

Integrated Organic Program

FY 2005 Request for Applications

Due Date:
Application: May 2, 2005



U.S. Department of Agriculture



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

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

Integrated Organic Program

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.303, Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program and under 10.307, Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) May 2, 2005 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will 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), USDA is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program. Such comments will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c) (2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c) (2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted by the deadline provided in the **DATES** portions of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy, Oversight and Funds Management Branch; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the FY 2005 Integrated Organic Program RFA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) requests applications for the Integrated Organic Program for fiscal year (FY) 2005 to solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research, education, and extension activities in two program areas: (1) Organic Transitions Program (ORG); and (2) Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI). ORG funds the development and implementation of research, extension and higher education programs to improve the competitiveness of organic producers and producers who are adopting organic practices. OREI funds research and extension programs that enhance the ability of producers and processors who have already adopted organic standards to grow and market high quality organic agricultural products.

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PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The Organic Transitions Program (ORG) is authorized by Section 406 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) (7 U.S.C. 7626) which allows the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a competitive grants program that provides funding for integrated, multifunctional agricultural research, extension, and education activities. Subject to the availability of appropriations to carry out this program, the Secretary may award grants to colleges and universities (as defined by section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3103)) on a competitive basis for projects that address priorities in United States agriculture and involve integrated research, education, and extension activities, as determined by the Secretary in consultation with the National Agricultural Research, Extension, Education, and Economics Advisory Board (NAREEEAB).

Section 7206 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (FSRIA) amended section 406(b) of AREERA to add the 1994 Land-Grant Institutions as eligible to apply for grants under this authority.

The Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI) is authorized by Section 7218 of the FSRIA which amended Section 1672B of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 5925b) allowing the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with the NAREEEAB, to make competitive grants to support research and extension activities regarding organically grown and processed agricultural commodities for six purposes (see Part II, C.). The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to make competitive grants, for periods not to exceed five years, to State agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, Federal agencies, national laboratories, private organizations or corporations, and individuals, for research to further the programs of the Department of Agriculture.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The Integrated Organic Program seeks to solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems through the integration of research, education, and extension activities in two program areas: (1) the Organic Transitions Program (ORG); and (2) the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative (OREI). ORG funds the development and implementation of research, extension and higher education programs to improve the competitiveness of organic producers and producers who are adopting organic practices. OREI funds research and extension programs that enhance the ability of producers and processors who have already adopted organic standards to grow and market high quality organic agricultural products.

The Integrated Organic Program strongly encourages applicants to develop partnerships that include collaboration with: (1) small- or mid-sized, accredited colleges and universities; and/or (2) 1890 Land-Grant Institutions, 1994 Land-Grant Institutions,

Hispanic-serving institutions, and/or other institutions that serve high-risk, under-served, or hard-to-reach audiences or international partnerships, linkages, and exchanges that contribute to or solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems in the U.S.

The Integrated Organic Program is particularly interested in proposed projects that emphasize research and outreach that assist farmers and ranchers with whole farm planning and ecosystem integration. Projects should plan to deliver applied production information to producers. Fieldwork for both program areas must be done on certified organic land or on land in transition to organic certification, as appropriate to project goals and objectives. Refer to the USDA National Organic Program (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>) for organic production standards.

Clinical trials investigating animal health issues need not be done in a certified organic setting. However, where animal management can play a pivotal role in the response of the animal to the proposed intervention (as might be the case when considering pasture-raised animals versus those in contained animal feeding operations (CAFO)) animals that have been raised under organic standards should be used in the trials.

PART II—AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. In FY 2005, CSREES anticipates that approximately \$1.8 million will be available to support the Organic Transitions program area and that approximately \$2.9 million will be available to support the Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative. Both program areas will accept applications proposing project periods of up to four (4) years.

No minimum or maximum annual project budgets have been established for the Integrated Organic Program. However, with respect to Objective 6. of OREI (see Part II, C.), CSREES intends to fund up to three long-term projects each year using continuation grants. A continuation grant is a grant instrument by which the Department agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, funds are available for this purpose, and continued support would be in the best interest of the Federal government and the public. While prohibited by law from extending grants beyond five years, if these three elements are met, CSREES plans to provide additional support to these long-term projects. CSREES is under no obligation to award a continuation grant and should CSREES decide to make such an award, the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) must make an affirmative decision to do so. Applicants wishing consideration as long-term projects should request initial funding periods of 48 months. Continuation funding can be requested during the third year of the project, but a full application that documents successes and impacts will be expected.

B. Types of Applications

In FY 2005, applications submitted to the Integrated Organic Program will be considered either as new applications or as resubmitted applications. Resubmitted applications should include a section immediately following the Project Summary page that indicates the major recommendations of the previous panel and how the current application addresses those recommendations (See Part IV, B, 5.). This section **does not** count towards the 21-page limit for the Project Description. All applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V, Application Review Requirements.

