excluded from CSREES 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 Adobe Reader (see section 1.8 of the CSREES Application Guide)?
 - SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet
 - SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)
 - SF 424 R&R Other Project Information
 - SF 424 R&R Senior/Key Person (Expanded)
 - SF 424 Personal Data (Optional)
 - SF 424 R&R Budget
 - SF 424 R&R Subaward Budget Attachment (Only if submitting a Collaboration Project)
 - Supplemental Information Form

◆ **SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**

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

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

- Have the fields describing project potential or actual environmental impact been properly completed?
- Project Summary/Abstract (PDF)
 - Has the Project Summary PDF been attached to this form in Field 6?
 - Does this section adhere to the format?
- Project Narrative (PDF)
 - Has the Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 7?
 - Are responses provided for all underlined text in the RFA for this section (Field 7, 1-4)?
 - Do responses clearly distinguish between project Products, Results and Outcomes/Impacts?
 - Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations?
- Bibliography & References Cited (PDF)
 - Attach as PDF file in Field 8, but only if needed.
- Facilities & Other Resources (PDF)
 - Attach as PDF file in Field 9, but only if needed.
- Equipment (PDF)
 - Attach as PDF file in Field 10, but only if needed.
 - Remember, ‘Equipment’ is defined as having a value of over \$5,000 for each item. Most equipment purchased for these projects is actually reported, instead, as ‘Materials and Supplies’ on the R&R Budget Form.
- Outside Services, Letters of Support, Use of Facilities
 - Attach as PDF file in Field 11, but only if needed.

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

- Biographical Sketch (PDF)
 - Has the biographical sketch (vitae) PDF for the PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel been attached?

- Current and Pending Support (PDF)
 - 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 DO NOT PROVIDE THE SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF THE PROJECT DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR.**

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

◆ **SF 424 R&R Budget**

- 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?
 - For multi-institutional applications, has a budget justification been included for each institution involved?
 - Have the matching requirements been address?

SPECIAL NOTE: Must provide a match in the form of cash or in-kind contributions in an amount at least equal to 25 percent of the funds provided by the award. All applicants will be required to provide appropriate matching documentation. See Part IV, B, 6 of this RFA for further details and specific instructions.

◆ **Supplemental Information Form**

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

Have you included the required Conflict of Interest List (PDF) attachment? (See format in CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide, Section VI, 1.8, p.46, for instructions.) Include this one-page with lists complied attachment even if your responses to the questions are “N.A.”.

C. Submission Dates and Times

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

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on **May 18, 2009** (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

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

If the AR has not received correspondence from CSREES regarding a submitted application within 30 days of submission of the application, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 amended the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs for grants to 22 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 22 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

For the cooperative agreement for the Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate. However, for the FY 2009 award, please note that under the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (P.L. 111-8), indirect costs may not exceed 10 percent of the total Federal funds provided under the award in the case of a cooperative agreement with a nonprofit institution (including an educational institution).

Claiming of indirect costs. The maximum allowed indirect costs may be claimed under the Federal portion of the award budget or, alternatively, the maximum allowed indirect costs may be claimed as a matching contribution (if no indirect costs are requested on the Federal portion of the budget). However, the maximum allowed indirect costs may not be claimed on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution, unless the total claimed on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution does not exceed the maximum allowed indirect costs. An awardee may split the allocation between the Federal and non-Federal portions of the budget only if the total percentage of indirect costs under the project does not exceed the maximum allowed indirect costs. For example, if a grantee's indirect costs are capped at 22 percent, the grantee may request 11 percent of the indirect costs on both the Federal portion of the budget for the award and as a matching contribution. Or, the grantee may request any other, similar percentage combination that, when combined, does not exceed the maximum indirect cost rate of 22 percent.

An award made under this program may not be used for planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility.

Note: Programs funds may not be used to buy land, match IDA funds, or purchase equipment for starting farm or ranch businesses. Program funds may only be used for education, training, outreach and mentoring of beginning farmers and ranchers. Program funds may not be used for research activities.

