



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Program Solicitation

Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA)



Cooperative State
Research, Education,
and Extension Service

Fiscal Year 2009

Application Deadline: April 10, 2009

RIIA Program:

Telephone: 202-720-1973

Email: gsmith@csrees.usda.gov

Internet:

<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/fo/residentinstructionforinsularareas.cfm>

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number (CFDA): 10.308

Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas

CSREES Funding Opportunity Number

USDA-CSREES-RIGP-002074

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

**IMPORTANT ITEMS FOR THE USDA-CSREES RIIA
Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 PROGRAM SOLICITATION**

The Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) requires all applications be submitted electronically through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov). There are considerable online resources to help potential applicants with the new electronic forms and submission requirements.

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>.

The Agency within USDA responsible for administering this grants program is the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES). CSREES has also developed documentation to help navigate the process. The central point for all information related to electronic application submission is www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic. This site is updated frequently and it should be checked often for program-specific help concerning electronic submissions.

| Helpful Submission Information | Website Address |
|--|--|
| <i>Information pertaining to the transition to electronic submission can be found at the CSREES website.</i> | www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic <i>This page will be updated frequently and should be checked for program-specific help.</i> |
| <i>Applications for this grants program should be submitted through the Grants.gov website.</i> | <i>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 <u>10.308</u> in the appropriate box to search by Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number.</i> |
| <i>The CSREES GRANTS.GOV Application Guide provides guidance for completing the forms required by Grants.gov and CSREES. Used in conjunction with this RFA for the RIIA grants program, this guide will assist applicants with most field-specific questions.</i> | <i>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 RFA package located at Grants.gov. This document provides guidance for completing the required forms at Grants.gov.</i> <i>Applicants should also reference the RFA for additional guidance not found in the application guide.</i> |

- Applications must be received by [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, on April 10, 2009. **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 any questions related to preparing application content, contact:

Email: electronic@csrees.usda.gov

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

For any questions related to Grants.gov content, contact:

Email: support@grants.gov

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

Part IV of this RFA provides additional information specific to the RIIA program 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>).

Applications for this grants program should include the following Contents of a CSREES-RIIA Application Submitted via Grants.gov:

| Document Title | Required | Instruction Source | Additional Instructions within this RFA |
|---|--|--|--|
| SF 424 (R&R) Cover Sheet | ✓ | CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 16 | RIIA RFA Part IV. B.1., p.19 |
| SF 424 (R&R) Project/Performance Site Location(s) | ✓ | CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 23 | RIIA RFA Part IV. B.2., p. 19 |
| SF 424 (R&R) Other Project Information | ✓ | CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 25 | RIIA RFA Part IV. B.2., p.19 |
| SF 424 (R&R) Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) | ✓ | CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 30 | RIIA RFA Part IV. B.3., p.24 |
| SF 424 (R&R) Personal Data | ✓ | CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 33 | RIIA RFA Part IV. B.4., p.25 |
| SF 424 (R&R) Budget | ✓ | CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 35 | RIIA RFA Part IV. B.5., p.25 |
| SF 424 (R&R) Subaward Budget Attachment | (Only if submitting a Consortium Project or subawarding to another organization) | CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 43 (Follow attachment guidelines) | RIIA RFA Part IV. B.6., p.26 |
| Supplemental Information | ✓ | CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide p. 45 | RIIA RFA Part IV. B.7., p.26 |

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

**RESIDENT INSTRUCTION GRANTS PROGRAM FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER
EDUCATION IN INSULAR AREAS (RIIA)**

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.308, Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas.

DATES: Applications must be received by Grants.gov by close of business (COB) on April 10, 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 Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: CSREES requests applications for the Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) for fiscal year (FY) 2009 to strengthen the capacity of Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas to carry out resident instruction, curriculum, and teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences, and to improve their ability to meet their unique needs. The amount available for support of this program in FY 2009 is approximately \$745,000.

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

This program is administered under the provisions of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (Section 7501 of Public Law 107-171) as reauthorized in Section 7143 of Public Law 110-246, which amended the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.) by providing for a program of resident instruction grants for insular areas (7 U.S.C. 3363). In FY 2009, approximately \$745,000 is available for a program of competitive grants, with funds to be awarded to one or more individual, eligible institutions of higher education in Insular Areas (Insular Area Institutions) or consortia of such eligible institutions, to carry out teaching and education programs in the food and agricultural sciences.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of the Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas (RIIA) is to promote and strengthen the ability of Insular Area Institutions (see definition in Part VIII, E. of this announcement) to carry out teaching and education programs within the broadly defined food and agricultural sciences-related disciplines. Food and agricultural sciences include programs in agriculture, food and fiber, renewable energy and natural resources, forestry, aquaculture, veterinary medicine, family and consumer sciences, home economics, nutrition and dietetics, rural human ecology, rural economic and community development, and other higher education activities and fields of study related to the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, utilization, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally-related products and services.

By reauthorizing and funding this program, Congress expects RIIA projects to: (a) produce measurable outcomes aligned with RIIA program goals and with USDA Strategic Objectives, (b) promote innovative, educational practices within the food and agricultural sciences that improve how students learn, and (c) include a rigorous evaluation component that validates your methodology. Funded projects should address one or more national issues derived from selected CSREES Strategic Goals and Objectives found in the *CSREES Strategic Plan 2007-2012* document (http://www.csrees.usda.gov/about/strat_plan.html). Essentially, your application must convince a peer panel of a compelling educational challenge, provide an approach and methodology that is both unique and with merit, exhibit significant promise of adoption by others, and respond to the grant program's Evaluation Criteria published in section Part V. B. of this RFA.