C. Project Types

CSREES expects that applicants will consult with organic producers and/or processors before developing project applications. Producers and/or processors should play an important role in developing project goals and objectives; in implementing the experimental or extension plan; and in evaluating and disseminating project results and outcomes. Farmers and others with little training or experience in developing and

implementing research and outreach projects should consult with appropriate specialists. These specialists might include university scientists and Extension personnel or production consultants with scientific training. Projects must involve work that is necessary, both in terms of stakeholder preferences and the magnitude of the problem. There is an expectation that a local and/or regional advisory panel will inform the program throughout its life. An outcome-oriented plan for disseminating information derived from project work must be an integral part of the project.

While it is desirable that extension materials be developed for organic systems, it has not been demonstrated that traditional extension methods suit the needs of organic producers and processors. Projects with the goal of developing extension information for organic agriculture should consider testing a number of delivery systems and methods as appropriate for the information. Applicants who wish to develop formal courses on organic agriculture should consider the possibility of packaging portions of the formal course into extension materials. Additionally, since it has not been demonstrated that traditional classroom instruction is appropriate for the delivery of information on organic agriculture, applicants should consider testing hypotheses to determine the most appropriate delivery method for formal coursework.

The following websites may serve as useful information resources in developing Integrated Organic Program applications:

- National Organic Program (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/>);
- Organic Farming Research Foundation (<http://www.ofrf.org/scoar/overview.html>);
- National Organic Standards Board (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nosb/index.htm>);
- CSREES Organic Agriculture page <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/organicagriculture>; and
- Organic Livestock Research Needs Survey http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/ag_systems/res/livestock_combined.pdf.

In FY 2005, applications are being solicited in two (2) program areas. Applicants need not designate the program area to which they are applying. As eligibility and objectives permit, each application will be considered for funding under each program area. Each program area has a specific focus, and it is essential that applicants read the following descriptions carefully when preparing applications. Program-area-specific goals are provided.

Organic Transitions (ORG)

Program Area Number: 113

Organic production became one of the fastest growing segments of U.S. agriculture during the 1990s. Many reasons are cited for adopting organic practices, including: (a) economic (to lower input costs, to capture high value markets), (b) environmental (to conserve nonrenewable resources, to be an environmental steward), and (c) health (to reduce exposure to agrochemicals). Organic production is not simply the avoidance of conventional chemical inputs, nor is it the substitution of natural inputs for synthetic ones. In organic production, overall system health is emphasized and the interaction of management practices is the primary concern. Organic producers implement a wide range of strategies to develop and maintain biological diversity and replenish soil fertility, all of which promotes a more sustainable system. Making the transition to

organic production generally requires producers to understand a great deal of new information and to experiment with combinations of techniques and technologies to meet their needs.

The purpose of this program area is to fund the development and implementation of research, extension and higher education programs to improve the competitiveness of organic livestock and crop producers. Projects should plan to deliver applied production information to producers and students. Fieldwork must be done on certified organic land or on land in transition to organic certification, as appropriate to project goals and objectives. Refer to the USDA National Organic Program (<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop>) for organic production standards. Clinical trials investigating animal health issues need not be done in a certified organic setting. However, where animal management can play a pivotal role in the response of the animal to the proposed intervention (as might be the case when considering pasture-raised animals versus those in contained animal feeding operations (CAFO)), animals that have been raised under organic standards should be used in the trials.

ORG has the following goals. In FY 2005, applications that address goals 1, 4 or 5 will be given highest priority.

Goals:

1. Develop and improve programs to address pest and pest-related problems to strengthen the livestock and crop systems approach of organic agriculture, including the effects of soil biology, cover crops, crop rotations, and crop/livestock integration on crop livestock health and productivity and animal nutrient programs;
2. Identify the relationship of applied organic fertility management to crop health and the resistance of crops to pests and diseases as well as on livestock health and nutrition;
3. Develop and demonstrate education and information training systems designed as education tools for county Cooperative Extension personnel and other agricultural professionals who advise producers regarding organic practices. This could include sharing or developing information on a national or regional level regarding pest mitigation, soil fertility building, best organic cultural practices, livestock management, and cataloguing animal health problems for various species and listing approved health care options and allowed medications;
4. Develop and implement formal courses for organic livestock and crop producers that address the complexity of issues surrounding organic agriculture; and
5. Develop the scientific basis to improve current organic standards and to extend organic standards to commodities that are not currently covered by the USDA National Organics Program, including animal products and processing.

Program Area Number: 113

Organic Agriculture Research & Extension Initiative (OREI)

The purpose of this program area is to fund research and extension programs that will enhance the ability of producers and processors who have already adopted organic standards to grow and market high quality organic agricultural products. These funds shall be allocated for high priority aspects of organic agricultural systems research and extension. Priority concerns include biological, physical, and social sciences, including economics.

OREI has the following six goals (some potential examples of research and extension areas within each goal are listed). In FY 2005, applications that address goals 1, 2, 3 or 6 will be given highest priority.