E. Other Submission Requirements

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

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

Priority will be given to: Partnerships and collaborations that are led by or include nongovernmental and community-based organizations with expertise in beginning agricultural producer training and outreach.

Target Audience: Not less than 25% of the program funds for BFRDP standard projects each funding year will be allocated to address the needs of limited resource beginning farmers and ranchers; socially disadvantaged beginning farmers or ranchers, immigrant farm workers planning to become beginning farmers or ranchers; and /or other farm workers desiring to become beginning farmers or ranchers. Therefore, if you want the application to be considered under this category, identify the target audience of any of the groups identified above and state what percentage of your budget will be allocated to serving these group(s).

All project applications submitted for funding shall be evaluated using the following criteria as provided by section 7405(c)(5) of FSRIA (7 U.S.C. 3319(c)(5), specifically:

- **Relevancy** – Explanation and documentation that the project is directed toward specific priority areas identified in Part I, B in this RFA. These priorities are designed to yield improvements in and sustainability of beginning farmers and ranchers as defined in FCEA.

- **Technical merit** – will be evaluated on the basis of:
 - (a) Necessity, innovation, and originality;
 - (b) Demonstrated awareness of previous and alternative training, outreach, mentoring and education programs that address the needs identified for the target audience;
 - (c) Clarity and delineation of objectives and outcomes;
 - (d) Conceptual adequacy of the proposed activities to meet the needs of the targeted audience including suitability and feasibility of the approach;
 - (e) Expected outcomes of the project in terms of the number of beginning farmers and ranchers served, the value of their enterprise, the needs of the targeted audience;
 - (f) Probability of success of the project; and
 - (g) Sustainability beyond the life of the grant.

- **Achievability** - Probability of success of the project is appropriate given the level of originality, and target audience.

- **Expertise and track record of 1 or more applicants** - Demonstration of feasibility through prior experience in education, outreach, mentoring and training beginning farmers and ranchers. Also, qualifications of applicant (individual or team) to conduct the proposed project and institutional experience and competence in serving the needs of the identified target audience.

- **Adequacy of available or obtainable support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation.**

- **Adequacy of Plans for Management of the proposed project**, including: time allocated for systematic attainment of objectives; plan for participatory evaluation of project activities, outcome-based reporting, and communication; and plan for administration of the proposed project and its maintenance, partnerships, and collaborative efforts.

Applications for Online Clearinghouse funding shall be evaluated using the following additional criteria:

Organizational Effectiveness in Designing and Operating an Electronic Library of Beginning Farmer and Rancher Education Programs and Materials

- (a) Ability to lead a scoping project based on prior knowledge of beginning farmer and rancher development programs and issues;
- (b) Management and organizational capacity to provide support to Educational Enhancement projects; knowledge and expertise to develop outcomes based measures and reporting formats; and
- (c) Capacity to provide communications materials to enhance the impacts of BFRDP projects.

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 an award 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 awards 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 award 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 award effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds awarded by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are awarded in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the applicable Departmental assistance regulations (e.g., 7 CFR 3015, 3016, 3019, 3430).

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 applications considered for review and to projects 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 (containing general provisions applicable to grants and cooperative agreements, and the set of principles for determining allowable costs as set forth in OMB Circular No. A-21, A-87, and A-122, now relocated at 2 CFR Parts 220, 225, and 230, respectively).

7 CFR Part 3016—USDA implementation of Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.

7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Government wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and 7 CFR Part 3021—Government wide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).

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

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations, now relocated at 2 CFR Part 215.

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.

7 CFR Part 3430—CSREES procedures to implement Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs—General Award Administrative Provisions and Specific Administrative Provisions.

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

Awardees are required to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to CSREES' Current Research Information System (CRIS). The CRIS database contains narrative project information, progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparing and 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>.

The Project Director will be required to attend an annual investigator meeting. Reasonable travel expenses for such annual Project Director Meeting should be included as part of the project budget.

