

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

Regional Rural Development Centers

INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT - FY 2009

CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE: This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.200.

DATES: Applications must be received by close of business (COB) **(5:00 p.m. Eastern Time) on the date designated by the CSREES Program Contact.** See the correspondence that accompanies this request for applications. Applications received after the deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

CSREES often issues requests for applications (RFAs) that contain information divided in eight parts. All information in the eight parts is not necessary for requesting applications for these funds, however, the unnecessary parts are included herein and are denoted by “Reserved,” in order to maintain the overall RFA structure for reference to RFAs by other documents.

PART I – FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. Legislative Authority and Background

The authority for the Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) is in Section 2(c)(1)(B) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act, of Pub. L. 89-106, as amended (7 U.S.C. 450i) and Title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972, of Pub. L. 92-419, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2204a) to promote excellence in research, education, and extension essential to assist and support rural development in the United States on a regional and national level and to facilitate coordination and cooperation of research, extension, and education among states.

The CSREES [Regional Rural Development Centers \(RRDCs\)](#) play a unique role in USDA's service to rural America. They coordinate rural development research, education, and extension programs cooperatively with land-grant institutions on a regional and national basis. Charged with developing and providing knowledge essential to assist rural development, they bring a scientific lens and skilled personnel to critical rural development issues and practice.

This request for applications (RFA) is for the host institutions of the RRDCs to apply for funds to carry out the RRDC programs under the direction of the RRDC Boards of Directors and in collaboration with the regional associations of directors of agricultural experiment stations and regional associations of extension directors in each region (Pub. L. 92-419).

The four (4) Centers are currently located at the following institutions:

The Pennsylvania State University serves as the host of the Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development (NERCRD). NERCRD serves Washington, DC and the following twelve states in the Northeast Region: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia.

Effective July 1, 2009 the NERCRD will be hosted at Michigan State University. NERCRD serves the twelve states in the North Central Region including: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Utah State University hosts the Western Rural Development Center (WRDC). WRDC serves the thirteen states and four U.S. Territories in the Western Region including: Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Federated States of Micronesia, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Northern Marianas, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Mississippi State University serves as the host for the Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC). SRDC serves the thirteen states and two territories in the Southern Region including: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Virginia.

B. Purpose and Priorities

Applications are being solicited for the Regional Rural Development Centers. The purpose of the CSREES [Regional Rural Development Centers \(RRDCs\)](#) program is to promote excellence in research, education, and extension essential to assist and support rural development in the United States. The RRDCs concentrate on high priority knowledge, training, and personnel needs and build the capacity of the land-grant institutions in their regions to conduct and support effective rural development activities. They encourage and support university-based faculty to conduct research that addresses critical and emerging rural development issues and to use their knowledge and resources to help rural communities and citizens direct their own futures. They coordinate and integrate research, education, and extension efforts among states and link the resources of land-grant universities with local decision-makers, rural residents, and diverse partners to address a wide range of national and regional rural development issues.

PART II – AWARD INFORMATION

A. Available Funding

In FY 2009, the total amount of funds available is approximately \$1.2 million. In accordance with statutory time limits [7 U.S.C. 450i(c)], the project period can not exceed three (3) years. If awards are granted for three (3) years, the recipient is encouraged to complete the project as proposed and obligate all funds awarded by the end of the project period. No-cost extensions of time will not be possible on 3 year awards.

B. Type of Application

Only new applications are to be submitted in response to this RFA.

PART III – Reserved.

PART IV – APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. 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-ERRD-002114** 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://www.grants.gov>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

- Grants.gov customer support
Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726
Business Hours: M-F 7:00 am – 9 pm Eastern 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

Applications should be prepared following Parts IV, V, and VI of the document entitled “CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide. ANY PROPOSALS CONTAINING NON-PDF DOCUMENTS WILL BE AT RISK OF BEING EXCLUDED FROM CSREES REVIEW. Partial applications will be excluded from CSREES review. With documented prior approval, resubmitted applications will be accepted until close of business on the agreed upon date.

If you do not own PDF-generating software, Grants.gov provides online tools to assist applicants. Users will find a link to “Convert Documents to PDF” on <http://grants.gov/assets/PDFConversion.pdf>.

1. SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 2. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

a. Field 20. Pre-application – Do not fill out this portion of the form.