Applicants are encouraged to submit a consortium project application (see definition in Part VIII, E. of this announcement) that builds linkages among Insular Area Institutions and with other institutions (including other colleges and universities, units of State government, and private sector entities) having a significant, demonstrable commitment to higher education programs in the food and agricultural sciences and to each specific subject area where grant funds are requested: (1) to strengthen institutional education capacities (including libraries, curriculum, faculty, scientific instrumentation, instruction delivery systems, and student recruitment and retention strategies), in order to respond to State, regional, national, or international education needs in the food and agriculture sciences; (2) to attract and support undergraduate and graduate

students in areas of national need in the food and agricultural sciences; (3) to conduct undergraduate scholarship programs to assist in meeting national needs for training food and agricultural scientists; and (4) to facilitate cooperative initiatives between two or more Insular Area Institutions, or between Insular Area Institutions and units of State Government or organizations in the private sector, to maximize the development and use of resources such as faculty, facilities, and equipment. These partnerships generate a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on increasing cost-effectiveness through achieving economies of scale, strengthening the scope and quality of a project's impact, and promoting coalition building likely to transcend the project's lifetime and lead to future ventures.

Applications submitted to this grants program must state how the funded project will address these two RIIA Program Goals:

- to increase the number of graduates with an associate (or higher) degree in the food and agricultural sciences, and
- to help students achieve their career goals and help meet workplace needs by increasing the quality of undergraduate instruction (e.g., through modernizing instructional technologies and methodologies; updating disciplinary content; and by developing students' analytical, interpersonal, leadership, communications, problem-solving, computational, and decision-making skills and abilities).

Applications must address the following items within specified sections of the 'SF 424 (R&R) Other Project Information' Form (Part IV, B.3.):

1. Identify and describe at least one Educational Need Area (Part I, C.2.) for each institution in the consortium, or for each institution submitting an application; and
2. Within the project's Evaluation Plan (Part IV, B.3.Field 7.2.d.), discuss how project activities will advance the two RIIA Program Goals (above) ; and
3. Document how project accomplishments (products, results and impacts, etc.) will be published or otherwise disseminated throughout the Insular Area academic community (Part IV, B.3.Field 7.2.e., Dissemination Plans).

Note: Your project's Educational Need Area and primary academic Discipline must appear on the required Project Summary/Abstract on the SF 424 (R&R) 'Other Project Information' Form (Part IV, B.3. Field 6. Project Summary/Abstract).

C. Program Area Description

1. Program Scope

Funded projects in this year's competition must enhance academic instruction that strengthens the capacity of Insular Area Institutions to carry out coordinated, multi-institutional delivery of teaching, learning, and faculty development (including distance education and articulation agreements, student and faculty exchanges, and expanded career planning activities) in the food and agricultural sciences.

2. Educational Need Areas

(a) Projects must focus on an Educational Need Area listed below, and applications must demonstrate how the chosen Need Area will help achieve both RIIA Program Goals from Part I, B, above. Consortium applications may address several Educational Need Areas, but each separate institution within the consortium should identify its own Need Area and provide a narrative response to Part IV.B.3. Field 7. **Note: Your application must include an Evaluation Plan (Part IV, B. 3. Field 7, 2d.) for each Educational Need Area you select. This will indicate how you plan to measure success in completing your objectives within your chosen Need Area. Therefore, choose only Need Areas for which you can commit to develop a rigorous Evaluation Plan.**

Educational Need Areas for the RIIA program are:

(1) **Curricula Design, Materials Development, and Library Resources.** The purpose of this initiative is to promote the development of courses of study and degree programs, new and improved curricula, and instructional materials and technology; to enable the acquisition of library resources including books and journals relating to the food and agricultural sciences; and to stimulate the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects, new research on teaching and learning theory, and new applications of knowledge. The overall objective is to increase the quality of, and continuously renew, the academic programs of Insular Area Institutions in the food and agricultural sciences.

(2) **Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching.** The purpose of this initiative is to advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications in a field; expanding competence in innovative technologies and new methods to deliver instruction; developing new skills in a field of science or education including student advising skills; or pursuing graduate-level study in a field related to the food and agricultural sciences.

Each faculty recipient of support for developmental activities must be an “Eligible participant” as defined in Part VIII, E. Definitions.

(3) **Instruction Delivery Systems.** The purpose of this initiative is to encourage the development and use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs, while simultaneously addressing the unique geographical challenges of Insular Area Institutions. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: conducting needs assessments of institutional academic and technological capacities; developing inter-institutional collaborations that deliver instruction in ways that maximize program quality and reduce unnecessary duplication; assisting faculty to incorporate alternative instructional methodologies and technologies that respond to differences in student learning styles; and helping institutions in the consideration and implementation of innovative instructional techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems in response to advances in knowledge and technology.

(4) Scientific Instrumentation for Teaching. The purpose of this initiative is to provide students and faculty in science-oriented courses with suitable, up-to-date equipment in order to involve them in work central to scientific understanding and progress. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional, laboratory, classroom, and research scientific equipment to help assure the achievement and maintenance of outstanding food and agricultural sciences education programs; and upgrading existing equipment, or replacing non-functional or clearly obsolete equipment.

(5) Student Experiential Learning. The purpose of this initiative is to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs that provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: preparing future graduates to advance knowledge and technology that enhance quality of life, conserve resources, and address community and economic development issues. Projects should focus on advancing student problem-solving, decision-making and communication skills, and improving real-life technological expertise. Activities may include, but are not limited to: field-based internships; laboratory research; work-study practicum experiences; study abroad opportunities; and participation with faculty in professional conferences.

(6) Student Recruitment, Retention, and Educational Equity (including the provision of student financial assistance). The purpose of this initiative is to enhance educational equity for students from under-represented groups, and to strengthen student recruitment and retention programs that ensure the future strength of the Nation's scientific, professional, and technical work force in the food and agricultural sciences. Applications may emphasize, but are not limited to: initiating new projects (or supplementing current efforts) to attract increased numbers of students from under-represented groups to attend college in order to prepare them for careers as food and agricultural scientists, professionals, and technicians; agricultural and science literacy programs at the high school level to attract students to college and careers in the food and agricultural sciences; mentoring programs and other initiatives for student retention; and the provision of student financial support to attend college.

