DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

Agricultural Telecommunications Program

AGENCY: Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice.

SUBJECT: Agricultural Telecommunications Program; Fiscal Year 1995; Request for Proposals; Application Guidelines.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Barbara A. White, 202–720–3029 for program information, or Margaret Bell, Cooperative Funds Division, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA, 202–401–4314, for fiscal or budget information.

Program Description

(a) Purpose

Proposals are requested for the purpose of awarding competitive grants for fiscal year 1995 under the Agricultural Telecommunications Program. Grants will be awarded to eligible institutions to assist in development and utilization of an agricultural communications network to facilitate and to strengthen agricultural extension, resident education and research, and domestic and international marketing of United States commodities and products through a partnership between eligible institutions and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The network will employ satellite and other telecommunications technology to disseminate and to share academic instruction, cooperative extension programming, agricultural research, and marketing information. The authority for this program is contained in section 1673 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, Pub. L. 101–624. The program is administered by the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) of USDA.

(b) Available Funding

For fiscal year 1995, $1.221 million is available for the program. Grants under this program may provide funds for no more than 50 percent (50%) of the cost of a propose project, unless otherwise determined by the Secretary. For the purpose of determining the non-Federal share of such costs, consideration will be given to contributions in cash and in-kind, fairly evaluated, including, but not limited to premises, equipment and services.

(c) Eligibility

Proposals are invited from accredited institutions of higher education. Applicants must demonstrate that they participate in a network that distributes programs consistent with the following objectives: (1) Make optimal use of available resources for agricultural extension, resident education, and research by sharing resources between participating institutions; (2) improve the competitive position of United States agriculture in international markets by disseminating information to producers, processors, and researchers; (3) train students for careers in agriculture and food industries; (4) facilitate interaction among leading agricultural scientists; (5) enhance the ability of United States agriculture to respond to environmental and food safety concerns; and; (6) identify new uses for farm commodities and to increase the demand for United States agricultural products in both domestic and foreign markets.

In addition to the above, an applicant must qualify as a responsible applicant in order to be eligible for a grant under the program. To qualify as responsible, an applicant must meet the following standards:

(1) Adequate financial resources for performance, the necessary experience, organizational and technical qualifications, and facilities, or a firm commitment, arrangement, or ability to obtain the same (including any to be obtained through sub-agreement(s)/contract(s));

(2) Ability to comply with the proposed or required completion schedule for the project;

(3) Adequate financial management system and audit procedures that provide efficient and effective accountability and control of all funds, property, and other assets;

(4) Satisfactory record of integrity, judgment, and performance, including, in particular, any prior performance under grants and contracts from the Federal Government; and

(5) Otherwise be qualified and eligible to receive Federal assistance under the applicable laws and regulations.

(d) Definitions

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

(1) ''Administrative costs'' means the total of direct and indirect costs as defined in 7 CFR part 3015, USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, related to the operation of a project under this program;

(2) ''Administrator'' means the Administrator of CSREES and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority to issue or modify grant instruments has been delegated.

(3) ''Agricultural telecommunications'' means those activities established to encourage development and utilization of an agricultural communications network employing satellite and other telecommunications technologies to disseminate and to share academic instruction, cooperation extension programming, agricultural research, and marketing information;

(4) ''Awarding official'' means the Administrator, CSREES, or any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority to issue or modify Agricultural Telecommunications grant instruments on behalf of the Department has been delegated.

(5) ''Communications network'' refers to television or cable television origination or distribution equipment, signal conversion equipment (including both modulators and demodulators), computer hardware and software, programs or terminals, or related devices, used to process and exchange data through a telecommunications system in which signals are generated, modified or prepared for transmission, or received, via telecommunications terminal equipment or via telecommunications transmission;

(6) ''Delivery'' means the transmission and reception of programs by facilities that transmit, receive, or carry data between telecommunications terminal equipment at each end of a telecommunications circuit or path;

(7) ''Facilities'' includes microwave antennae, fiberoptic cables and repeaters, coaxial cables, communications satellite ground station complexes, copper cable electronic equipment associated with telecommunications transmission;

