

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Information Collection: Assignments of Payment and Joint Payment Authorization

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) is seeking comments from all interested individuals and organizations on the extension of a currently approved information collection. The information collection is to allow farmers to voluntarily assign their payment to a third party and to authorize a joint payment.

DATES: We will consider comments that we receive by June 29, 2009.

ADDRESSES: We invite you to submit comments on this notice. In your comments, include the date, volume and page number of this issue of the *Federal Register*. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- *Mail:* Farm Service Agency, USDA, ATTN: Deborah Simmons, Financial Specialist, FMD, Stop 0561, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC.

- *E-mail:* Send comment to: Debbie.Simmons@wdc.usda.gov.

- *Fax:* (703) 305-1144.

You may also send comments to the Desk Officer for Agriculture, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC, 20503.

Copies of the information collection may be obtained from Deborah Simmons at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Deborah Simmons, Financial Specialist, (703) 305-1309.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Title: Assignment of Payments and Joint Payment Authorization.

Forms: CCC-36-Assignment of Payment, CCC-37-Joint Payment. Authorization, CCC-251-Notice of Assignment, and CCC-252-Instrument of Assignment.

OMB Control Number: 0560-0183.

Type of Request: Extension.

Abstract: Section 4(j) of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714b (j)) authorizes CCC to determine the character of and the necessity for its obligations and expenditures and the manner in which they shall be incurred, allowed, and paid. Pursuant to this authority, CCC allows producers to assign certain payments to a third party. Any such assignment must be made in accordance with the regulations at 7 CFR part 1404. There are no regulations governing joint payments, but this service is offered as a result of public requests for this type of payment option. There are no changes to the information collection since the last OMB approval.

Estimate of Respondent Burden: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 minutes per response for CCC-36, CCC-37, and CCC-251, and 5 minutes per response for CCC-252.

Respondents: Participants in FSA or CCC farm programs.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 70,900 (50,000 for CCC-36; 20,000 for CCC-37, and 450 for CCC-251 and CCC-252).

Estimated Number of Responses per Respondent: 1.

Estimated Total Annual Burden on Respondents: 11,778.

We are requesting comments on all aspects of this information collection including the following to help us to:

(1) Evaluate whether the collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;

(2) Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used;

(3) Enhance the quality, utility and clarity of the information to be collected;

(4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the

use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

All responses to this notice will be summarized and included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval. All comments will also become a matter of public record.

Signed at Washington, DC, on April 22, 2009.

Dennis J. Taitano,

Acting Executive Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. E9-9722 Filed 4-28-09; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Business-Cooperative Service

Announcement of Rural Cooperative Development Grant Application Deadlines

AGENCY: Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of solicitation of applications.

SUMMARY: The Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) program is administered through USDA Rural Development on a competitive basis. USDA Rural Development announces the availability of approximately \$4.424 million in competitive grant funds for the fiscal year (FY) 2009 Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) Program. The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications for FY 2009 and award grants on or before September 15, 2009. The maximum award per grant is \$200,000 and matching funds are required. In accordance with section 310B(e)(6)(B) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(e)) as amended by section 6013 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, the Secretary has determined that a grant period of one year is in the best interest of the program at this time.

DATES: Applications for grants must be submitted on paper or electronically according to the following deadlines:

Paper copies must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than June 29, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2009 grant funding.

Electronic copies must be received by June 29, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Late applications are not eligible for FY 2009 grant funding.

ADDRESSES: Application materials for a RCDG may be obtained at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm> or by contacting the applicant's USDA Rural Development State Office. Contact information for State Offices can be found at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/Contacts.htm>. Submit completed paper applications for a grant to Cooperative Programs, Attn: RCDG Program, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Mail Stop 3250, Room 4016-South, Washington, DC 20250-3250. The phone number that should be used for courier delivery is (202) 720-8460.

Submit electronic grant applications at <http://www.grants.gov>, following the instructions found on this Web site.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Visit the program Web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm> for application assistance or contact your USDA Rural Development State Office.

Contact information may be obtained at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/Contacts.htm>. Applicants are encouraged to contact their State Offices well in advance of the deadline to discuss their projects and ask any questions about the application process.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Overview

Federal Agency: Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS).

Funding Opportunity Title: Rural Cooperative Development Grant.

Announcement Type: Initial announcement.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: 10.771.

Dates: Application Deadline:

Completed applications for grants may be submitted on paper or electronically according to the following deadlines:

Paper copies must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than June 29, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Electronic copies must be received by June 29, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding.