Goals:

1. Facilitate the development of organic agriculture production, breeding, and processing methods.
 - Functionally identify soil microbial communities and ways to manage microbial dynamics to enhance nutrient cycling and disease suppression;
 - Develop systemic approaches to weed, insect and disease management;
 - Prevent, control, and treat internal and external parasites in various livestock species; and
 - Breed crops for disease and insect resistance, good yield in a biologically diverse system, compatibility with intercrops, good response to organic fertility sources, horizontal resistance (traits determined by multiple genes).
2. Evaluate the potential economic benefits to animal and crop producers and processors who use organic methods.
 - Analyze potential economic costs, returns and risks of organic production systems;
 - Use environmental valuation tools to quantify externalities of producing food, and compare externalities of producing organic and conventional food;
 - Analyze price and market structures, including ability of small-, medium-, and large-scale growers to access different markets, in order to frame policies that minimize concentration within the industry; and
 - Analyze marketing channels to document how organic food is distributed, what share of the organic food dollar is returned to the farmer, and the implications of large-scale manufacturers entering the organic market.
3. Explore international trade opportunities for organically grown and processed agricultural commodities.
 - Compare compatibility of certification standards used in different parts of the world, with the ultimate goal of harmonization and reciprocity;
 - Undertake marketing studies of international consumer demand for U.S.-produced organic goods; and
 - Perform “Welfare analyses” (quantified gains and losses for producers and consumers) of trade policies affecting international competitiveness, including implementation of the National Organic Program, domestic support programs such as the Conservation Security Act, country of origin labeling, GMO labeling, etc.
4. Determine desirable traits for organic commodities.

- Examine relationships between nutrients in the soil and nutrients in the food grown on that soil, including long-term soil nutrient and crop nutrient profiles under conventional and organic management;
 - Perform comparisons of nutrient levels between organic and conventional crops and relationship, if any, between taste and nutrient profile;
 - Investigate the role of post-harvest handling and treatment in the maintenance of quality in fresh market organic products; and
 - Determine the reasons for consumer preferences for organic goods.
5. Identify marketing and policy constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture.
- Analyze opportunities and constraints to organic agriculture resulting from provisions of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002;
 - Investigate specific barriers to markets, such as scale-based regulations that restrict family farm access to processors and/or markets;
 - Study negative lender perception of organic farming and ways to change this; and
 - Analyze regulatory barriers, such as lack of access to Federal farm programs, and developing solutions to these challenges.
6. Conduct advanced on-farm research and development that emphasizes observation of, experimentation with, and innovation for working organic farms, including research relating to animal and crop production and marketing and to socioeconomic conditions. (Note: Many topics from other goal areas can be conducted on working farms.)
- Develop rigorous on-farm systems research designs; and
 - Conduct long-term, interdisciplinary systems research.

PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. Eligible Applicants

For ORG, applications may be submitted by colleges and universities (as defined in Section 1404 of NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3103). For purposes of the ORG, the terms “college” and “university” mean an educational institution in any State that (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate, from a school providing secondary education; (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; (3) provides an educational program for which a bachelor’s degree or any other higher degree is awarded; (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association. Applications also may be submitted by 1994 Land-Grant Institutions (as defined in Part VIII, E.). **A research foundation maintained by a college or university is not eligible to receive an award under this program.**

For OREI, applications may be submitted by State agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, Federal agencies, national laboratories, private organizations or corporations, and individuals.

For both ORG and OREI, all award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

If a grant provides a particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, the grant recipient is required to match the USDA funds awarded on a dollar-for-dollar basis from non-Federal sources with cash and/or in-kind contributions. (See Part IV, B., 13 for details.)

CSREES may waive the matching funds requirement for a grant if CSREES determines that: (1) the results of the project, while of particular benefit to a specific agricultural commodity, are likely to be applicable to agricultural commodities generally; or (2) the project involves a minor commodity, the project deals with scientifically important research, and the grant recipient is unable to satisfy the matching funds requirement.

PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Address to Request Application Package

Program application materials are available at the CSREES Funding Opportunities website <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/forms.html>. If you do not have access to the web page or have trouble downloading material and you would like a hard copy, you may contact the Proposal Services Unit, Competitive Programs, USDA/CSREES at (202) 401-5048. When calling the Proposal Services Unit, please indicate that you are requesting the RFA and associated application forms for the Integrated Organic Program. These materials also may be requested via Internet by sending a message with your name, mailing address (not e-mail) and phone number to psb@csrees.usda.gov. State that you want a copy of the RFA and the associated application forms for the Integrated Organic Program.

B. Content and Form of Application Submission

In response to stakeholder input, the format for proposals has been modified from previous RFAs. These changes can be found on pages 14 to 22. Please be sure to follow these new guidelines as proposals that do not follow the guidelines will likely receive unfavorable reviews. Applicants should include budget requests for funds to travel to Washington, D.C. during 2006 to present current results at a conference.