(8) ''Grant'' means the assistance award by the Administrator to a grantee to develop agricultural telecommunications programs utilizing an agricultural telecommunications network;

(9) ''Grantee'' means the entity designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to whom a grant is awarded;

(10) ''Peer Review Panel'' means a group of appropriate employees of the Federal Government qualified to give advice on the merit of grant applications submitted under this program;

(11) ''Project'' means the particular activity within the scope of the program

as identified herein that is supported by a grant under this program;

(12) ''Project Director'' means the individual who is responsible for technical direction of the project, as designated by the grantee in the award proposal and approved by the Administrator, CSREES, USDA;

(13) ''Project Period'' means the total time approved by the Administrator for conducting the proposed project as outlined in the approved Federal assistance proposal or the approved portions thereof.

Proposal Preparation

(a) Proposal Cover Page

(1) Title of Proposal

The title of the proposal must be brief (80-charactermaximum) yet represent the major thrust of the project.

(2) Other Information

Include the following information on the proposal cover page:

(a) Name, address, telephone, fax number, and e-mail address of applicant and project director.

(b) Signatures and date. The cover page must contain the original signatures of the Project Director and the Authorized Organizational Representative who possesses the necessary authority to commit the applicant's time and other relevant resources.

(c) Project Summary. Each proposal must contain a 200-word abstract containing a brief description of the project. The abstract should describe the situation, targeted audience, purpose of project, program goal, methodology, and expected outcomes of the project.

(d) Application Category. Each proposal must state the category under which funds are requested.

Application Categories

Applicants may submit proposals in any of the following program areas as specified in the authorization: (a) Program Delivery, (b) Innovative Program Development/Production, and (c) Capacity Building.

(a) Program Delivery

Applicants may submit a proposal in the Program Delivery Category requesting funding to operate an agricultural communications network, employing satellite and other telecommunications technology, to deliver Cooperative Extension programming, academic instruction, agricultural research and marketing information through partnership(s) between eligible institutions and the Department of Agriculture. The project

goal(s) and objective(s) must be clearly stated in the proposal.

Proposal Narrative

The narrative portion of the proposal is limited to 20 pages in length. No other material will be considered. The narrative should contain the following sections:

(1) Project Need

Each proposal must contain a clear and concise statement identifying the background and situation leading to the project need, goal(s), and supporting objectives.

(2) Audience Description

Describe targeted audience(s) for whom the project will be designed including pertinent history identified in need, demographics, and expected impact on audience.

(3) Partnerships and Collaboration

Describe partnerships and collaborations fostered through this project including expected impact and benefit to those involved such as learner, institution, agency, state, and nation.

(4) Staffing Pattern and Procedure

Describe the staff needed for project administration, instructional design/ curriculum development, production, evaluation, and marketing/promotion. Narrative should demonstrate that the staffing and implementation procedure will result in an integrated approach involving content specialists, instructional designers, and quality production resources, and that the individual staff members proposed are qualified to perform these roles. Provide an outline (management plan) demonstrating integration.

(5) Project Sustainability

Projects should not depend on continued funding from this program. Each proposal should include convincing evidence of the project's ability to continue and grow after receiving the funding.

(6) Budget

A budget and a detailed narrative in support of the budget is required. Show all funding sources and itemize costs by the following line items: salary costs, fringe benefits costs, equipment, materials and supplies, travel, publication/printing/duplication costs, computer costs, and all other costs. While some funds are available for the acquisition and installation of telecommunications transmission facilities, applicants are cautioned that

no more than 10 percent of the funds available may be awarded for that purpose.

Funds may be requested under any of the line items listed above provided that the item or service for which support is requested is identified as necessary for successful conduct of the project, is allowable under the authorizing legislation and the applicable Federal cost principles, and is not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute. Salaries of project personnel who will be working on the project may be requested, but must be in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project.

In addition to the initial required information under Project Description (Project Need; Audience Description: Partnerships and Collaboration; Staffing Pattern and Procedure; Sustainability and Budget), the proposal must define a structure for the technical design and development of the delivery system, including:

(7) Alternative Distance Learning Technologies

Development and employment of alternative distance learning technologies including, but not limited to, internet, multimedia, audio/visual, and other telecommunications technologies.

