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 nonfinancial assistance and benefits under a CSREES 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).

§ 3430.17 Content of an application.

The RFA provides instructions on how to access a funding opportunity. The funding opportunity contains the application package, which includes the forms necessary for completion of an application in response to the RFA, as well as the application instructions. The application instructions document, “CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov,” is intended to assist applicants in the preparation and submission of applications to CSREES. It is also the primary document for use in the preparation of CSREES applications via Grants.gov.

§ 3430.18 Submission of an application.

(a) When to submit. The RFA will provide deadlines for the submission of letters of intent, if requested and required, and applications. CSREES may issue separate RFAs and/or establish separate deadlines for different types of applications, different award instruments, or different topics or phases of the Federal assistance programs. If applications are not received by applicable deadlines, they will not be considered for funding. Exceptions will be considered only when extenuating circumstances exist, as determined by CSREES, and justification and supporting documentation are provided to CSREES.

(b) What to submit. The contents of the applicable application package, as well as any other information, are to be submitted by the due date.

(c) Where to submit. The RFA will provide addresses for submission of letters of intent, if requested or required, and applications. It also will indicate permissible methods of submission (i.e., electronic, e-mail, hand-delivery, U.S. Postal Service, courier). Conformance with preparation and submission instructions is required and will be strictly enforced unless a deviation had been approved. CSREES may establish additional requirements. CSREES may return without review applications that are not consistent with the RFA instructions.

§ 3430.19 Resubmission of an application.

(a) Previously unfunded applications. (1) Applications that are resubmitted to a program, after being previously submitted but not funded by that program, must include the following information:

(i) The CSREES-assigned proposal number of the previously submitted application.

(ii) Summary of the previous reviewers’ comments.

(iii) Explanation of how the previous reviewers’ comments or previous panel summary have been addressed in the current application.

(2) Resubmitting an application that has been revised based on previous reviewers’ critiques does not guarantee the application will be recommended for funding.

(b) Previously funded applications. (1) CSREES competitive programs are generally not designed to support multiple Federal assistance awards activities that are essentially repetitive in nature. PDs who have had their projects funded previously are discouraged from resubmitting relatively identical applications for further funding. Applications that are sequential continuations or new stages of previously funded projects must compete with first-time applications, and should thoroughly demonstrate how the proposed project expands substantially on previously funded efforts and promotes innovation and creativity beyond the scope of the previously funded project.

(2) An application may be submitted only once to CSREES. The submission
of duplicative or substantially similar applications concurrently for review by more than one program will result in the exclusion of the redundant applications from CSREES consideration.

§ 3430.20 Acknowledgment of an application.

The receipt of all letters of intent and applications will be acknowledged by CSREES. Applicants who do not receive an acknowledgement within a certain number of days (as established in the RFA, e.g., 15 and 30 days) of the submission deadline should contact the program contact. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number by CSREES, that number should be cited on all future correspondence.

§ 3430.21 Confidentiality of applications and awards.

(a) General. Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application contents and evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permissible by law.

(b) Identifying confidential and proprietary information in an application. If an application contains proprietary information that constitutes a trade secret, proprietary commercial or financial information, confidential personal information, or data affecting the national security, it will be treated in confidence to the extent permitted by law, provided that the information is clearly marked by the proposer with the term “confidential and proprietary information” and that the following statement is included at the bottom of the project narrative or any other attachment included in the application that contains such information: “…The following pages (specify) contain proprietary information which (name of proposing organization) requests not to be released to persons outside the Government, except for purposes of evaluation.”

(c) Disposition of applications. By law, the Department is required to make the final decisions as to whether the information is required to be kept in confidence. Information contained in unsuccessful applications will remain the property of the proposer. However, the Department will retain for three years one file copy of each application received; extra copies will be destroyed. Public release of information from any application submitted will be subject to existing legal requirements. Any application that is funded will be considered an integral part of the award and normally will be made available to the public upon request, except for designated proprietary information that is determined by the Department to be proprietary information.

(d) Submission of proprietary information. The inclusion of proprietary information is discouraged unless it is necessary for the proper evaluation of the application. If proprietary information is to be included, it should be limited, set apart from other text on a separate page, and keyed to the text by numbers. It should be confined to a few critical technical items that, if disclosed, could jeopardize the obtaining of foreign or domestic patents. Trade secrets, salaries, or other information that could jeopardize commercial competitiveness should be similarly keyed and presented on a separate page. Applications or reports that attempt to restrict dissemination of large amounts of information may be found unacceptable by the Department and constitute grounds for return of the application without further consideration. Without assuming any liability for inadvertent disclosure, the Department will limit dissemination of such information to its employees and, where necessary for the evaluation of the application, to outside reviewers on a confidential basis. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

Subpart C—Pre-award: Application Review and Evaluation

§ 3430.31 Guiding principles.

The guiding principle for Federal assistance application review and evaluation is to ensure that each proposal is treated in a consistent and fair manner regardless of regional and institutional affiliation. After the evaluation process by the review panel, CSREES, through the program officer, ensures that applicants receive appropriate