Late applications are not eligible for FY 2009 grant funding.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

RCDGs are authorized by section 310B(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932(e)) as amended by section 6013 of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008. Regulations are contained in 7

CFR part 4284, subparts A and F. The primary objective of the RCDG program is to improve the economic condition of rural areas through cooperative development. Grant funds are provided for the establishment and operation of Centers that have the expertise or who can contract out for the expertise to assist individuals or entities in the startup, expansion or operational improvement of rural businesses, especially cooperative or mutually-owned businesses (section 310B(e)(5)). The program is administered through USDA Rural Development State Offices.

Definitions

The definitions published at 7 CFR 4284.3 and 7 CFR 4284.504 are incorporated by reference. The definition of "rural" and "rural area," as amended at section 6018(13)(A) of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 is also incorporated by reference. In addition, since there has been some confusion on the Agency's meaning of the term "conflict of interest," the Agency is providing clarification on what it means by this term.

Conflict of interest—A situation in which the ability of a person or entity to act impartially would be questionable due to competing professional or personal interests. An example of conflict of interest occurs when the grantee's employees, board of directors, including their immediate family, have a legal or personal financial interest in the recipients receiving the benefits or services of the grant.

Mutually-owned business—An organization owned and governed by members who either are its consumers, producers, employees, or suppliers.

II. Award Information

Type of Award: Grant.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2009.

Approximate Total Funding: \$4.424 million.

Approximate Number of Awards: 22.

Approximate Average Award: \$200,000.

Floor of Award Range: None.

Ceiling of Award Range: \$200,000.

Anticipated Award Date: September 15, 2009.

Budget Period Length: 12 months.

Project Period Length: 12 months.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Grants may be made to nonprofit corporations and institutions of higher education. Grants may not be made to public bodies.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching

The matching fund requirement is 25 percent of the total project cost (5 percent in the case of 1994 Institutions). Applicants must verify in their applications that all matching funds are available during the grant period. If an applicant is awarded a grant, additional verification documentation may be required. All of the matching funds must be spent on eligible expenses during the grant period, and must be from eligible sources. Unless provided by other authorizing legislation, other Federal grant funds cannot be used as matching funds. However, matching funds may include loan proceeds from Federal sources. Matching funds must be spent in advance or as a pro-rata portion of grant funds being expended. All of the matching funds must be provided by either the applicant or a third party in the form of cash or in-kind contributions. The Center must be able to document and verify the number of hours worked and the value associated with the in-kind contribution. Additionally, if the in-kind contributions are from board/ advisory council members for their travel, incidentals, etc., the Center must have established written policies explaining how these costs are normally reimbursed, including rates, and an explanation of this policy must be included in the application. Otherwise, the in-kind contributions will not be considered eligible and may cause the application to be determined ineligible for funding. Please note that priority is no longer given to matching contributions greater than the required 25 percent. Therefore, to reduce the paperwork burden of the applicant with regard to verification of matching funds, the Agency will no longer accept board/ advisory council members' time as an eligible match. In-kind contributions provided by individuals, businesses, or cooperatives which are being assisted by the Center can not be provided for the direct benefit of their own projects as USDA Rural Development considers this to be a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

C. Other Eligibility Requirements

Grant Period Eligibility: Applications should have a timeframe of no more than 365 consecutive days with the time period beginning no earlier than October 1, 2009 and no later than January 1, 2010. Projects must be completed within the 1-year timeframe. The Agency may approve requests to extend the grant period for up to twelve months at the discretion of the Agency. However, the grant must be closed 30

days prior to the application deadline for the subsequent grant cycle or the grantee will not be eligible to apply for funding for the next fiscal year.

Completeness Eligibility: Applications without sufficient information to determine eligibility and scoring will be considered ineligible. Applications that are non-responsive to this notice will be considered ineligible.

Activity Eligibility: Applications must propose the development or continuation of the cooperative development center concept or they will not be considered for funding. Additionally, applications that focus assistance on only one cooperative or mutually-owned business will not be considered for funding. Applications requesting more than the maximum grant amount will not be considered for funding. Applications that have ineligible costs that equal more than 10 percent of the total project costs will be determined ineligible, and will not be considered for funding. If an application has ineligible costs of 10 percent or less of total project costs and is selected for funding, the applicant must remove all ineligible costs from the budget and replace them with eligible activities or the amount of the grant award will be reduced accordingly.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address To Request Application Package

The application package for applying on paper for this funding opportunity can be obtained at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm>. For electronic applications, applicants must visit <http://www.grants.gov> and follow the instructions.