(8) Learner and Program Support

Each proposal should include evidence of learner support including, but not limited to, facilitation of access, accommodation for diversity in special needs and learning styles, and recognition of need for alternative modes of program design and delivery. There should be a plan for learner and program support.

(9) Innovation

Innovative application of distance delivery including, but not limited to, approaches in reaching audience; methods of connectivity and/or interaction; use of existing resources; and innovations in the teaching-learning transaction.

(10) Infrastructure

Framework representing both the technological and human infrastructure including, but not limited to, technical troubleshooting, scheduling and operation.

(11) Marketing

Marketing plan including, but not limited to, rationale for promotional effort; logistical considerations; convincing tie to needs assessment.

(12) Cost/Benefit

The proposal must include a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed project, including comparison to other delivery methods, relative benefit to learner, and staffing costs versus benefits.

(b) Innovative Program Development/ Production

Applicants submitting an application in the Innovative Program Development/Production Category must demonstrate a creative approach to distance education programming. Examples might include: Pilot projects demonstrating innovative combinations of satellite/video, computer networking, audio conferencing, and/or wrap-around plans and materials; inclusion of limited resource audiences; match of audience needs/characteristics to delivery system; and design of evaluation protocol for measuring teaching-learning transaction.

An integrated approach to instructional design should be evident including subject-matter content, educational methodology and compatible production and delivery techniques.

Project Narrative

The narrative portion of the proposal must not exceed 20 pages in length. No additional material will be considered. The narrative should contain the following sections:

(1) Project Need

Each proposal must contain a clear and concise statement identifying the background and situation leading to the project need, goal(s), and supporting objectives.

(2) Audience Description

Describe targeted audience(s) for whom the project will be designed including pertinent history identified in need, demographics, and expected impact on audience.

(3) Partnerships and Collaboration

Describe partnerships and collaborations fostered through this project including expected impact and benefit to those involved such as learner, institution, agency, state, and nation.

(4) Staffing Pattern and Procedure

Describe the staff needs for project administration, instructional design/ curriculum development, production, evaluation, and marketing/promotion. Narrative should demonstrate that the staffing and implementation procedure will result in an integrated approach involving content specialists,

instructional designers, and quality production resources, and that the individual staff members proposed are qualified to perform these roles. Provide an outline (management plan) demonstrating integration.

(5) Project Sustainability

Projects should not depend on continued funding from this program. Each proposal should include convincing evidence of the project's ability to continue and grow after receiving the funding.

(6) Budget

A budget and a detailed narrative in support of the budget is required. Show all funding sources and itemize costs by the following line items: salary costs, firing benefits costs, equipment, materials and supplies, travel, publication/printing/duplication costs, computer costs, and all other costs. While some funds are available for the acquisition and installation of telecommunications transmission facilities, applicants are cautioned that no more than 10 percent of the funds available may be awarded for that purpose.

Funds may be requested under any of the line items listed above provided that the item or service for which support is requested is identified as necessary for successful conduct of the project, is allowable under the authorizing legislation and the applicable Federal statute. Salaries of project personnel who will be working on the project may be requested, but must be in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project.

(7) Specific Learning Objectives

Learning objectives should be stated in terms of behavioral changes expected to occur in the audience(s) based on participation in the program, not in terms of what the program will deliver.

(8) Instructional Methodology/Strategies

Explain the instructional/educational method or strategy to be implemented including appropriateness for audience and learning environment. Explanation should demonstrate knowledge of how people learn and/or interact in a mediated environment.

(9) Content/Curriculum

Each proposal should include detailed outline of curriculum to be included in the program, including, but not limited to, overview of content, learner activities, mechanism for evaluating learning outcome.

(10) Production Techniques

Provide detailed explanation of production techniques used in producing and delivery of program. It should be clear from the narrative how subject-matter content, instructional method/strategy, and production will be integrated.

(11) On-site Activities

Innovative design for implementation of on-site or personal learning environment (i.e., creative design and implementation plan for support materials and enrichment activities for on-site and personal learning environments).