Grantees are required to submit outcomes/results data through their appointed Educational Enhancement Project for the online Curriculum and Training Clearinghouse. Grantees are also required to establish and maintain communications with funded Educational Enhancement Projects within their region, geographic area, topic or theme as directed by CSREES. The Clearinghouse is required to aggregate and synthesize outcomes data for reporting to CSREES.

PART VII—AGENCY CONTACTS

Applicants and other interested parties with questions or comments are encouraged to contact:

Dr. Siva Sureshwaran, National Program Leader, Competitive Programs Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2240; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2240; Telephone: 202-720-7536 or Fax: 202-401-6070; E-mail: ssureshwaran@csrees.usda.gov.

Janie Simms Hipp, J.D., LL.M., National Program Leader Economic and Community Systems Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2215; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2215; Telephone 202-720-3605 or Fax: 202-690-3162; E-mail: jhipp@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 five years (3 years for Standard BFRDP grants). 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. No-cost extensions are subject to the requirements of 7 CFR 3430.58.

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:

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

1862 Land-Grant Institution means an institution eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862, as amended (7 U.S.C. 301 *et seq.*). Unless otherwise stated for a specific program, this term includes a research foundation maintained by such an institution.

1890 Land-Grant Institution means one of those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 419, chapter 841, 7 U.S.C. 321 *et seq.*) including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State University.

1994 Land-Grant Institution means one of those institutions as defined in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note), as amended. These institutions are commonly referred to as Tribal Colleges or Tribal Universities.

Administrator means the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Authorized Departmental Officer means the Secretary or any employee of the Department who has the authority to issue or modify award instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

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

Beginning Farmer and Rancher means a person that has not operated a farm or ranch; or has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years (as defined by section 7405(a) of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 3319f(a)).

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.

Clearinghouse means an online repository that will make available to beginning farmers or ranchers education curricula and training materials and programs, and which may include online courses for direct use by beginning farmers or ranchers.

Cooperative Agreement means the award by the Secretary of funds to an eligible organization or individual to assist in meeting the costs of conducting, for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program as identified in these guidelines with substantial involvement of the agency.

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Education means an act or process that delivers knowledge and informal educational programs to beginning farmers and ranchers, enabling them to make practical decisions.

Grant means the award by the Secretary of funds to an eligible organization or individual to assist in meeting the costs of conducting, for the benefit of the public, an identified project which is intended and designed to accomplish the purpose of the program as identified in these guidelines.

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

Limited resource beginning farmer or rancher means beginning farmers or ranchers who have: 1) direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the sales amount established by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in each of the previous 2 years (in current dollars, adjusted for inflation each year, based on the October 2002 Prices Paid by Farmer Index compiled and updated annually by the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS)), and 2) a total household income at or below the National Poverty Level for a family of four or

less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous 2 years as determined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) using Census Poverty Data. Please see: <http://www.lrftool.sc.egov.usda.gov>.

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

Peer review means an evaluation of a proposed project for scientific or technical quality and relevance performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed work or to give expert advice on the merits of a proposal.

Peri-urban means urban areas that lie on the outer edges of the city.

Producer means individuals, families, or other entities in the U.S. engaged in the business of agriculture, crop, livestock, forestry, and range production, management and marketing.

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

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

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

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

Qualified Public and Private Entities means public or private groups, organizations, or institutions that have established and demonstrated capacities to conduct projects that accomplish the purposes of the program as designated in these guidelines.

Regions means (1) the Northeast region consisting of the 12 Northeast States and the District of Columbia (Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and West Virginia); (2) the Southern Region consisting of 13 States plus Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma); the North Central Region consisting of 12 States (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota, and North Dakota); and the Western Region consisting of 12 States and the American Territories in the Pacific (Hawaii, Alaska, Washington State, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, and American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and Micronesia).

Rural communities means all communities with a population under 50,000.

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

Socially disadvantaged beginning farmer or rancher means a farmer or rancher who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group (i.e., a group whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender, prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities) (7 U.S.C. 2003(e)).

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.