B. Submission Dates and Times

Applicants may submit their applications to their State Rural Development Office for a preliminary review up to 30 days prior to the final application deadline published in this notice. The preliminary review will assess applicant and project eligibility of the application and completeness of the application in terms of presence of the required elements. Should the Agency identify missing or incomplete elements, the applicant will be notified and given an opportunity to submit the missing elements before the final deadline published in the **Federal Register**. This preliminary review is an informal assessment of the application and not an evaluation of the quality of the proposal. Findings of the preliminary review are courtesy only

and are not binding on the Agency nor are they appealable.

Final paper applications must be postmarked and mailed, shipped, or sent overnight no later than June 29, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding. Applications postmarked, mailed, or shipped after June 29, 2009 will not be processed. Final electronic applications must be received by June 29, 2009, to be eligible for FY 2009 grant funding.

C. Content and Form of Submission

Applications must be submitted on paper or electronically. An application guide may be viewed at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm>. It is recommended that applicants use the template provided on the Web site. The template can be filled out electronically and printed out for submission with the required forms for paper submission or it can be filled out electronically and submitted as an attachment through <http://www.grants.gov>.

The submission must include all pages of the application. It is recommended that the application be in black and white, not color. Those evaluating the application will only receive black and white images.

If the application is submitted electronically, the applicant must follow the instructions given at <http://www.grants.gov>. Applicants are advised to visit the site well in advance of the application deadline if they plan to apply electronically to ensure they have obtained the proper authentication and have sufficient computer resources to complete the application.

Applicants must complete and submit the following elements. The Agency will then screen all applications for eligibility and to determine whether the application is sufficiently responsive to the requirements set forth in this notice to allow for an informed review. Information submitted as part of the application will be protected to the extent permitted by law. An application guide and forms are available online at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm>.

1. Form SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance." The form must be completed, signed and submitted as part of the application package.

Please note that applicants are required to have a DUNS number to apply for a grant from USDA Rural Development. The DUNS number is a nine-digit identification number which uniquely identifies business entities. There is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dnb.com/us/> or call 866-705-5711. For more

information, see the RCDG Web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm> or contact the applicant's USDA Rural Development State Office. Contact information for State Offices can be found at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/Contacts.htm>.

2. Form SF-424A, "Budget Information—Non-Construction Programs." This form must be completed and submitted as part of the application package.

3. Form SF-424B, "Assurances—Non-Construction Programs." This form must be completed, signed, and submitted as part of the application package.

4. Survey on Ensuring Equal Opportunity for Applicants. The Agency is required to make this survey available to all nonprofit applicants. Submission of this form is voluntary.

5. Title Page. To include the title of the project as well as any other relevant identifying information.

6. Table of Contents. To include page numbers for each component of the application.

7. Executive Summary. A summary of the proposal, not to exceed two pages, must briefly describe the Center, including project goals and tasks to be accomplished, the amount requested, how the work will be performed (e.g., Center staff, consultants, or contractors) and the percentage of work that will be performed among the parties.

8. Eligibility. The applicant must describe, not to exceed two pages, how it meets the applicant, matching, grant period and activity eligibility requirements.

9. Proposal Narrative. The proposal narrative is limited to a total of 40 pages.

i. Project Title. The title of the proposed project must be brief, not to exceed 75 characters, yet describe the essentials of the project. If a title page was included under number 5 above, it is not necessary to include an additional title page under this section.

ii. Information Sheet. A separate one-page information sheet listing each of the evaluation criteria referenced in this funding announcement, followed by the page numbers of all relevant material and documentation contained in the proposal that address or support the criteria. If the evaluation criteria are listed on the Table of Contents and specifically and individually addressed in narrative form, then it is not necessary to include an information sheet under this section.

iii. Goals of the Project. The applicant must include the following statements in this section of the narrative to

demonstrate that the Center is following these statutory requirements:

1. A statement that substantiates that the Center will effectively serve rural areas in the United States;

2. A statement that the primary objective of the Center will be to improve the economic condition of rural areas through cooperative development;

3. A description of the contributions that the proposed activities are likely to make to the improvement of the economic conditions of the rural areas for which the Center will provide services. Expected economic impacts should be tied to tasks included in the work plan and budget; and

4. A statement that the Center, in carrying out its activities, will seek, where appropriate, the advice, participation, expertise, and assistance of representatives of business, industry, educational institutions, the Federal Government, and State and local governments.

iv. Performance Evaluation Criteria. The Agency has established annual performance measures to evaluate the RCDG program. Applicants may provide estimates on the following performance measures.