(b) Note: CSREES has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority to address any Need Area may not be used for the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities (i.e., greenhouses, laboratories, or other structures).

(c) Projects must be innovative and promote and strengthen academic instruction or activities that lead to completion of a student's formal degree. Your project should have broad-based applicability beyond a single course or an individual instructor. Projects are encouraged that include partnerships among several academic institutions to more efficiently deliver coordinated, academic instruction that reduces instructional duplication and costs. Equally valued are projects between an academic institution and employer(s) of that institution's graduates to better prepare students to meet increasingly more scientific, technical and professional work force needs. Academic instruction that can be coordinated by articulation agreements with the applicant and either secondary, or 2- or 4-year postsecondary colleges and universities to increase academic program quality are also strongly encouraged. Successful projects should also have a positive

impact on large numbers of students and on activities that achieve cost-effective economies of scale in meeting the two Program Goals.

(d) Each student recipient of monetary support for education costs or developmental purposes must be enrolled at an eligible institution and meet the requirement of an “Eligible participant” as defined in Part VIII, E., Definitions.

PART II-AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

CSREES anticipates approximately \$745,000 will be available to fund applications in FY 2009, and has no commitment to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

B. Types of Applications

Applications may be submitted to the RIIA Program as one of the following types of requests:

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

(2) Renewal application. This is a project application that requests additional funding for a project beyond the period that was approved in an original or amended award. Applications for renewed funding must contain the same information as required for new applications. Applications must be received by the relevant due date, 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.

(3) Resubmitted application. This is an application that had previously been submitted to the RIIA Program but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (use R&R Other Project Information. See Part IV, B.3, Field 11, Response to Previous Review). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

C. Project Types

CSREES encourages the submission of consortium project applications, and anticipates funding one consortium award in FY 2009. However, CSREES may fund one or more additional non-consortia grants, and reserves the right to fund any mix of applications based on the number and merit of applications received.

1. Regular Project

An eligible institution may submit a regular project application for project activities undertaken principally on behalf of its own students or faculty, and managed primarily by its own personnel. In a Regular Project, the applicant executes the project without the requirement of sharing grant funds with other project partners.

2. Consortium Project

To facilitate inter-institutional cooperation and collaborative initiatives, two or more eligible, individual institutions may form a consortium, or use an existing consortium of which they are members, and submit a consortium project application. In such cases, one institution or fiscal agent is to be designated as the “lead institution.” The designated lead institution, fiscal agent, and PD, all situated on one campus or site, will receive the award on behalf of all the consortium

members and will be responsible for managing the grant. Eligible consortium members may be sub-grantees of the primary award. Other entities not eligible to receive an award directly from CSREES under this program may, however, participate in fulfilling grant objectives and receive a sub-grant via the designated lead institution.

A consortium project application must contain an overall project plan of operation and overall budget from the lead institution, as well as a separate plan of operation and a separate budget (see Part IV, B.6 & 7.) for each consortium member receiving funds as a sub-grantee. Sub-grantees may not normally receive less than 10 percent of total grant funds. Applications proposing that sub-grantees receive less than 10 percent of total grant funds must be fully justified and approved by CSREES. Only in justified and exceptional instances will CSREES approve involvement by sub-grantees at a lower level.

3. Project Duration

A project application may request funding for a project period from 12 to 36 months duration (from one to three years). The project start date should not occur prior to August.

4. Number and Size of Grant Awards

The number of grants awarded will depend on the number and type of applications submitted in response to this notice. However, CSREES anticipates making only one consortium project award.

CSREES estimates that, if awarded, funding for Regular Project applications will be in the range of \$35,000 to \$70,000 each. Regular Project applications are expected to request funding within this range.

CSREES estimates that awards for Consortium Project applications will be in the range of \$675,000 to \$745,000. Note that the amount of grant funds for eligible consortium members as sub-grantees does **not** have to be the same for each sub-grantee. However, a sub-grantee will not normally receive less than 10 percent -and the lead institution may not normally receive less than 30 percent- of the total awarded funds. Requests for deviations from these restrictions must be fully justified and approved by CSREES in advance. Such approval will be made only under the most exceptional circumstances.

CSREES has determined that the dollar amounts awarded to eligible institutions, or made available to eligible institutions through sub-grants in consortium arrangements, may vary from institution to institution and from year to year, depending upon institutional educational capacity, project scope, and the level of involvement of each institution participating in grant activities. Grants will be made only to eligible institutions or consortia of eligible institutions as outlined below.

Based on the project scope and budget of all applications selected for awards, the actual, individual grant amounts awarded by CSREES under this Grants Program may differ from the funds requested by the applicant. In such cases, revised budgets and revised plans of work may be required by CSREES before an award is made.

5. Application Submission Limitations

Each eligible institution may submit (or be a party to) a maximum of **one** application for funding. An institution (or its fiscal agent) may submit only one application, either as an individual institution (Regular Project), or as a party to an application as part of a consortium project.

6. Award Limitations per Institution

Each eligible institution may receive (or be a party to) a maximum of **one** grant award per competition –either a Regular Project or a Consortium Project– under this RIIA Program. This ceiling includes sub-grant awards made under a consortium arrangement, i.e., an institution may participate, as either the lead institution or as a sub-grantee, in only one Consortium Project awarded in this year’s competition. Institutions receiving a grant under this program in any one competition are eligible to receive grants in subsequent years. Receiving a grant under any other authority does not affect eligibility for this RIIA grants program.

7. Funding Limitations per Institution

There are no limits on the total program funds that may be awarded to any one institution (except for the overall limitation of funds for this program which is approximately \$745,000). The amount of funds awarded may vary from institution to institution depending on project goals and objectives.

PART III-ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

Applications may be submitted only by an Eligible Institution. For the purposes of the RIIA Program, an eligible institution means an institution of higher education, as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1995 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)), that is located in an Insular Area as defined in this announcement, and that has a demonstrable capacity to carry out teaching and extension programs in the food and agricultural sciences. Individual land-grant colleges and universities, and other institutions that have secured land-grant status through Federal legislation, **and** which are located in Insular Areas as defined in this announcement, are automatically eligible for awards under the RIIA Program, either as direct applicants or as parties to a consortium agreement.