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. R&R Other Project Information

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

a. Field 7. Project Narrative – **PDF Attachment.** The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages including figures and tables. PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative must also include all of the following:

(i) **Objectives** - Clear, concise, complete, and logically arranged statement(s) of specific aims of the proposed effort should be included;

(ii) **Expected Outcomes, and Impacts** – This section should contain information on how the proposed effort will obtain the goal of managing rural development; and

(iii) **Methods and Procedures** - Plans to achieve the objectives and measure impacts.

b. Scientific Peer Review Certification Documentation. (Field 11. on the Form)
Required (see Part V.E.), the application must contain a written notice to CSREES that a Scientific Peer Review has been completed.

4. R&R Senior/Key Person Profile

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

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

6. R&R Budget

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part V, 7. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

7. Supplemental Information Form

Information related to the questions on this form is dealt with in detail in Part VI, 1. of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.

- a. Program Code (Field 2. on the Form). Enter the program code name “Rural Development Centers” and the program code “UU.R”.
- b. Conflict of Interest List (Field 8. on the Form). A conflict of interest list is not required under this program. Do not include a conflict of interest list.

C. Submission Date and Time

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

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

If the AR of the institution that submitted the application has not received correspondence **from CSREES** regarding a submitted application within 15 days of submission of the application, please contact the CSREES Program Contact and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in a delay in the issuance of an award. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

D. Funding Restrictions

1. Indirect Costs

Pursuant to Section 1473 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended, 7 U.S.C. 3319, **indirect costs are not allowable costs under Section 2(c)(1)(B)** and no funds will be approved for this purpose. Further, costs that are a part of the institution's indirect cost pool, (e.g., administrative or clerical salaries), may not be reclassified as direct costs for the purpose of making them allowable.

2. Building Construction or Renovation

No funds will be awarded for the renovation or refurbishment of research spaces; the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces; or for the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of a building or facility.

3. Tuition Remission

In accordance with Section 1473 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 U.S.C. 3319), as amended, tuition remission is not an allowable cost under Section 2(c)(1)(B), and no funds will be approved for this purpose

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. through C. – Reserved.

D. Organizational Management Information

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

E. Scientific Peer Review

Subsection (c)(5) of the Competitive, Special, and Facilities Research Grant Act, as amended (7 U.S.C. 450i(c)(5)) requires applicants to conduct scientific peer review of their proposed research activities in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary prior to the

Secretary making a grant award under this authority. Regulations implementing this requirement are set forth in 7 CFR Part 3400.20. The regulations impose the following requirements:

(1) Scientific peer review. Prior to the award of a standard or continuation grant by CSREES, any proposed project shall have undergone a review arranged by the grantee. For research projects, such review must be a scientific peer review conducted in accordance with 7 CFR 3400.21.

(2) Credible and independent review. A review arranged by the grantee must provide for a credible and independent assessment of the proposed project. A credible review is one that provides an appraisal of technical quality and relevance sufficient for an organizational representative to make an informed judgment as to whether the proposal is appropriate for submission for Federal support. To provide for an independent review, such review may include USDA employees, but should not be conducted solely by USDA employees.

(3) Notice of completion and retention of records. A notice of completion of the review shall be conveyed in writing to CSREES as part of the Other Attachments (Field 11. of the R&R Other Project Information Form)(See Part IV.B.2.b.). The written notice constitutes certification by the applicant that a review in compliance with these regulations has occurred. Applicants are not required to submit results of the review to CSREES; however, proper documentation of the review process and results should be retained by the applicant. **Please note: award funds cannot be released until the Scientific Peer Review Certification is received.**

PART VI – AWARD ADMINISTRATION

A. General

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

B. Award Notice

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

(1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;

(2) Title of project;

- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of 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 recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view CSREES award terms and conditions);
- (10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and
- (11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

C. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220 and 230) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

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

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

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110 (i.e., 2 CFR 215), 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.

7 CFR Part 3430 - Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Grant Programs--General Grant Administrative Provisions.

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

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

D. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements

Grantees are required to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to 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. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparation 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

The agency contact is Dr. Sally Ward Maggard, National Program Leader, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 2215; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2215; Telephone: 202-720-0741; Fax: 202-720-6071; and E-mail: smaggard@csrees.usda.gov.

PARTS VIII – Reserved.