- Number of groups who are not legal entities assisted.
- Number of businesses that are not cooperatives assisted.
- Number of cooperatives assisted.
- Number of businesses incorporated that are not cooperatives.
- Number of cooperatives incorporated.
- Total number of jobs created as a result of assistance.
- Total number of jobs saved as a result of assistance.
- Number of jobs created for the Center as a result of RCDG funding.
- Number of jobs saved for the Center as a result of RCDG funding.

If the application is selected for funding, the applicant will be required to report actual numbers for these performance elements on a semi-annual basis and in the final performance report. Additional information on post-award requirements can be found in Section VI. Applicants must also suggest additional performance criteria in the event the proposal receives grant funding. These additional voluntary criteria should be specific, measurable performance criteria, but are not binding on USDA.

v. Undertakings. The applicant must include the following statements in this section of the narrative and expressly undertake to do them.

1. Take all practicable steps to develop continuing sources of financial support for the Center, particularly from sources in the private sectors;

2. Make arrangements for the Center's activities to be monitored and evaluated; and

3. Provide an accounting for the money received by the grantee in accordance with 7 CFR part 4284, subpart F.

vi. Work Plan. Please see section V. A. 6. for specific requirements on the work plan and budget. The work plan and budget should be presented under proposal evaluation criterion number 6. It is not necessary to include the work plan and budget under this section.

vii. Delivery of Technical Assistance and Other Services. Please see section V. A. 2. for specific requirements on delivery of technical assistance in rural areas to promote and assist the development of cooperatively and mutually owned businesses. Delivery should be presented under proposal evaluation criterion number 2. It is not necessary to include discussion on delivery of technical assistance under this section.

viii. Qualifications of Personnel. Please see section V. A. 7. for specific requirements on qualifications of personnel. Qualifications of personnel should be presented under proposal evaluation criterion number 7. It is not necessary to include discussion on qualifications of personnel under this section.

ix. Local Support. Please see section V. A. 8. for specific requirements for local support. Local support should be presented under proposal evaluation criterion number 8. It is not necessary to include discussion of local support under this section.

x. Future Support. Please see section V. A. 9. for specific requirements on future support. Future support should be presented under proposal evaluation criterion number 9. It is not necessary to include discussion on future support under this section.

xi. Proposal Evaluation Criteria. Each of the evaluation criteria referenced in this funding announcement must be specifically and individually addressed in narrative form. Applications that do not address all of the proposal evaluation criteria will be considered ineligible. See Section V. A. for a description of the Proposal Evaluation Criteria.

10. Certification of Judgment Owed to the United States. Applicants must certify that there are no current outstanding Federal judgments against them. No grant funds shall be used to pay a judgment obtained by the United States. It is suggested that applicants use the following language for the certification. "[INSERT NAME OF APPLICANT] certifies that the United

States has not obtained a judgment against it and will not use grant funds to pay any judgments obtained by the United States." A separate signature is not required.

11. Certification of Matching Funds. Applicants must certify that matching funds will be available at the same time grant funds are anticipated to be spent and that matching funds will be spent in advance of grant funding, such that for every dollar of the total project cost, not less than the required amount of matching funds will have been expended prior to submitting the request for reimbursement. Please note that this certification is a separate requirement from the Verification of Matching Funds requirement. To satisfy the Certification requirement, applicants should include a statement for this section that reads as follows: "[INSERT NAME OF APPLICANT] certifies that matching funds will be available at the same time grant funds are anticipated to be spent and that matching funds will be spent in advance of grant funding, such that for every dollar of the total project cost, at least 25 cents (5 cents for 1994 Institutions) of matching funds will have been expended prior to submitting the request for reimbursement." A separate signature is not required.

12. Verification of Matching Funds. Applicants must provide documentation of all proposed matching funds, both cash and in-kind. Matching funds must be used for eligible purposes and expenditures for this grant program. The documentation must be included in Appendix A and will not count towards the 40-page limitation. Template letters for each type of matching funds are available at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/verifymatchsample.doc>.

If matching funds are to be provided in cash, the following requirements must be met at the time of application. Additional documentation may be required if a grant is awarded.

Applicant: The application must include a statement verifying (1) the amount of the cash and (2) the source of the cash. If the applicant is paying for goods and/or services as part of the matching funds contribution, the expenditure is considered a cash match, and should be verified as such.