1. Branch Institutions of a State System:

For the purposes of this program, the individual branches of a State university system or public system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree granting institutions are treated as separate, individual institutions eligible to apply for and receive awards, provided they otherwise satisfy the definition of “eligible institution” as specified above.

2. Independent Branch Campuses:

Independent branch campuses of individual institutions may apply for and receive grant awards under this program, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of “eligible institution” as specified above. An “independent branch campus” means a unit of a 2-year or 4-year institution of higher education that is geographically apart from the main campus, is permanent in nature, offers courses for credit and programs leading to an associate or bachelor’s degree, and is autonomous to the extent that it has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization and its own budgetary and hiring authority.

3. Consortium Arrangements:

Two or more eligible, individual institutions, independent branch campuses, or branch institutions of a State university system may form a consortium to carry out education, training, and teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences as allowed under the RIIA Program. In addition to the eligible, individual institutions, such a consortium also may include units of State government and private sector entities. A consortium established for such purposes may apply for and receive a consortium project under the RIIA Grants Program. An existing consortium consisting of at least two or more eligible, individual institutions, independent branch campuses, or branch institutions of a State system, which demonstrates its ability to carry out allowed activities and its commitment to the goals of the RIIA Grants Program, also may apply for and receive a Consortium Project under the RIIA Grants Program. Such a consortium also may include units of State government and private sector entities.

4. Certification of Eligibility:

At the time of application, each primary applicant will be required to certify that it is an eligible institution as defined by this RIIA Grants Program. If the applicant is part of a new or existing consortium, at least two members of the consortium must certify that they are eligible, individual institutions, independent branch campuses, or branch institutions of a State system as defined in

paragraphs 1-3 above. Individual institutions that have land-grant status under Federal statutes, and consortia of which they are members applying under a consortium agreement, are exempt from the requirements of certification as specified in this section. A non-land-grant institution must submit a letter, signed by the institution's Authorized Representative (AR) certifying that it meets the requirements of an "eligible institution" as defined in paragraphs 1, 2, or 3 above. The AR must also certify the institution, or parent institution in the case of an independent branch campus:

- (a) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (b) Is legally authorized by the State in which it is located to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- (c) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; and
- (d) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

All eligible institutions must demonstrate that they have a significant commitment to higher education programs in the food and agricultural sciences and to each specific subject area for which grant funds are to be used.

Eligibility documentation must be submitted as part of the applicant's Project Narrative. See Part IV, B.3, Field 7.

5. Fiscal Agents:

If an institution cannot accept Federal funds directly, it must submit a letter stating that it will accept the award, but that funds must be administered through a fiscal agent. This agent must be identified in the letter from the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by a representative of the fiscal agent organization. The letter should include the fiscal agent's point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. Both the fiscal agent and the applicant institution must submit complete management information (see Part V, D.). Nevertheless, the legal recipient of the award must be an eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system, or a consortium of eligible institutions. Examples of fiscal agent arrangements include, but are not limited to, the following scenarios:

- (a) A State university system or a public system of higher education may apply on behalf of an eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution in its State. In

such cases, the State system will act as fiscal agent for the eligible institution under a Regular Project award to advance the purposes of the RIIA Grants Program.

(b) A research foundation or other, similar foundation established and maintained by an eligible, individual institution to facilitate the application and management of externally funded grant awards may apply on behalf of its eligible, parent institution. In such cases, the foundation will act as fiscal agent for the eligible, individual institution under a Regular Project award to advance the purposes of the RIIA Grants Program.

(c) A State university system, or a public system of higher education, may apply on behalf of two or more eligible, individual institutions, independent branch campuses, or branch institutions in its State under a consortium arrangement. In such cases, the State system will act as fiscal agent for the eligible institutions under a Consortium Project award to advance the purposes of the RIIA Grants Program.

(d) A research foundation, or other similar foundation, established and maintained by an eligible, individual institution to facilitate the application and management of externally-funded grant awards, may apply on behalf of its parent institution and at least one additional eligible, individual institution, independent branch campus, or branch institution of a State system under a consortium arrangement. In such cases, the foundation will act as fiscal agent for the eligible institutions under a Consortium Project award to advance the purposes of the RIIA Grants Program.

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply to this RIIA grants program, provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

CSREES does not require matching support for this program, and matching resources will not be a factor in the review process as evaluation criteria.

PART IV-APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Electronic Application Package

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

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR)(also referred to as Authorized Organizational Representative or AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through 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-RIGP-002074 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

See <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following 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 a discrepancy exists between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

1. SF 424 (R&R) Cover Sheet – (Required Form)

Complete all applicable fields. The following, additional information may be helpful:

Field 2. Applicant Identifier – This field is provided for the Applicant’s use if they have an internal tracking system they would like to use in tracking applications they have submitted. This field is not required.

Field 3. Date received by State and State Application Identifier – This is not applicable for RIIA applications; these fields do not need to be completed.

Field 5. Applicant Information – This must be the legal name of eligible Insular Area academic institution (See Part III. A. Eligible Applicant). If a fiscal agent will be involved (see Part III. A.5.), do not list that organization in this field. **Official correspondence will be directed to either the Project Director (Field 15) or the Authorized Representative (Field 19).**

Field 8. Type of Application – Only ‘New’, ‘Renewal’ or ‘Resubmitted’ applications are permitted.

Field 13. Proposed Project Start Date and End Date – A project’s duration should normally be at least 12 months (to allow time for assessment and evaluation) and no more than 36 months. Project Start Date should not occur before August.

Field 16. Estimated Project Funding –

- a. **Total Estimated Project Funding** = Amount of Federal funds requested (See Part II. C. 4, for maximum award amounts permitted.)

Field 20. Pre-application – Not applicable to the RIIA program. No attachments needed.