(12) Interactivity

Describe the expected level of interactivity necessary based on principles underlying teaching-learning transaction, sound instructional design, and mode of delivery used.

(13) Program Evaluation

Describe both formative and summative design for evaluating success in meeting learning objective(s) listed under Project Need. In addition, describe strategy for evaluating overall effectiveness of program in terms of teaching and learning, behavior change/ problem-solving, immediate application, meeting learner need, and potential for replication.

(14) Marketing Plan

Describe the marketing plan including rationale for promotional effort, logistical considerations, and evidence that plan will reach intended audience.

(c) Capacity Building

Proposals in this category should target a specific need in the area of distance education. The need may be at the university, regional or national level. The proposal must include:

(1) detailed plan for assessing capability; and

(2) existing plan for targeting need based on completed assessment.

Project Narrative

Project narratives should be no more than 20 pages in length. No additional materials will be considered. The narrative portion of the proposal should contain the following sections:

(1) Project Need

Each proposal must contain a clear and concise statement identifying the background and situation leading to the project need, goal(s), and supporting objectives.

(2) Audience Description

Describe targeted audience(s) for whom the project will be designed including pertinent history identified in need, demographics, and expected impact on audience.

(3) Partnerships and Collaboration

Describe partnerships and collaborations fostered through this project including expected impact and benefit to those involved such as learner, institution, agency, state, and nation.

(4) Staffing Pattern and Procedure

Describe the staff needed for project administration, instructional design/ curriculum development, production, evaluation, and marketing/promotion. Narrative should demonstrate that the staffing and implementation procedure will result in an integrated approach involving content specialists, instructional designers, and quality production resources, and that the individual staff members proposed are qualified to perform these roles. Provide an outline (management plan) demonstrating integration.

(5) Project Sustainability

Projects should not depend on continued funding from this program. Each proposal should include convincing evidence of the project's ability to continue and grow after receiving the funding.

(6) Budget

A budget and a detailed narrative in support of the budget is required. Show all funding sources and itemize costs by the following line items: Salary costs, fringe benefits costs, equipment, materials and supplies, travel, publication/printing/duplication costs, computer costs, and all other costs. While some funds are available for the acquisition and installation of telecommunications transmission facilities, applicants are cautioned that no more than 10 percent of the funds available may be awarded for that purpose.

Funds may be requested under any of the line items listed above provided that the item or service for which support is requested is identified as necessary for successful conduct of the project, is allowable under the authorizing legislation and the applicable Federal cost principles, and is not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute. Salaries of project personnel who will be working in the project may be requested, but must be in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project.

(7) Capability Assessment

Include a detailed assessment of capability or fully developed plan for assessing capability. Areas of consideration include, but are not limited to, faculty development; support resources; production/technical capability; delivery capability; building learner capacity.

(8) Project Objectives

Project objectives should be stated in terms of what the program will deliver and should be measurable.

(9) Evaluation

Describe both formative and summative design for evaluating success in meeting project objective(s). In addition, describe strategy for evaluating overall effectiveness of program in terms of teaching and learning, behavior change/problem-solving, immediate application, meeting learner need, and potential for replication.

(10) Dissemination

Describe the plan for sharing results with institution, organization or agency, and plan for integration in outreach mission of institution, organization, or agency.

(11) Institutional Commitment

Discuss the institution's commitment to the project. For example, substantiate that the institution attributes a high priority to the project; discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution's long-term (five-to-ten-year) goals; explain how the project will help satisfy the institution's high priority objectives; or show how this project is linked to and supported by the institution's strategic plan.

Proposal Review

All proposals received will be acknowledged. Prior to technical examination, a preliminary review will be made for responsiveness to this solicitation. Proposals that do not fall within the solicitation guidelines will be eliminated from competition. All accepted proposals will be reviewed by a peer review panel comprised of full-time Federal employees and will be evaluated against criteria included in the announcement.

Evaluation Criteria

The maximum score a proposal can receive is 200 points. The peer review panel will be selected and organized to provide maximum expertise and objective judgment in the evaluation of proposals. In the event the number of proposals accepted outnumber dollars available, proposals will be ranked and support levels will be recommended by the panel(s) within the limitation of total funding available in fiscal year 1995.