Third-party: The application must include a signed letter from the third party verifying (1) how much cash will be donated and (2) that it will be available corresponding to the proposed grant period or donated on a specific date within the grant period. Cash matching contributions from third-parties are to be used for Center

operations and cannot be used to provide services which directly benefit the third-party contributor. Contributors of cash matching contributions may not limit how or where the Center may use the contributions.

If matching funds are to be provided by an in-kind donation, the following requirements must be met.

Applicant: The application must include a signed letter from the applicant or its authorized representative verifying (1) the nature of the goods and/or services to be donated and how they will be used (2) when the goods and/or services will be donated (*i.e.*, corresponding to the proposed grant period or to specific dates within the grant period) and (3) the value of the goods and/or services.

Third-Party: The application must include a signed letter from the third party verifying (1) the nature of the goods and/or services to be donated and how they will be used, (2) when the goods and/or services will be donated (*i.e.*, corresponding to the proposed grant period or to specific dates within the grant period when matching contributions will be made available) and (3) the value of the goods and/or services. It should be noted that non-profit or other organizations contributing the services of affiliated volunteers must follow the third-party verification requirement above, for each individual volunteer.

Applicants should note that only goods or services for which no expenditure is made can be considered in-kind. Verification for in-kind contributions that are over-valued will not be accepted. The valuation process for in-kind funds does not need to be included in the application. However, the applicant must be able to demonstrate how the valuation was derived at the time of notification of tentative selection for the grant award. If the applicant cannot satisfactorily demonstrate how the valuation was determined, the grant award may be withdrawn or the amount of the grant may be reduced.

Verification for funds donated outside the proposed time period of the grant will not be accepted.

Examples of unacceptable matching funds are in-kind contributions from individuals, businesses, or cooperatives being assisted by the Center to benefit their own project, donations of fixed equipment and buildings, and costs related to the preparation of the RCDG application package.

Expected program income may not be used to fulfill the matching funds requirement at the time of application. However, if there are contracts in place

at the time of application, they may be treated as cash match. If program income is earned during the time period of the grant, it is subject to the requirements of 7 CFR part 3015, subpart F and 7 CFR part 3019.24 and any provisions in the Grant Agreement.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Application Deadline Date: June 29, 2009.

Explanation of Deadlines: Paper applications must be postmarked by the deadline date (see Section IV.F for the address). Electronic applications must be received by <http://www.grants.gov> by the deadline date. If the application does not meet the deadline above, it will not be considered for funding. The applicant will be notified if the application does not meet the submission requirements. The applicant will also be notified by mail or by e-mail if the application is received on time.

E. Intergovernmental Review of Applications

Executive Order 12372, Intergovernmental review of Federal programs, applies to this program. This EO requires that Federal agencies provide opportunities for consultation on proposed assistance with State and local governments. Many states have established a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) to facilitate this consultation. For a list of states that maintain an SPOC, please see the White House Web site: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/spoc.html>. If an applicant's state has an SPOC, the applicant may submit a copy of the application directly for review. Any comments obtained through the SPOC must be provided to USDA Rural Development for consideration as part of the application. If the applicant's state has not established an SPOC, or the applicant does not want to submit a copy of the application, USDA Rural Development will submit the application to the SPOC or other appropriate agency or agencies.

Applicants are also encouraged to contact the USDA Rural Development State Office for assistance and questions on this process. Contact information for USDA Rural Development State Offices can be viewed at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/Contacts.htm>.

F. Funding Restrictions

Funding restrictions apply to both grant funds and matching funds. Grant funds may be used to pay up to 75 percent (95 percent where the grantee is a 1994 Institution) of the total project cost.

1. Grant funds and matching funds may be used for, but are not limited to, providing the following to individuals, small businesses, cooperative and mutually-owned businesses and other similar entities in rural areas served by the Center (section 310B(e)(5)):

i. Applied research, feasibility, environmental and other studies that may be useful for the purpose of cooperative development.

ii. Collection, interpretation and dissemination of principles, facts, technical knowledge, or other information for the purpose of cooperative development.

iii. Training and instruction for the purpose of cooperative development.

iv. Loans and grants for the purpose of cooperative development in accordance with this notice and applicable regulations.

v. Technical assistance, research services and advisory services for the purpose of cooperative development.

vi. Programs providing for the coordination of services and sharing of information among the Centers (section 310B(e)(4)(C)(vi)).