CSREES plans to publish the RFA for FY 2006 in early October of 2006. Proposals will be due 90 days after publication of the RFA.

Applications should be prepared following the guidelines and the instructions below. Each application must contain the following elements in the order indicated.

- 1. General.** Use the following guidelines to prepare an application. Proper preparation of applications will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion:
 - (a) Prepare the application on only one side of the page using standard size (8 1/2" x 11") white paper, one-inch margins, typed or word processed using no type smaller than 12 point font, and single-spaced. Use an easily readable font face (e.g., Geneva, Helvetica, Times Roman).
 - (b) Number each page of the application sequentially, starting with the Project Description, including the budget pages, required forms, and any appendices.
 - (c) Staple the application in the upper left-hand corner. Do not bind. An original and fourteen (14) copies (15 total) must be submitted in one package, along with eleven (11) additional copies of the Project Summary, Form CSREES-2003, as a separate attachment.
 - (d) Include original illustrations (photographs, color prints, etc.) in all copies of the application to prevent loss of meaning through poor quality reproduction.
 - (e) The contents of the application should be assembled in the following order:
 - (1) Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)
 - (2) Table of Contents

- (3) Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003)
- (4) Response to Previous Review, if applicable
- (5) Project Description
- (6) References
- (7) Appendices to Project Description
- (8) Key Personnel
- (9) Collaborative Arrangements (including letters of support)
- (10) Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007)
- (11) Budget (Form CSREES-2004)
- (12) Budget Narrative
- (13) Matching, if applicable
- (14) Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)
- (15) Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)
- (16) Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)
- (17) Page B, Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002), Personal Data on Project Director

2. Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002)

(a) Page A

Each copy of each grant application must contain a Proposal Cover Page, Form CSREES-2002. One copy of the application, preferably the original, must contain the pen-and-ink signature(s) of the proposing project director(s) (PD) and the authorized organizational representative (AOR), the individual who possesses the necessary authority to commit the organization's time and other relevant resources to the project. If there are more than three co-PDs for an application, please list additional co-PDs on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information and signatures) and attach to the Proposal Cover Page (Form CSREES-2002). Any proposed PD or co-PD whose signature does not appear on Form CSREES-2002 or attached additional sheets will not be listed on any resulting grant award. Complete both signature blocks located at the bottom of the Proposal Cover Page form. Please note that Form CSREES-2002 is comprised of two parts - Page A, which is the Proposal Cover Page, and Page B, which is the Personal Data on Project Director.

Form CSREES-2002 serves as a source document for the CSREES grants database; it is therefore important that it be accurately completed in its entirety, especially the e-mail addresses requested in Blocks 4.c. and 18.c. However, the following items are highlighted as having a high potential for errors or misinterpretations:

1. Type of Performing Organization (Block 6.a. and 6.b.). For Block 6.a., a check should be placed in the appropriate box to identify the type of organization, which is the legal recipient named in Block 1. Only one box should be checked. For Block 6.b., please check as many boxes as apply to the affiliation of the PD listed in Block 16.

2. Title of Proposed Project (Block 7.). The title of the project must be brief (140-character maximum, including spaces), yet represent the major thrust of the effort being proposed. Project titles are read by a variety of nonscientific people; therefore, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible. In addition, introductory phrases such as “investigation of,” “research on,” “education for,” or “outreach that” should not be used.
3. Program to Which You Are Applying (Block 8.). Enter Integrated Organic Program - 113.
4. DUNS NO. (Data Universal Numbering System) (Block 11.). A DUNS number must be included for the legal recipient named in Block 1. (except applications from individuals). See Part VIII, G.
5. Type of Request (Block 14.). Check “New” or “Resubmission”.
6. Project Director (PD) (Blocks 16.-19.). Blocks 16.-18. are used to identify the PD and Block 19. to identify co-PDs. If needed, additional co-PDs may be listed on a separate sheet of paper and attached to Form CSREES-2002, the Proposal Cover Page, with the applicable co-PD information and signatures. Listing multiple co-PDs, beyond those required for genuine collaboration, is discouraged.
7. Other Possible Sponsors (Block 21.). List the names or acronyms of all other public or private sponsors including other agencies within USDA to which your application has been or might be sent. In the event you decide to send your application to another organization or agency at a later date, you must inform the identified CSREES program area contact as soon as practicable. Submitting your application to other potential sponsors will not prejudice its review by CSREES; however, submitting the same (i.e., duplicate) application to another CSREES program or program area is not allowed.

(b) Page B

Page B should be submitted only with the original signature copy of the application and should be placed as the last page of the original copy of the application. This page contains personal data on the PD(s). CSREES requests this information in order to monitor the operation of its review and awards processes. This page will not be duplicated or used during the review process. Please note that failure to submit this information will in no way affect consideration of your application.

3. Table of Contents: For consistency and ease in locating information, each application must contain a detailed Table of Contents immediately following the Proposal Cover Page. The Table of Contents should contain page numbers for each component of the application. Page numbering should begin with the first page of the Project Description.

4. Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003): The application must contain a Project Summary, Form CSREES-2003. The summary should be approximately 250 words, contained within the box, placed immediately after the Table of Contents, and not numbered. The names and affiliated organizations of all PDs and co-PDs should be listed

on this form, in addition to the title of the project. The summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the activity to be undertaken and should focus on: overall project goal(s) and supporting objectives; plans to accomplish project goal(s); and relevance of the project to the goals of the Integrated Organic Program. The importance of a concise, informative Project Summary cannot be overemphasized. If there are more than three co-PDs for an application, please list additional co-PDs on a separate sheet of paper (with appropriate information) and attach to the Project Summary (Form CSREES-2003).

5. Response to Previous Review: This requirement only applies to “Resubmitted Applications” (as detailed in Part II, B.). PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page, titled “RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW,” which is to be placed directly after the Project Summary, Form CSREES-2003. Response to Previous Review is not considered in the page limitation for the Project Description.

6. Project Description: PLEASE NOTE: The Project Description includes the following: Introduction, Objectives, Methods, Cooperation and Institutional Units Involved, and Facilities and Equipment. The Project Description section may not exceed twenty-one (21) single-spaced pages including figures and tables. The Introduction may not exceed six (6) pages, and the rest of the Project Description may not exceed fifteen (15) pages. These maxima have been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Applications that exceed these limits risk being returned to the applicant without review. Reviewers are not required to read materials that exceed these limits.

While applicants may include additional information, the Project Description must include the following:

(a) Introduction: The Introduction should not exceed six (6) pages. Include information on the following in the order identified:

- (1) A concise statement of the long-term goal(s) of the proposed project;
- (2) Summarize the relevant body of knowledge or past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. In an appendix, describe the Current Research Information System (CRIS) (<http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>) database search that was used and summarize the results of the search;
- (3) Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities or publications related to the proposed activity including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project;
- (4) Provide estimates of the magnitude of the issues in economic terms and their relevance to stakeholders and ongoing organic agricultural research, education, and extension programs; and
- (5) Describe the role of stakeholders in problem identification and implementation of results.

(b) Objectives:

- (1) Provide a brief review of the goal(s) stated in the Introduction; and
- (2) Present a clear, concise set of project objectives.

(c) Methods: Explicitly describe the procedures by objective for the proposed effort, including:

- (1) Techniques and methods to be employed, including their feasibility and rationale for their use in this project. For specialized methodology, such as plant breeding, list citations that describe what is being proposed in detail;
- (2) Timeline for proposed research, education, and/or extension activities. Applicants must provide milestones and verifiable indicators to measure research progress;
- (3) Means by which extension and/or education activities will be evaluated. Applicants must describe plans to evaluate the outreach component including means by which data will be analyzed and interpreted; details of plans to communicate results to stakeholders and the public;
- (4) Description of stakeholder involvement in identification of project priorities, their implementation and adoption; and
- (5) Description of anticipated results or expected outcomes. Applicants must provide milestones and verifiable indicators to measure impact across a broad range of criteria (e.g., a timeline for grower adoption of techniques that lead to production, economic, and environmental benefits).

(d) Cooperation and Institutional Units Involved: Cooperative, multi-institutional and multidisciplinary applications are encouraged. Where applicable, identify each institutional unit contributing to the project and designate the lead institution or institutional unit. Clearly define the programmatic roles, responsibilities and budget for each institutional partner.

(e) Facilities and Equipment: Briefly identify the primary facilities and major types of equipment that are available for use or assignment to the project. List all items of nonexpendable equipment needed to conduct the project, include dollar amounts and justify funds requested for acquisition of equipment.

7. References: All references to works cited should be complete, including titles and all co-authors, and should conform to an acceptable journal format. References are not considered in the 21-page limitation for the Project Description.

8. Appendices to Project Description: Appendices to the Project Description are allowed if they are directly germane to the proposed project. The addition of appendices should not be used to circumvent the page limitation.

9. Key Personnel: The following should be included, as applicable:

- (a)** The roles and responsibilities of each PD and/or collaborator should be clearly described; and
- (b)** A current curriculum vitae of the PD and each co-PD, senior associate, and other professional personnel. This section should include vitae of all key persons who are

expected to work on the project, whether or not CSREES funds are sought for their support. The vitae should be limited to two (2) pages each in length, excluding publications listings. The vitae should include a presentation of academic and research credentials, as applicable; e.g., earned degrees, teaching experience, employment history, professional activities, honors and awards, and grants received. A chronological list of **all** publications in **refereed journals** during the past **four (4) years**, including those in press, must be provided for each project member for whom a curriculum vitae is provided. Also, list only those **non-refereed** technical publications that have **relevance** to the proposed project. All authors should be listed in the same order as they appear on each paper cited, along with the title and complete reference as these usually appear in journals.