(a) Program Delivery

Evaluation Criterion and Weight

(1) Project Need—10 points.
Does the proposal contain a clear and concise statement identifying the background and situation leading to the project need, goal(s), and supporting objectives?

(2) Audience Description—10 points.
Is the targeted audience(s) for whom the project will be designed adequately described, including pertinent history identified in need, demographics, and expected impact on audience?

(3) Partnerships and Collaboration—10 points.
Are the partnerships and collaborations fostered through this project including expected impact and benefit to those involved such as learner, institution, agency, state, and nation adequately described?

(4) Staffing Pattern and Procedures—10 points.
Is the staff needed for project administration, instructional design/ curriculum development, production, evaluation, and marketing/promotion adequately described? Does the narrative demonstrate that the staffing and implementation procedure will result in an integrated approach involving content specialists, instructional designers, and quality production resources, and that the individuals are qualified to perform these roles. Is there an outline (management plan) demonstrating integration?

(5) Project Sustainability—30 points.
Does the proposal include convincing evidence of the project's ability to continue and grow after receiving the funding?

(6) Budget—10 points.
Is there a budget and a detailed narrative in support of the budget included in the proposal? Are the following funding sources and itemized costs shown by the following line items: Salary costs, fringe benefits costs, equipment, materials and supplies, travel, publication/printing/duplication costs, computer costs, and all other costs. Is less than 10 percent of the funds requested for equipment?

Are all items or services for which support is requested identified as necessary for successful conduct of the project, is allowable under the authorizing legislation and the

applicable Federal cost principles, and is not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute? Are salaries of project personnel who will be working on the project in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project?

(7) Alternative Distance Learning Technologies—20 points.

Is there a plan for development and employment of alternative distance learning technologies including, but not limited to, internet, multimedia, audio/visual, and other telecommunications technologies?

(8) Learner and Program Support—20 points.

Is there provision of learner and program support?

(9) Innovation—20 points.

Is there a plan for innovation application of distance delivery including, but not limited to, approaches in reaching audience; methods of connectivity and/or interaction; use of existing resources; and innovations in the teaching-learning transaction?

(10) Infrastructure— 20 points.

Is a framework present representing both the technological and human infrastructure including, but not limited to, technical trouble-shooting, scheduling and operation?

(11) Marketing—20 points.

Is there a marketing plan which includes a rationale for promotional effort, logistical considerations, and convincing tie to needs assessment?

(12) Cost-Benefit—20 points.

Is there a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed project, including comparison to other delivery methods, relative benefit to learner, and staffing costs versus benefits?

(b) Innovative Program Development/ Production

Evaluation Criterion and Weight

(1) Project Need—10 points.

Each proposal must contain a clear and concise statement identifying the background and situation leading to the project need, goal(s), and supporting objectives.

(2) Audience Description—10 points.

Is the targeted audience(s) for whom the project will be designed adequately described, including pertinent history identified in need, demographics, and expected impact on audience?

(3) Partnerships and Collaboration—10 points.

Are the partnerships and collaborations fostered through this project including expected impact and benefit to those involved such as learner, institution, agency, state, and nation adequately described?

(4) Staffing Pattern and Procedure—10 points.

Is the staff needed for project administration, instructional design/curriculum development, production, evaluation, and marketing/promotion adequately described? Does the narrative demonstrate that the staffing and implementation procedure will result in an integrated approach involving content specialists, instructional designers, and quality production resources, and that the individuals are qualified to perform these roles. Is there an outline (management plan) demonstrating integration?

(5) Project Sustainability—20 points.

Does the proposal include convincing evidence of the project's ability to continue and grow after receiving the funding?

(6) Budget—10 points.

Is there a budget and a detailed narrative in support of the budget included in the proposal? Are the following funding sources and itemized costs shown by the following line items: Salary costs, fringe benefits costs, equipment, materials and supplies, travel, publication/printing/duplication costs, computer costs, and all other costs. Is less than 10 percent of the funds requested for equipment?

Are all items or services for which support is requested identified as necessary for successful conduct of the project, is allowable under the authorizing legislation and the applicable Federal cost principles, and is not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute? Are salaries of project personnel who will be working on the project in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project?