2. SF 424 R&R 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. SF 424 (R&R) Other Project Information – (Required Form)

Complete all applicable fields. Note: If a ‘Yes’ response is provided for Fields 1, 2, or 4.a, the applicant must provide the necessary assurances prior to an award being made.

Field 6. Project Summary/Abstract – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

Include the following underlined text along with your responses:

- List the Project Title;
- List the Project Director (and any) Co-Project Director(s) (include institutional affiliation for each);
- List your project's primary Educational Need Area: (Part I, C.2.);
- List your project's *key* Discipline: (e.g., list one or more subject areas that are the focus of this project, including, as an example: animal sciences, tropical horticulture, marine science/aquaculture, food safety, human nutrition,...etc.);
- Consortium Project: Yes or No? (Do you plan to share Federal grant funds with other partners? See 'Definitions', Part VIII. E.);
- Partners: If a Consortium Project, list all partner institutions/organizations that will share grant funding (Note: Each Partner so identified needs to have their budget information submitted on a separate R&R Subaward Budget Attachment).
- Total Funds Requested: (List total Federal funds requested for this application. If this project is a Consortium Project, also list each partner's total funds requested next to the institution's name, as entered in the bullet above); and
- Summary Text - Provide a very concise (approx. 250 word) summary of your project to include the following, underlined elements (Note: For a Consortium Project, this summary should be a general, overall explanation of the entire project. Each institution in the consortium will provide a more detailed description of these elements within their individual Project Narrative.):
 - Purpose: What is the major problem your project will address?
 - Audience: Who are the intended beneficiaries? Who will be impacted?
 - Products: What will be produced? and
 - Outcome/Impact: What is the intended result (consequence) of your project? Describe as the primary benefits to your audience. Note: outcomes/impacts should be measurable, and should be included in your project's assessment/evaluation plan to demonstrate you will assess whether or not these benefits were achieved (See Field 7 2.c., below).

Field 7. Project Narrative – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

PLEASE NOTE:

- The Project Narrative for a **Regular Project** application (see Part II, C.1.) shall not exceed 20 pages of written text and up to a maximum of five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (25 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Reviewers will not be required to review material in excess of this limit.
- The Project Narrative for a **Consortium Project** application (see Part II, C.2.) must contain two parts: (1) an overall plan of operation limited to five (5) pages of written text, submitted by the lead institution, containing sufficient background and justification to document the capability (resources and personnel) and support of the lead institution to coordinate this overall consortium project, to include resources to support the overall project evaluation, and (2) a separate Project Narrative of no more than twenty (20) pages of written text for each institution within the consortium receiving grant funds (including the lead institution). A maximum of five additional pages for figures and tables for each institution may also be provided. This maximum (25- page per institution) limit has been

established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Reviewers will not be required to review material in excess of this limit.

Note: While each institution in the consortium should initially prepare its own Project Narrative, the lead institution submitting the consortium application should: (1) edit each institution's submission for consistent content (e.g., coordinate related, inter-institutional procedures and activities), and then (2) combine each institutional narrative into one, comprehensive file attachment containing the combined (but separate) Project Narratives from all participating consortium institutions. Since the lead institution is responsible for the overall consortium project (consistency, collaborative activities, communication and evaluation), this coordinated submission should assist the lead institution in focusing the project's multiple objectives and in promoting rigor and consistency in assessing the overall project's outcomes and impacts.

The Project Narrative in this Field 7 attachment contains the major description of your project. It follows the RIIA program's Evaluation Criteria (Part V. B). Accordingly, please provide your responses in the following format (for both a Regular Project and a Consortium Project, include the Certification of Eligibility statement, followed by your responses to each of the elements 1-5, below. In your responses, include the following, underlined text to assist reviewers in assessing your response to each of the required elements. For a Consortium application, each institution should include a response for each of the elements, 1-5, below):

Certification of Eligibility: i.e., AR certification that the primary applicant organization is an "eligible institution." If the application is a consortium application, then the ARs from at least two members of the consortium must certify that they are "eligible institutions" (not required if the applicant or eligible consortium members have land-grant status. See Part III, A.1-5.).

1. Potential for Advancing the Quality of Education; Significance of the Problem:

- a. Identification of Educational Problem and Project Impact. Briefly summarize: (1) the specific educational problem (or opportunity) to be addressed; (2) the project's target objective(s) (What change in education is proposed?); (3) the anticipated project audience; and (4) the anticipated, overall project impact (Impacts are anticipated project *benefits* that will improve the quality of food and agricultural sciences education. Note: Your *impacts* should be changes you can measure at the project's conclusion.).

Note: Previous Award Accomplishments and Relation to Proposed Project: **If the applicant has received previous funding from this grants program, you must update (summarize) that project's accomplishments to date. Indicate how objectives of this proposed project will complement objectives from your past award.**

- b. Project Justification. Explain your project's chosen Educational Need Area (Part I.C.2). Justify how this Need Area will support your project objectives. Where appropriate, include how the project will specifically improve science, technology, engineering, and

mathematical (STEM) capabilities of students. Will your project impact large numbers of students? Does your project have the potential for adoption by other institutions?

- c. Institutional Long-range Goals. Explain how the project's objectives align with the institution's long-term (five- to ten-year) goals.
- d. Innovation. Describe any creative, innovative approach your project will use to improve the quality of food and agricultural sciences education, solve an education problem, or advance equal opportunity for all students.
- e. Multidisciplinary and/or Problem-based Focus. Indicate how the project is relevant to multiple disciplines within food and agricultural sciences education, or within other academic disciplines. Will the project enhance students' understanding of complex agricultural systems?

2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages:

- a. Plan of Operation and Methodology. How do you plan to administer the project to ensure efficient and effective results?
- b. Timetable. Identify all important project milestones and dates (performance targets that indicate when project goals will be met) as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination, and closeout.
- c. Products, Results and Measurable Outcomes. Outline your project's expected products/results and their outcome (impact) on strengthening food and agricultural sciences education.

