

Department of Energy

§ 600.15

§ 600.9 [Reserved]

§§ 600.11–600.12 [Reserved]

§ 600.10 Form and content of applications.

(a) *General.* Applications shall be required for all financial assistance projects or programs.

(b) *Forms.* Applications shall be on the form specified in a program rule, the program announcement, or these regulations. (See also §§ 600.112 and 600.210.) For unsolicited applications, a guide for preparation and submission is available from U.S. Department of Energy, Federal Energy Technology Center, Attn: Unsolicited Proposal Manager, Post Office Box 10940, Pittsburgh, PA, 15236-0940.

(c) *Contents of an application.* In general, a financial assistance application shall include:

(1) A facesheet containing basic identifying information. The facesheet shall be the Standard Form (SF)424;

(2) A detailed narrative description of the proposed project, including the objectives of the project and the applicant's plan for carrying it out;

(3) A budget with supporting justification; and

(d) *Incomplete applications.* DOE may return an application that:

(1) Is not signed, either in writing or electronically, by an official authorized to bind the applicant; or

(2) Omits any information or documentation required by statute, program rule, or the solicitation, if the nature of the omission precludes review of the application.

(e) *Supplemental information.* During the review of a complete application, DOE may request the submission of additional information only if the information is essential to evaluate the application.

(f) Registration is required in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) for all applications. Information on registration can be obtained at <http://www.ccr.gov/Grantees.aspx>.

[61 FR 7166, Feb. 26, 1996, as amended at 64 FR 56420, Oct. 20, 1999; 69 FR 7867, Feb. 20, 2004; 74 FR 44276, Aug. 28, 2009]

§ 600.13 Merit review.

(a) It is the policy of DOE that discretionary financial assistance be awarded through a merit-based selection process. A merit review means a thorough, consistent, and objective examination of applications based on pre-established criteria by persons who are independent of those submitting the applications and who are knowledgeable in the field of endeavor for which support is requested.

(b) Each program office must establish a merit review system covering the financial assistance programs it administers. Merit review of financial assistance applications is intended to be advisory and is not intended to replace the authority of the project/program official with responsibility for deciding whether an award will be made.

[64 FR 56420, Oct. 20, 1999]

§ 600.14 [Reserved]

§ 600.15 Authorized uses of information.

(a) *General.* Information contained in applications shall be used only for evaluation purposes unless such information is generally available to the public or is already the property of the Government. The Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. 1905, prohibits the unauthorized disclosure by Federal employees of trade secret and confidential business information.

(b) *Treatment of application information.* (1) An application or other document, including any unsolicited information, may include technical data and other data, including trade secrets and commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential, which the applicant does not want disclosed to the public or used by the Government for any purpose other than application evaluation.

(i) To protect such data, the submitter must mark the cover sheet of the application or other document with the following Notice:

§ 600.16

Notice of Restriction on Disclosure and Use of Data

Pages [] of this document may contain trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential and is exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes or in accordance with a financial assistance or loan agreement between the submitter and the Government. The Government may use or disclose any information that is not appropriately marked or otherwise restricted, regardless of source.

(ii)(A) To further protect such data, except as otherwise provided in paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this section, each page containing trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential must be specifically identified and marked with text similar to the following:

May contain trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential and exempt from public disclosure.

(B) In addition, each line or paragraph containing trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential must be marked with brackets or other clear identification, such as highlighting.

(iii) (A) In the case where a form for data submission is unalterable, such as certain forms submitted through Grants.gov, submitters must include in a cover letter or the project narrative a notice like the following:

Forms [] may contain trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential and exempt from public disclosure. Such information shall be used or disclosed only for evaluation purposes or in accordance with a financial assistance or loan agreement between the submitter and the Government. The Government may use or disclose any information that is not appropriately marked or otherwise restricted, regardless of source.

(B) The cover letter or project narrative must also specify the particular information on such forms that the submitter believes contains trade secrets or commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential.

(2) Unless DOE specifies otherwise, DOE shall not refuse to consider an application or other document solely on the basis that the application or other

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document is restrictively marked in accordance with paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(3) Data (or abstracts of data) specifically marked in accordance with paragraph (b)(1) of this section shall be used by DOE or its designated representatives solely for the purpose of evaluating the proposal. The data so marked shall not be disclosed or used for any other purpose except to the extent provided in any resulting assistance agreement, or to the extent required by law, including the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) (10 CFR Part 1004). The Government shall not be liable for disclosure or use of unmarked data and may use or disclose such data for any purpose.

(4) This process enables DOE to follow the provisions of 10 CFR 1004.11(d) in the event a Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) request is received for the data submitted, such that information not identified as subject to a claim of exemption may be released without obtaining the submitter's views under the process set forth in 10 CFR 1004.11(c)

[76 FR 26581, May 9, 2011]

§ 600.16 Legal authority and effect of an award.

(a) A DOE financial assistance award is valid only if it is in writing and is signed, either in writing or electronically, by a DOE Contracting Officer.

(b) Recipients are free to accept or reject the award. A request to draw down DOE funds constitutes acceptance; however, DOE may require formal acceptance of an award.

(c) DOE funds awarded under a grant, cooperative agreement, or technology investment agreement shall be obligated as of the date the DOE Contracting Officer signs the award; however, the recipient is not authorized to incur costs under an award prior to the beginning date of the budget period shown in the award except as may be authorized in accordance with §§ 600.125(e), 600.230, 600.317(b), or 603.830 of this part. The duration of the DOE financial obligation shall not extend beyond the expiration date of the budget period shown in the award unless authorized by a DOE Contracting Officer by means of a continuation or renewal