(7) Specific Learning Objectives—20 points.

Are learning objectives stated in terms of behavioral changes expected to occur in the audience(s) based on participation in the program?

(8) Instructional Methodology/Strategies—30 Points.

Is the instructional/educational method or strategy to be implemented fully explained, including appropriateness for audience and learning environment. Does the explanation demonstrate knowledge of how people learn and/or interact in a mediated environment?

(9) Content/Curriculum—10 points.

Is a detailed outline of subject-matter content/curriculum included in the proposal?

(10) Production Techniques—10 points.

Is a detailed explanation of how the production techniques used in producing and delivery of program included. Is it clear how subject-matter content, instructional method/strategy, and production will be integrated?

(11) On-Site Activities—20 points.

Is there an innovative design for implementation of on-site or personal learning environment, including creative design and implementation plan for support materials and enrichment activities for on-site and personal learning environment?

(12) Interactivity—10 points.

Is there a full description of the expected level of interactivity necessary based on principles underlying teaching-learning transaction, sound instructional design, and mode of delivery used?

(13) Program Evaluation—20 points.

Are both formative and summative design for evaluating success in meeting learning objective(s) listed? Is there convincing evidence that the described strategy for evaluating overall effectiveness of program measure teaching and learning, behavior change/problem-solving, immediate application, meeting learner need, and potential for replication?

(14) Marketing Plan—10 points.

Does the marketing plan include a rationale for promotional effort, logistical considerations, and convincing tie to needs assessment?

(c) Capacity Building

Evaluation Criterion and Weight

(1) Project Need—10 points.

Each proposal must contain a clear and concise statement identifying the background and situation leading to the project need, goal(s), and supporting objectives.

(2) Audience Description—10 points.

Is the targeted audience(s) for whom the project will be designed adequately described, including pertinent history identified in need, demographics, and expected impact on audience?

(3) Partnerships and Collaboration—10 points.

Are the partnerships and collaborations fostered through this project including expected impact and benefit to those involved such as learner, institution, agency, state, and nation adequately described?

(4) Staffing Pattern and Procedure—10 points.

Is the staff needed for project administration, instructional design/curriculum development, production, evaluation, and marketing/promotion adequately described? Does the narrative demonstrate that the staffing and implementation procedure will result in an integrated approach

involving content specialists, instructional designers, and quality production resources, and that the individuals are qualified to perform these roles. Is there an outline (management plan) demonstrating integration?

(5) Project Sustainability—20 points.

Does the proposal include convincing evidence of the project's ability to continue and grow after receiving the funding?

(6) Budget—10 points.

Is there a budget and a detailed narrative in support of the budget included in the proposal? Are the following funding sources and itemized costs shown by the following line items: Salary costs, fringe benefits costs, equipment, materials and supplies, travel, publication/printing/duplication costs, computer costs, and all other costs? Is less than 10 percent of the funds requested for equipment?

Are all items or services for which support is requested identified as necessary for successful conduct of the project, allowable under the authorizing legislation and the applicable Federal cost principles, and not prohibited under any applicable Federal statute? Are salaries of project personnel who will be working on the project in proportion to the effort they will devote to the project?

(7) Capability Assessment—40 points.

Is there a detailed assessment of capability or a fully developed plan for assessing capability? Does it include the following areas of consideration: Faculty development, support resources, production/technical capability, delivery capability, and building learner capacity?

(8) Project Objectives—20 points.

Are program objectives stated in terms of what the program will deliver? Are the outcomes measurable and tied to the evaluation strategy?

(9) Evaluation—20 points.

Does the evaluation include both formative and summative design for evaluating success in meeting project objective(s)? Is there a description of the strategy for evaluating overall effectiveness of program in terms of teaching and learning, behavior change/problem-solving, immediate application, meeting learner need, and potential for replication? Are the individuals skilled in evaluation strategies and procedures?

(10) Dissemination—20 points.

Is there a detailed plan for sharing results with the institution, organization or agency?

(11) Institutional Commitment—30 points.