(Important Note: Make sure to differentiate among the three terms:

“Products” may be actual *items or services* acquired with funds, e.g., “...developed three, new Web-based courses”; “Results” are *accomplishments* related to the products, e.g., “...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours”; and “Outcomes/Impacts” are the *benefits* to your audience, e.g., “...an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, Web-based course materials”. Outcomes/impacts are the consequences of your project and the most critical elements in your Evaluation Plan. They are a measure of the results by comparison to what might have happened in the absence of the funded project. They answer the question: “So what?”)

- d. Evaluation Plans. How will you know when anticipated products, results and measurable outcomes are achieved? Describe your assessment methods. Also, discuss the strategies and metrics for evaluating progress toward meeting the two Program Goals identified in Part I, B. This section should clearly indicate how you plan to measure outcomes/impacts.
- e. Dissemination Plans. How do you plan to publicize your project's outcomes/impacts? Identify target audiences and explain communication methods to disseminate project results and products.
- f. Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts. Explain how the project will maximize partnership and collaborative efforts to strengthen food and agricultural sciences education (e.g., involvement of faculty in related disciplines at the same institution, joint projects with other educational institutions, or cooperative activities with business or

industry). Provide evidence of support via letters from key partners involved in the project.

3. **Institution Capability and Capacity Building:**

a. Institutional Commitment and Capability. Demonstrate how the institution is committed to ensure completion of this project.

b. Institutional Resources. Document that necessary institutional resources (administrative personnel, facilities, equipment, and/or materials), and other appropriate resources, will be made available to the project.

c. Academic Enhancement. Document how this project will improve teaching and education at the institution (including any partner institutions). Include how any project performance target(s) identified above (2.b., Timetable) will be incorporated into academic instruction at the institution.

d. Continuation Plans. Discuss the likelihood of, or specific plans for, continuation or expansion of the project beyond the period of USDA support. For example, does the institution's long-range budget or academic plan provide for the realistic continuation or expansion of the initiative undertaken by this project after the grant period ends, are plans for eventual self-support built into the project, are plans being made to institutionalize the program if it meets with success, and are there indications of other continuing non-Federal support?

4. Key Personnel: Discuss specific attributes, project responsibilities, and adequacy of each key person associated with the project. Also include the background and qualifications of those personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering the project evaluation and reporting process.

5. Budget and Cost-effectiveness:

a. Budget. In addition to the separate, required budget forms and budget justification included with this application, also explain how such budget items as professional or technical staff time and salary, travel, equipment, etc., are necessary and reasonable to achieve project objectives. Justify that the total budget is allocated adequately between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s), and will be appropriate to carry out the activities of the project.

b. Cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, or leverages additional funds. For example, discuss how the project has the potential to generate a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on an Educational Need Area, or to promote coalition building that could lead to future ventures.

Field 8. Bibliography & Cited References - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format)

If needed, provide a complete list of all references cited in the application. **For each reference, provide the complete name for each author, the year of the publication, full title of the article, name of the journal or book published, volume, and the page numbers.** The references should be listed in alphabetical order using the last name of the first author.

Field 9. Facilities & Other Resources - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format)

If needed, describe the types, location, and availability of instrumentation and physical facilities necessary to carry out the work proposed. **If special academic, private or government laboratories or facilities are being used, include a letter in the application from the authorized representative of the facility describing the proposed arrangements and availability.** This letter should be included as a part of Other Attachments, see Field 11 below.

Field 10. Equipment Documentation - (Optional Attachment – Must be PDF format)

Equipment purchased (defined as in excess of \$5,000 for each item) must be fully justified under this section. Note: Equipment, as previously defined, is normally not funded in a RIIA grant. Other purchases under \$5,000 (e.g., computers, laboratory materials,...etc.) are described, instead, in the Budget Justification section under the ‘Materials and Supplies’ line item.

Field 11. Other Attachments - (Must be PDF format)

- **Response to Previous Review - PDF Attachment. 1-Page Limit.** Title the attachment as ‘Response to Previous Review’ in the document header and save file as ‘Response to Previous Review’. This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” as described under Part II, B., “Types of Applications”. 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.
- **Appendices to Project Narrative – PDF Attachment.** Title the attachment as ‘Appendices’ in the document header and save file as ‘Appendices’. Appendices to the Project Narrative are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the text and/or figures and tables page limitations.
- **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 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.

4. SF 424 (R&R) Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded) – (Required Form)

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. 31 & 32, item 5.3, 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.

5. SF 424 (R&R) Personal Data – (Optional)

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.**

6. SF 424 (R&R) Budget – (Required Form)

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:

Complete one SF 424 (R&R) Budget Form for each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget form for the entire project. If your project involves partners with whom you plan to share Federal funds (Consortium Project), make sure (a) you include a budget form for the applicant institution and each project partner (subaward/consortium), for each 12-month period and a cumulative budget form, and (b) your budget figures reflect the required budget sharing criteria (See ‘Definitions’, Part VIII. E, Consortium Project). Project Director(s) may be invited to attend at least one National Project Directors meeting, if offered, in Washington, DC, or any other announced location. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in your application’s travel expenses.

Field H. Indirect Costs –

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, amended the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs 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. (See Part IV.D., below, “Funding Restrictions.”)

Field K. Budget Justification – (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

(a) Provide a Budget Justification that reflects each 12-month period, plus a cumulative budget justification for the entire project. If your project involves partners with whom you plan to share Federal funds (Consortium Project), make sure the attachment reflects information (a) for the applicant institution as well as each project partner (subaward/consortium), for each 12-month period plus a cumulative column total for the entire project, and (b) your budget figures reflect the required budget sharing criteria (See ‘Definitions’, Part VIII. E, Consortium Project).