2. No funds made available under this solicitation shall be used for any of the following activities:

i. To duplicate current services or replace or substitute support previously provided. If the current service is inadequate, however, grant funds may be used to expand the level of effort or services beyond that which is currently being provided;

ii. To pay costs of preparing the application package for funding under this program;

iii. To pay costs of the project incurred prior to the date of grant approval;

iv. To fund political or lobbying activities;

v. To pay for assistance to any private business enterprise that does not have at least 51 percent ownership by those who are either citizens of the United States or reside in the United States after being legally admitted for permanent residence;

vi. To pay any judgment or debt owed to the United States;

vii. To plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct a building or facility, including a processing facility;

viii. To purchase, rent, or install fixed equipment, including laboratory equipment or processing machinery;

ix. To pay for the repair of privately owned vehicles;

x. To fund research and development;

xi. To pay costs of the project where a conflict of interest exists; or

xii. To fund any activities prohibited by 7 CFR parts 3015 or 3019.

G. Other Submission Requirements

A paper application for a grant must be submitted to Cooperative Programs, Attn: RCDG Program, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Mail Stop 3250, Room 4016–South, Washington, DC 20250–3250. The phone number that should be used for courier delivery is (202) 720–8460. Electronically submitted applications must apply using the following internet address: <http://www.grants.gov>. Applications may not be submitted by electronic mail, facsimile, or by hand-delivery. Each application submission must contain all required documents.

V. Application Review Information

A. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All eligible and complete applications will be evaluated based on the following criteria. Evaluators will base scores only on the information provided or cross-referenced in each individual evaluation criterion. The maximum amount of points available is 100. Note: Newly established or proposed Centers that do not yet have a track record on which to evaluate the following criteria should refer to the expertise and track records of staff or consultants expected to perform tasks related to the respective criteria.

1. *Administrative capabilities in support of Center activities.* (maximum score of 10 points) The Agency will evaluate the application to determine whether the applicant demonstrates a proven track record in carrying out activities to promote and assist the development of cooperatively and mutually owned businesses. Applicants that discuss the capabilities of their financial systems and audit controls, personnel and program administration performance measures and clear rules of governance that will be utilized, either in-house or by supporting institutions to support Center activities will receive more points.

2. *Technical assistance and other services.* (maximum score of 15 points) The Agency will evaluate the applicant's demonstrated expertise in providing technical assistance and accomplishing effective outcomes in rural areas to promote and assist the development of cooperatively and mutually-owned businesses. The applicant should also discuss their potential for delivering effective technical assistance, the types of assistance provided, the expected effects of that assistance, the sustainability of organizations receiving the assistance, and the transferability of its cooperative development strategies and focus to other areas of the U.S. Applicants that

evidence effective delivery systems for cooperative development will receive more points.

3. *Economic development.* (maximum score of 15 points) The Agency will evaluate the applicant's demonstrated ability to assist in the retention of businesses, facilitate the establishment of cooperatives and new cooperative approaches and generate employment opportunities that will improve the economic conditions of rural areas. Applicants that provide statistics for historical and potential development and identify their role in economic development outcomes will receive more points.

4. *Networking and regional focus.* (maximum score of 10 points) The Agency will evaluate the applicant's demonstrated commitment to (a) networking with other cooperative development centers, and other organizations involved in rural economic development efforts, as well as (b) developing multi-organization and multi-state approaches to addressing the economic development and cooperative needs of rural areas.

5. *Commitment.* (maximum score of 10 points) The Agency will evaluate the applicant's commitment to providing technical assistance and other services to under-served and economically distressed areas in rural areas of the United States. Applicants that define the underserved and economically distressed areas within their service area, provide statistics, and identify projects within or affecting these areas, as appropriate, will receive more points.

6. *Work Plan/Budget.* (maximum score of 10 points) The work plan will be reviewed for detailed actions and an accompanying timetable for implementing the proposal. Clear, logical, realistic and efficient plans will result in a higher score. Budgets will be reviewed for completeness and the quality of non-Federal funding commitments. Applicants must discuss the specific tasks (whether it be by type of service or specific project) to be completed using grant and matching funds. The work plan should reflect projects initiated by the applicant and in which the applicant plays a key role. The work plan should also show how customers will be identified, key personnel to be involved, and the evaluation methods to be used to determine the success of specific tasks and overall objectives of Center operations. The budget must present a breakdown of the estimated costs associated with cooperative development activities as well as the operation of the Center and allocate these costs to each of the tasks to be

undertaken. Matching funds as well as grant funds must be accounted for in the budget.