Is there evidence to substantiate that the institution attributes high-priority to the project; that the project is linked to the achievement of the institution's long-term goals; that is will help satisfy the institution's high-priority objectives; or that the project is supported by the institution's strategic plans? Is there a plan for integration into the outreach mission of the institution, organization, or agency?

Proposal Disposition

When the peer review panel has completed its deliberations, the USDA program coordinator, based on the recommendations of the peer review panel, will recommend to the Awarding Official that the project be (a) approved for support from currently available funds or (b) declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

USDA reserves the right to negotiate with the Project Director and/or the submitting entity regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in scope of work), funding level, or period of support prior to recommending any project for funding.

A proposal may be withdrawn at any time before a final funding decision is made. One copy of each proposal that is not selected for funding (including those that are withdrawn) will be retained by USDA for one year and remaining copies will be destroyed.

Proposal Submission

(1) What to Submit

An original and two copies of the proposal must be submitted. Each copy of each proposal must be stapled securely in the upper left hand corner (Do Not Bind). All copies of the proposal must be submitted in one package.

(2) Where and When to Submit

Proposals submitted through regular mail must be received by close of business July 28, 1995, and sent to:

By Surface Mail (U.S. Postal Service)

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA, Cooperative Funds Division, Ag Box 0995, Washington, DC 20250–0995

By Overnight Mail or Courier

Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA, Cooperative Funds Division, 2nd Floor Mezzanine, Cotton Annex, 300–12th Street, SW, Washington, DC 20250–0995, (202) 401–4314

Hard copy proposals must be received by close of business July 28, 1995.

Include the following information on the proposal cover page:

(a) Name, address, telephone, fax number, and e-mail address of applicant and project director.

(b) Signatures and date. The cover page must contain the original signatures of the Project Director and the Authorized Organizational Representative who possesses the necessary authority to commit the applicant's time and other relevant resources.

(c) Project Summary. Each proposal must contain a 200 word abstract containing a brief description of the project. The abstract should describe the situation, targeted audience, purpose of project, program goal, methodology, and expected outcomes of the project.

Proposals may also be submitted electronically via the Internet in addition to the required hard copy version to the address listed. To obtain a copy of the electronic application submission information, send an electronic mail message to: ALMANAC@esusda.gov. In the body of the message, type the following one-line-only message: Send atf-guidelines. To submit a copy of your proposal electronically, send an ascii text version to: Atf-proposal@esusda.gov. Additionally, when submitting electronically, applicants are still required to submit three hard copies of the Proposal Cover Page which contains original signatures and date (i.e., three cover pages with original signatures and date must be submitted even though electronic submission is used). Electronically submitted proposals and the hard copy Proposal Cover Pages must be received by close of business July 28, 1995.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

(a) Federal Assistance Awards

Within the limits of funds available for such purposes, the awarding official shall make awards to those responsible, eligible applicants whose proposals are judged most meritorious under the evaluation criteria and procedures set forth in these application guidelines.

The date specified by the awarding official as the beginning of the project period shall not be later than September 30, 1994.

All funds awarded under the Program shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are awarded in accordance with the approved application and budget, the terms and conditions of any resulting award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations (7 CFR part 3015).

(b) Obligation of the Federal Government

Neither the approval of any application nor the award of any Federal assistance commits or obligates the United States in any way to provide further support of a project or any portion thereof.

(c) Applicable Federal Statutes and Regulations That Apply

Federal statutes and regulations that apply to Federal assistance proposals considered for review or grants awarded under the Program include, but are not limited to, the following:

7 CFR part 1.1—USDA Implementation of the Freedom of Information Act;

7 CFR part 1b—USDA Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act;

7 CFR part 3—USDA Implementation of OMB Circular A–129 regarding debt collection;

7 CFR part 15, Subpart A—USDA Implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;

7 CFR part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., Circular Nos. A–110, 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. 95–224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance;

7 CFR part 3016—USDA Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments;

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 New 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 3051—Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Nonprofit Institutions, implementing OMB Circular A–133, regarding audits of institutions of higher education and other nonprofit institutions;

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

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).

Leodrey Williams,

Acting Associate Administrator, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service.

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