The Budget Justification should follow a standard spreadsheet format (‘Budget Line Item’ = row; ‘Budget Year’ and ‘Cumulative Project’ = columns) including a detailed, itemized breakdown of each of the line item categories reported on the SF 424 (R&R) Budget form. This Budget Justification attachment provides a more detailed, itemized breakdown for each budget line item

reported on the SF 424 (R&R) Budget form (i.e., itemize your complete list of ‘Materials and Supplies’ showing per unit costs and number of units to be purchased, etc.). Include a description for each requested budget line item found on the (R&R) Budget form (i.e., total budget amount reported on the SF 424 (R&R) Budget form should equal the total budget amount reported on the Budget Justification attachment).

(b) Matching: CSREES does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

7. SF 424 (R&R) Subaward Budget Attachment – (Only required if submitting a Consortium Project application)

8. Supplemental Information – (Required Form)

Complete all applicable fields. Consult the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide for instructions.

Field 2. Program Code -

- For the ‘Program Code Name’ field, enter the text: “Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas”.
- For the ‘Program Code’ field, enter: “AA-Q”.

Field 8. Conflict of Interest List - (Required Attachment – Must be PDF format)

See format in CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide, Section VI, 1.8, p.46, for instructions. Include this one-page attachment even if your responses to the questions are “N.A.”.

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 seven components of the SF 424 Research and Related (R&R) Application Package been completed? Did you use the “Check Package for Errors” feature of Adobe (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 Profile (Expanded)
 - SF 424 R&R Personal Data
 - SF 424 R&R Budget
 - SF 424 R&R Subaward Budget Attachment (If submitting a Consortium Project application or subawarding to another organization)

- Supplemental Information Form
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet**
 - Have all required fields been completed? Field 5 must contain the name of the eligible institution.
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s)**
 - Have all required fields been completed?
- ◆ **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 a single Project Narrative PDF file (containing narratives from all consortium institutions) been attached to this form in Field 7?
 - Are responses provided for all underlined text in the RFA for this section (Field 7, 1-5)?
 - Do responses clearly distinguish between project Products, Results and Outcomes/Impacts (Field 7, Item 2.c.)?
 - Does this section adhere to the format and page limitations?
 - Bibliography & References Cited (Optional)**
 - If needed, has the Bibliography & References Cited PDF been attached to this form in Field 8?
 - Are all references cited and are all citations referenced?
 - Do all citations contain a title, the names of all authors, and are they in accepted journal format?
 - Facilities & Other Resources (Optional)**
 - Attach as PDF file in Field 9, but only if needed.
 - Equipment (Optional)**
 - 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.
 - 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?
 - Collaborative Arrangements**
 - Has the Collaborative Arrangements PDF been attached to this form in Field 11?
 - Appendices to Project Narrative**
 - Has the Appendices to Project Narrative PDF been attached to this form in Field 11?
- ◆ **SF 424 R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)**
 - 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 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 consortium projects, has a budget justification been included for each institution involved?
- ◆ **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 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 April 10, 2009 (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 Agency 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

The use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility is not allowed under this program. With prior approval, and in accordance with the cost principles set forth in OMB

Circular No. A-21, some grant funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations, or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching or research spaces in order to carry out a funded project. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must demonstrate that the alterations, renovations, or repairs are essential to achieving the major purpose of the project. Grant funds may not be used for endowment investing.

Section 7132 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, amended the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310(a)), limiting indirect costs 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.

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 and weights below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Potential for Advancing Quality of Education/Significance of the Problem (30 points).

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing educational equity, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, and potential for adoption by other institutions.

2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages (25 points).

This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. Emphasis is placed on the quality of educational or research support provided to the applicant institution through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project.

3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building (20 points).

This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its teaching or research capacity. Elements include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic or research

enhancement, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support.

4. Key Personnel (15 points).

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts and the dissemination of these findings.

5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (10 points).

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, leverages additional funds, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority educational or research need areas.

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. (**Note: *This management information will also be required from designated Fiscal Agents.***) 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 (2 CFR 215 and 3430 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:

2 CFR Part 215—Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-110).

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 3017--USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and 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 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 Nonformula Grant Programs—General Grant Administrative Provisions and Program.

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

1. Project Directors Conference

During the tenure of a grant, Project Director(s) may be invited to attend at least one National Project Directors meeting, if offered, in Washington, D.C., or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, future directions for education reform, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results. Reasonable travel expenses to attend this meeting may be included in your application's travel expenses.

2. Annual Performance Report

An Annual Performance Report must be submitted within 90 days after the completion of the first year of the project, and annually thereafter during the life of the grant. Generally, the Annual Performance Reports should include a summary of the overall progress toward project objectives, current problems or unusual developments, the next year's activities, and any other information that is pertinent to the ongoing project or which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award. Annual Performance Reports are to be submitted through the CRIS system described in paragraph 4., below.

3. Final Performance Report

A Final Performance Report must be submitted within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The expiration date is specified in the award documents and modifications thereto, if any. Generally, the Final Performance Report should be a summary of the completed project, including: a review of project objectives and accomplishments; a description of any products and outcomes resulting from the project; activities undertaken to disseminate products and outcomes; partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from the project; future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project; the impact of the project on the Project Director(s), students, the departments, the institution, and the food and agricultural sciences higher education system; and data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The report must document how project accomplishments (products, results and impacts...etc.) have been published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. The Final Performance Report should be accompanied by samples or copies of any products or publications resulting from or developed by the project. The Final Performance Report also must contain any other information which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award. The Final Performance Report is to be submitted through the CRIS system described in paragraph 4., below.

4. Current Research Information System (CRIS) Reports

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

PART VII-AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Mr. P. Gregory Smith; National Education Program Leader; Higher Education Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; STOP 2251; 1400 Independence Ave, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2251; Telephone: (202) 720-1973; Fax: (202) 720-2030; E-mail: gsmith@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. Changes in Project Period: The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

D. Regulatory Information

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

E. Definitions

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

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

Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) 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 (AR) means the president, director, chief executive officer, or other designated official of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

Award means the provision of funds by the Secretary to an entity 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 this solicitation.