7. *Qualifications of those performing the tasks.* (maximum score of 10 points) The Agency will evaluate the application to determine if the personnel expected to perform key tasks have a track record of positive solutions for complex cooperative development and/or marketing problems, or a successful record of conducting accurate feasibility studies, business plans, marketing analysis, or other activities relevant to applicant's success as determined by the tasks identified in the applicants work plan. The applicant must also identify whether the personnel expected to perform the tasks are full/part-time employees of the applicant or are contract personnel. Applicants that evidence commitment/availability of qualified personnel expected to perform the tasks will receive more points.

8. *Local support.* (maximum score of 10 points) The Agency will evaluate applications for previous and expected local support for the applicant, and plans for coordinating with other developmental organizations in the proposed service area or with state and local government institutions.

Applicants that evidence strong support from potential beneficiaries and formal evidence of intent to coordinate with other developmental organizations will receive more points. Support should be discussed directly within the response to this criterion. The applicant may submit a maximum of 10 letters of support or intent to coordinate with the application. These letters should be included in Appendix B of the application and will not count against the 40-page limit for the narrative.

9. *Future support.* (maximum score of 10 points) The Agency will evaluate the applicant's vision for funding its operations in future years. Applicants should document new and existing funding sources that support its goals. Applicants should also discuss reliance on Federal, State, and local grants; and the use of in-house personnel for providing services versus contracting out for that expertise. Applications that evidence vision and likelihood of long-term sustainability with diversification of funding sources and building in-house technical assistance capacity will receive more points.

B. Review and Selection Process

The Agency will screen all of the proposals to determine whether the application is eligible and sufficiently responsive to the requirements set forth

in this notice to allow for an informed review.

The Agency will evaluate applications using a panel of qualified reviewers who will score the applications in accordance with the point allocation specified in this notice. Applications will be submitted to the Administrator in rank order, together with funding level recommendations.

C. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

Award Date: The announcement of award selections is expected to occur on or about September 15, 2009.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

Successful applicants will receive a notification of tentative selection for funding from USDA Rural Development. Applicants must comply with all applicable statutes and regulations before the grant award will be approved. Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification by mail, including appeal rights, as appropriate. Consolidated comments for reviewed applications will be made available.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

7 CFR parts 3015, 3019, and 4284 are applicable to this program. To view these regulations, please see the following internet address: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr/cfr-table-search.html>.

The following additional requirements apply to grantees selected for this program:

- Grant Agreement.
- Letter of Conditions.
- Form RD 1940-1, "Request for Obligation of Funds."
- Form RD 1942-46, "Letter of Intent to Meet Conditions."
- Form AD-1047, "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters—Primary Covered Transactions."
- Form AD-1048, "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion—Lower Tier Covered Transactions."
- Form AD-1049, "Certification Regarding Drug-Free Workplace Requirements (Grants)."
- Form RD 400-4, "Assurance Agreement."
- RD Instruction 1940-Q, Exhibit A-1, "Certification for Contracts, Grants and Loans," including Standard Form (SF) LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities."

Additional information on these requirements can be found at <http://>

www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/rcdg.htm.

Reporting Requirements: Grantees must provide USDA Rural Development with an original or electronic copy that includes all required signatures of the following reports. The reports should be submitted to the Agency contact listed on the Grant Agreement and Letter of Conditions. Failure to submit satisfactory reports on time may result in suspension or termination of the grant.

1. Form SF-269 or SF-269A. A "Financial Status Report" listing expenditures according to agreed upon budget categories, on a semi-annual basis. Reporting periods end each March 31 and September 30. Reports are due 30 days after the reporting period ends.

2. Semi-annual performance reports that compare accomplishments to the objectives stated in the proposal. Identify all tasks completed to date and provide documentation supporting the reported results. If the original schedule provided in the work plan is not being met, the report should discuss the problems or delays that may affect completion of the project. Objectives for the next reporting period should be listed. Compliance with any special conditions on the use of award funds should be discussed. The report should also include a summary at the end of the report with the following elements to assist in documenting the annual performance goals of the RCDG program for Congress.

- Number of groups who are not legal entities assisted.
- Number of businesses that are not cooperatives assisted.
- Number of cooperatives assisted.
- Number of businesses incorporated that are not cooperatives.
- Number of cooperatives incorporated.
- Total number of jobs created as a result of assistance.
- Total number of jobs saved as a result of assistance.
- Number of jobs created for the Center as a result of RCDG funding.
- Number of jobs saved for the Center as a result of RCDG funding.

Reports are due as provided in paragraph 1 of this section. Supporting documentation must also be submitted for completed tasks. The supporting documentation for completed tasks includes, but is not limited to: Feasibility studies, marketing plans, business plans, publication quality success stories, applied research reports, copies of surveys conducted, articles of incorporation and bylaws and an accounting of how outreach, training, and other funds were expended.