10. Collaborative Arrangements: If it will be 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 application, vitae or resume should be provided. In addition, evidence (e.g., letter of support) 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. See instructions in the application forms for completing Form CSREES-2004, Budget.

11. Conflict-of-Interest List (Form CSREES-2007): A Conflict-of-Interest List, Form CSREES-2007, must be provided for all individuals who have submitted a vitae in response to item 9 of this part. Each Form CSREES-2007 should list alphabetically, by the last names, the full names of the individuals in the following categories: (a) all co-authors on publications within the past four years, including pending publications and submissions; (b) all collaborators on projects within the past four years, including current and planned collaborations; (c) all thesis or postdoctoral advisees/advisors within the past four years; and (d) all persons in your field with whom you have had a consulting or financial arrangement within the past four years, who stand to gain by seeing the project funded. This form is necessary to assist program staff in excluding from application review those individuals who have conflicts of interest with the personnel in the grant application. The program contact must be informed of any additional conflicts of interest that arise after the application is submitted.

12. Budget

(a) Budget Form (Form CSREES-2004)

Prepare the Budget, Form CSREES-2004, in accordance with instructions provided with the application forms. *A budget form is required for each year of requested support. In addition, a cumulative budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period.* Indirect costs should be calculated as specified under Part IV, D., and identified on Line L. of Form CSREES-2004. The budget form may be reproduced as needed by applicants. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable

under the authorizing legislation, the applicable statutes, regulations, and Federal cost principles, and these program guidelines, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project. Applicants also must include a budget narrative to justify their budget requests (see (b) below.)

Please Note: Applicants are expected to include in their budget request sufficient funds for travel to present the results and impacts of their program at a conference in Washington, DC to be designated by the Program Director. It is anticipated that this conference might be held in conjunction with another meeting related to the goals of the Integrated Organic Program.

(b) Budget Narrative

All budget categories, with the exception of indirect costs, for which support is requested must be individually listed (with costs) in the same order as the budget and justified on a separate sheet of paper and placed immediately behind the Budget form.

13. Matching

If an applicant concludes that matching funds are not required (as specified under Part III, B.), a justification should be included in the Budget Narrative. CSREES will consider this justification when ascertaining final matching requirements or determining if required matching can be waived. CSREES retains the right to make final determinations regarding matching requirements.

For those grants where matching funds are required as specified under Part III, B., applications should include written verification of commitments of matching support (including both cash and in-kind contributions) from third parties. Written verification means:

For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the AOR of the donor organization and the applicant organization, which must include: (1) the name, address, and telephone number of the donor; (2) the name of the applicant organization; (3) the title of the project for which the donation is made; (4) the dollar amount of the cash donation; and (5) a statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period.

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

The sources and amounts of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be summarized on a separate page and placed in the application immediately

following the Budget Narrative. All pledge agreements must be placed in the application immediately following the summary of matching support.

The value of applicant contributions to the project shall be established in accordance with the applicable cost principles. Applicants should refer to OMB Circular A-21, Cost Principles for Educational Institutions, for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

14. Current and Pending Support (Form CSREES-2005)

All applications must contain Form CSREES-2005 listing other current public or private support (including in-house support) to which personnel (i.e., individuals submitting a vitae in response to item 9 of this part) identified in the application have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for person(s) involved is included in the budget. Please follow the instructions provided on this form. Concurrent submission of identical or similar applications to the possible sponsors will not prejudice application review or evaluation by the CSREES. However, an application that duplicates or overlaps substantially with an application already reviewed and funded (or to be funded) by another organization or agency will not be funded under this program. **Please note that the project being proposed should be included in the Pending section of the form.**

15. Assurance Statement(s) (Form CSREES-2008)

A number of situations encountered in the conduct of projects require special assurances, supporting documentation, etc., before funding can be approved for the project. In addition to any other situation that may exist with regard to a particular project, applications involving any of the following elements must comply with the additional requirements as applicable.

(a) Recombinant DNA or RNA Research

As stated in 7 CFR Part 3015.205 (b)(3), all key personnel identified in the application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health entitled, "Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules," as revised. If your project proposes to use recombinant DNA or RNA techniques, you must so indicate by checking the "yes" box in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 (the Proposal Cover Page) and by completing Section A of Form CSREES-2008. For applicable applications recommended for funding, Institutional Biosafety Committee approval is required before CSREES funds will be released. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

(b) Animal Care

Responsibility for the humane care and treatment of live vertebrate animals used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing

organization. Where a project involves the use of living vertebrate animals for experimental purposes, all key personnel identified in an application and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the applicable provisions of the Animal Welfare Act of 1966, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.), and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary in 9 CFR Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of these animals. If your project will involve these animals, you should check "yes" in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section B of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving the use of live vertebrate animals results in a grant award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee has approved the project. Please refer to the application forms for further instructions.