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

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

Citizen or national of the United States means: (1) a citizen or native resident of a State, the District of Columbia, or any Insular Area; or, (2) a person defined in the Immigration and

Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101 (a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States. When eligibility is claimed solely on the basis of permanent allegiance, documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to CSREES upon request.

Consortium of Insular Area Institutions means two or more eligible, Insular Area Institutions that have entered into a cooperative arrangement for the purpose of carrying out a common objective, and which demonstrates its ability to carry out allowed activities and its commitment to the goals of this grants program. The term also applies to a public or private nonprofit agency, organization, or institution designated or created by two or more eligible, Insular Area Institutions for the purpose of carrying out a common objective on the group's behalf, and which demonstrates its ability to carry out allowed activities and its commitment to the goals of this grants program.

Consortium project application means an application for a project: (1) which will involve a consortium of at least two or more eligible, Insular Area Institutions, which may work in cooperation with one or more other entities including units of State government and private sector organizations; and (2) where the applicant institution and each cooperating entity receiving grant funds will assume a significant role in the conduct of the proposed project. To demonstrate a substantial involvement with the project, the applicant institution submitting a Consortium Project application must retain at least 30 percent but not more than 70 percent of the awarded funds, and no eligible RIIA institution receiving funds as a sub-grantee may receive less than 10 percent of awarded funds. Only the consortium members receiving funds as eligible sub-grantees must meet the definitions for an eligible, Insular Area Institution as specified in this section; other institution(s) participating in a consortium project application under subcontracts are not required to meet the definitions for an eligible, Insular Area Institution.

Department means the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Education means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters related thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by colleges and universities offering associate, baccalaureate, or higher degrees.

Educational Need Area means the specific area(s) of educational focus identified in the RFA and addressed by the applicant's application. Educational Need Areas are derived from statutory language authorizing the grants program and specific Educational Need Areas may be targeted for priority funding support in the RFA.

Eligible institution means an institution of higher education, as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1995 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)), that is located in an Insular Area as defined in this section, and that has a demonstrable capacity to carry out teaching and extension programs in the food and agricultural sciences. Land-grant colleges and universities in Insular Areas are automatically eligible institutions. The term eligible institution also applies to any

branch of any institution of higher education that by itself satisfies the requirements contained in the definition of an Insular Area Institution, including:

- (1) the individual branches of a State university system or public system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree granting institutions, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of an eligible institution;
- (2) independent branch campuses of individual institutions, provided that they otherwise satisfy the definition of an eligible institution; or
- (3) a consortium of two or more eligible, individual Insular Area Institutions.

Eligible participant means an individual who is a citizen or national of the U.S. as defined in this section.

Food and agricultural sciences means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in the food, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities concerned with the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, utilization, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, and inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, home economics, rural human ecology, rural economic, community, or business development, and closely allied disciplines.

Grantee (see Awardee).

Independent branch campus means a unit of a 2-year or 4-year institution of higher education that is geographically apart from the main campus, is permanent in nature, offers courses for credit and programs leading to an associate or bachelor's degree, and is autonomous to the extent that it has its own faculty and administrative or supervisory organization and its own budgetary and hiring authority.

Institution of higher education means an educational institution in any State that:

- (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- (3) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
- (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
- (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education for the granting of pre-accreditation status, and the Secretary of Education has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

Insular Area means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

Insular Area Institution means an institution of higher education as defined in this section that is located in an Insular Area as defined above.

Land-grant colleges and universities means those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of July 2, 1862 (12 Stat. 503-505, as amended; 7 U.S.C. 301-305, 307 and 308), including the land-grant institutions in the Insular Areas; or the Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 417-419, as amended; 7 U.S.C. 321-326 and 328), including Tuskegee University and West Virginia State University.

Nonprofit as applied to a school, college, university, agency, organization, or institution means a school, college, university, agency, organization, or institution owned and operated by one or more nonprofit corporations or associations, no part of the net earnings of which inures, or may lawfully inure, to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

Outcomes mean specific, measurable project results and benefits that, when assessed and reported, indicate the project's plan of operation has been achieved.

Peer reviewers mean experts or consultants qualified by training and experience in particular field of science, education, or technology to give expert advice on the scientific and technical merit of grant applications or on the relevance of those applications to one or more of the application evaluation criteria. Peer reviewers may be ad hoc or convened as a panel.

Plan of operation means a detailed, step-by-step description of how the applicant intends to accomplish the project's objectives. At a minimum, the plan of operation should include a time line of major activities to be undertaken, descriptions of protocols and procedures to be followed, an explanation of how resources will be acquired and used, a timetable indicating when projected accomplishments and outcomes are to be achieved and an explanation of how they will be assessed, and an outline of the qualifications and responsibilities of all key project personnel.

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer as defined in this section.

Private sector means all non-public entities, including for-profit and non-profit commercial and non-commercial entities, and including private or independent educational institutions.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of one or more of the educational need areas targeted for support by a grant awarded under this program.

Project director means the single individual designated by the grantee in the grant application, and approved by the Authorized Departmental Officer, who is responsible for the direction and management of the project [also known as a principal investigator for research activities].

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

Regular project application means as application for a project: (1) where the applicant institution will be the sole entity involved in the execution of the project; or (2) which will involve the applicant institution and one or more other entities, but where the involvement of the other entity(ies) does not meet the requirements for a consortium project application as defined in this section.

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

State means a State, the District of Columbia, and any insular area.

Teaching (see Education).

Teaching capacity means the quality and depth of an institution's academic programs infrastructure as evidenced by its: curriculum, teaching faculty, instructional delivery systems, student experiential learning opportunities, scientific instrumentation for teaching, library resources, academic standing, diversity of its faculty and student body, faculty and student recruitment and retention programs, and ability to achieve maximum results in the development of scientific and professional expertise for the Nation's food and agricultural system.

United States means the several States, the territories and possessions of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

Units of State government means all state institutions, including the formal divisions of State government (i.e., the official state agencies such as departments of transportation and education), local government agencies (e.g., a county human services office), and including individual state educational institutions (e.g., public colleges and universities).

USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.