(c) Protection of Human Subjects

Responsibility for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Guidance on this issue is contained in the National Research Act, Pub. L. No. 93-348, as amended and implementing regulations promulgated by the Department under 7 CFR Part 1c. If you propose to use human subjects in your project, you should check the "yes" box in Block 20 of Form CSREES-2002 and complete Section C of Form CSREES-2008. In the event a project involving human subjects at risk is recommended for award, funds will be released only after the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved the research plan and CSREES has accepted documentation of the IRB approval. Please refer to the application forms for additional instructions.

16. Certifications

Note that by signing Form CSREES-2002 the applicant is providing the certifications required by 7 CFR Part 3017, regarding Debarment and Suspension and Drug-Free Workplace, and 7 CFR Part 3018, regarding Lobbying. The certification forms are included in the application package for informational purposes only. These forms should not be submitted with the application since by signing Form CSREES-2002 your organization is providing the required certifications. If the project will involve a subcontractor or consultant, the subcontractor/consultant should submit a Form AD-1048, Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion - Lower Tier Covered Transactions, to the grantee organization for retention in their records. This form should not be submitted to USDA.

17. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)

As outlined in 7 CFR Part 3407 (the CSREES regulations implementing NEPA), the environmental data for any proposed project is to be provided to CSREES so that CSREES may determine whether any further action is needed. In some cases, however, the preparation of environmental data may not be required. Certain categories of actions are excluded from the requirements of NEPA.

In order for CSREES to determine whether any further action is needed with respect to NEPA, pertinent information regarding the possible environmental impacts of a particular project is necessary; therefore, Form CSREES-2006, NEPA Exclusions Form, must be included in the application indicating whether the applicant is of the opinion that the project falls within a categorical exclusion and the reasons therefore. If it is the applicant's opinion that the proposed project falls within the categorical exclusions, the specific exclusion(s) must be identified.

Even though a project may fall within the categorical exclusions, CSREES may determine that an Environmental Assessment or an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for an activity, if substantial controversy on environmental grounds exists or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present that may cause such activity to have a significant environmental effect.

C. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be received by COB May 2, 2005 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

D. Funding Restrictions

CSREES has determined that grant funds awarded under this authority may not be used for the renovation or refurbishment of research, education, or extension space; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such space; or the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.

Section 710 of the FY 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Public Law 108-792) limits indirect costs to 20 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 20 percent of total Federal funds awarded. Another method of calculating the maximum allowable is 25 percent of the total direct costs.

For the OREI program area, pursuant to Section 1462 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3310), CSREES must limit the recovery of indirect costs to 19 percent of total Federal funds provided under the award. Therefore, the recovery of indirect costs on awards made by CSREES under this program area may not exceed the lesser of the institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 19 percent of total Federal funds awarded.

All applicants should prepare their budgets based on the 20 percent indirect cost limitation described above for the ORG program area. CSREES will contact applicants whose projects are recommended for funding in the OREI program area, and request budgets that have been revised accordingly.

Indirect cost limitations also apply to the recovery of indirect costs by subawardees or subcontractors, and should be reflected in subrecipients' budgets. If no rate has been negotiated, a reasonable dollar amount (equivalent to or less than the 20 percent of total Federal funds requested) in lieu of indirect costs may be requested, subject to approval by CSREES.

E. Other Submission Requirements

1. What to Submit

An original and fourteen (14) copies of the application (15 total) must be submitted. In addition, eleven (11) copies of the Project Summary must be submitted. All copies of the application and the Project Summary must be submitted in one package.

2. Where to Submit

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by the USDA. The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is:

Integrated Organic Program
c/o Proposal Services Unit
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Room 1420, Waterfront Centre
800 9th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024
Telephone: (202) 401-5048

Applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the following address:

Integrated Organic Program
c/o Proposal Services Unit
Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
STOP 2245
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-2245

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 Form CSREES-2002. If the applicant's e-mail address is not indicated, CSREES will acknowledge receipt of the application by letter.

If the applicant does not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline, please contact the program contact. Once the application has been assigned an application number, please cite that number on all future correspondence.

PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

A. General

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

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

B. Evaluation Criteria

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

1. Proposal Relevance (50 points):

(a) Documented need (15 points). Application includes documentation substantiating that project is directed to current and likely future potential problems/challenges in organic agriculture;

(b) Stakeholder involvement (10 points). Application includes information on how stakeholders were selected and how their input was solicited and incorporated. There is an expectation that a local and/or regional advisory panel will inform the program throughout its life;

(c) Outreach plan (10 points). Application includes a detailed outreach plan that includes deliverables and a description of how impacts will be measured;

(d) Potential for project to contribute to long-term profitability and sustainability of organic production or marketing systems (10 points); and

(e) Importance of the commodity or production system or importance of marketing constraints and resulting impacts on the production system, Potential for project to make a difference (5 points).

2. Proposal Quality (50 points):

(a) Conceptual adequacy (10 points). Application clearly states objectives which are potentially attainable within project time, scope and budget;

(b) Design (15 points). The application's methodology and analytical approach are appropriate to project objectives;

(c) Involvement of appropriate, relevant expertise (5 points);

(d) Experience of key project personnel (5 points);

(e) Appropriateness of budget (5 points);

(f) Feasibility, probability of success (5 points); and

(g) Adherence to guidelines (5 points).

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 affect review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an academic institution shall be determined by reference to the current edition of the Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, VA 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Website: <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. The identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential and will not be released to applicants.

PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

B. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one-time basis as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and non-financial 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).

C. Award Notice

The award document shall include, 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 PD(s) 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 re-competition 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 awarded;
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 granting activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular grant.

D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

E. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees must submit Annual Progress Reports to CSREES that detail progress toward achieving goals and objectives of the project and a Final Performance Report that includes a brief project impact statement written in lay language. These reports should be succinct and no longer than five (5) pages, single-spaced, using 12-point font. They should include the following information about the project: (1) basic information (i.e., project title, name(s) of PD(s), award number, and reporting period); (2) a description of the stakeholder needs identified, problems addressed, and results of the project (including publications); (3) plans for the upcoming year; and (4) a description of subaward activity, including the process used to select recipients. Any students who work on a project should be listed in the project reports (i.e., report graduate degrees awarded and undergraduates trained, as applicable). A budget summary should be attached to each report to provide an overview of all monies spent during the reporting period.

Grantees also are required to submit annual and summary progress reports via CSREES' Current Research Information System (CRIS). CRIS is an electronic, Web-based inventory system that facilitates both grantee submissions of project outcomes and public access to information on Federally-funded projects.

PART VII-PROGRAM CONTACT

Tom Bewick; National Program Leader; Plant and Animal Systems Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; STOP 2220; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; Washington, DC 20250-2220; Telephone: (202) 401-3356; Fax: (202) 401- 4888; E-mail: tbewick@csrees.usda.gov.

PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION

A. Access to Review Information

Copies of written review and a summary of the panel comments will be provided to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed. The identity of reviewers is confidential.

B. Use of Funds; Changes

1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility

Unless the terms and conditions of the grant state otherwise, the grantee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of grant funds.

2. Changes in Project Plans

(a) The permissible changes by the grantee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project grant 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 grantee 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 grantee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved that 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 grantee 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 grantee 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 four years. Any Extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the grantee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

(f) Changes in Approved Budget: Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the grantee 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 a grant, 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 a grant 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 that 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

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

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

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

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

Authorized Organizational Representative means the President or Chief Executive Officer of the applicant organization or the official, designated by the President or Chief Executive Officer of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

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

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

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

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

Extension activity means an act or process that delivers science-based knowledge and informal educational programs to people, enabling them to make practical decisions.

Grant means the award by the Authorized Departmental Officer of funds to an eligible recipient for the purpose of conducting the identified project.

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

Hispanic-serving Institution means an institution of higher education that: (1) is an eligible "college" or "university" (as defined in Part III, A.); (2) at the time of application, has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students; and (3) provides assurances that not less than 50 percent of the institution's Hispanic students are low-income individuals.

Integrated means to bring the three components of the agricultural knowledge system (research, education, and Extension) together around a problem area or activity.

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

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

Project director or PD 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 the principal investigator for research activities.

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an Authorized Departmental Officer as defined above.

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

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.

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

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

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

F. CSREES' Grants.gov Implementation Plans

Grants.gov is an internet web site for grant and other financial assistance information (e.g., allows grant seekers to find funding opportunities). It also will serve to facilitate electronic transmission of information pertaining to grants and other financial assistance information (e.g., electronic application submission).

In FY 2004, CSREES initiated the receipt of applications electronically through the Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) storefront for limited programs. As a result of this initiative, it was evident that improvements were necessary prior to further implementation of electronic applications. CSREES is working hard to provide Grants.gov as an option for programs in FY 2005. More information about CSREES' Grants.gov plans, including important announcements, program implementation, and detailed requirements, is posted on the CSREES' web site, http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/other_links/egov/egov.html, which will be updated as appropriate. It is suggested that this site be visited periodically for important updates.

Grants.gov is not an option for the submission of applications in response to this RFA. See Part IV, E for information about the format (i.e., hard copy or electronic) for the submission of applications under this RFA.

G. DUNS Number

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A Federal Register notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. Therefore, potential applicants should verify that they have a DUNS number or take the steps needed to obtain one. For

information about how to obtain a DUNS number go to <http://www.grants.gov/RequestaDUNS>. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.

H. Required Registration for Grants.gov

The Central Contract Registry (CCR) is a database that serves as the primary Government repository for contractor information required for the conduct of business with the Government. This database will also be used as a central location for maintaining organizational information for organizations seeking and receiving grants from the Government.

Such organizations must register in the CCR prior to the submission of applications via grants.gov (a DUNS number is needed for CCR registration). For information about how to register in the CCR visit “Get Start” in the web site, <http://www.grants.gov>. Allow a minimum of 5 days to complete the CCR registration.