3. Final project performance reports. These reports shall include all of the requirements of the semi-annual performance reports and responses to the following:

i. What have been the most challenging or unexpected aspects of this program?

ii. What advice would the grantee give to other organizations planning a similar program? These should include strengths and limitations of the program. If the grantee had the opportunity, what would they have done differently?

iii. If an innovative approach was used successfully, the grantee should describe their program in detail so that other organizations might consider replication in their areas.

The final performance report is due within 90 days of the completion of the project.

VII. Agency Contacts

For general questions about this announcement and for program technical assistance, applicants should contact their USDA Rural Development State Office at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/rcdg/Contacts.htm>. If an applicant is unable to contact their State Office, please contact a nearby State Office or the USDA Rural Development National Office at 1400 Independence Avenue, SW., Mail Stop 3250, Rm. 4016-South, Washington, DC 20250-3250, telephone: (202) 720-8460, e-mail: cpgrants@wdc.usda.gov.

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Dated: April 14, 2009.

Pat Fiala,

Acting Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service.

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Notice of Funds Availability: Inviting Applications for the Foreign Market Development Cooperator Program

Announcement Type: New.
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 10.600.

SUMMARY: The Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) announces that it is inviting proposals for the 2010 Foreign Market Development Cooperator (Cooperator) program. The intended effect of this notice is to solicit applications from eligible applicants and award funds in October 2009. The Cooperator program is administered by personnel of the Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS).

DATES: All applications must be received by 5 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, May 29, 2009. Applications received after this date will not be considered.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Entities wishing to apply for funding assistance should contact the Program Operations Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, Portals Office Building, Suite 400, 1250 Maryland Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20024, phone: (202) 720-4327, fax: (202) 720-9361, e-mail: podadmin@fas.usda.gov. Information is also available on the Foreign Agricultural Service Web site at <http://www.fas.usda.gov/mos/programs/fmdprogram.asp>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Funding Opportunity Description

Authority: The Cooperator program is authorized by title VII of the Agricultural Trade Act of 1978, as amended. Cooperator program regulations appear at 7 CFR part 1484.

Purpose: The Cooperator program is designed to create, expand, and maintain foreign markets for U.S. agricultural commodities and products through cost-share assistance. Financial assistance under the Cooperator program will be made available on a competitive basis and applications will be reviewed against the evaluation criteria contained herein. All U.S. agricultural commodities, except tobacco, are eligible for consideration.

The FAS allocates funds in a manner that effectively supports the strategic decision-making initiatives of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 and the USDA's Food and Agricultural Policy (FAP). In deciding whether a proposed project will contribute to the effective creation, expansion, or maintenance of foreign markets, the FAS seeks to identify a clear, long-term agricultural trade strategy, and a program effectiveness time line against which results can be measured at specific intervals using quantifiable product or country goals. The FAS also considers the extent to which a proposed project targets markets with the greatest growth potential. These factors are part of the FAS resource allocation strategy to fund applicants who can demonstrate performance and address the objectives of the GPRA and FAP.

II. Award Information

Under the Cooperator program, the FAS enters into agreements with eligible nonprofit U.S. trade organizations to share the cost of certain overseas marketing and promotion activities. Funding priority is given to organizations that have the broadest possible producer representation of the commodity being promoted and that are nationwide in membership and scope. Cooperators may receive assistance only for generic activities that do not involve promotions targeted directly to consumers. The program generally operates on a reimbursement basis.

III. Eligibility Information

1. *Eligible Applicants:* To participate in the Cooperator program, an applicant must be a nonprofit U.S. agricultural trade organization.

2. *Cost Sharing:* To participate in the Cooperator program, an applicant must agree to contribute resources to its proposed promotional activities. The Cooperator program is intended to supplement, not supplant, the efforts of the U.S. private sector. The contribution must be at least 50 percent of the value of resources provided by CCC for activities conducted under the project agreement.

The degree of commitment of an applicant to the promotional strategies contained in its application, as represented by the agreed cost share contributions specified therein, is considered by the FAS when determining which applications will be approved for funding. Cost-share may be actual cash invested or in-kind contributions, such as professional staff time spent on design and execution of activities. The Cooperator program

regulations, in sections 1484.50 and 1484.51, provide detailed discussion of eligible and ineligible cost-share contributions.

3. *Other:* Applications should include a justification for funding assistance from the program—an explanation as to what specifically could not be accomplished without federal funding assistance and why participating organization(s) are unlikely to carry out the project without such assistance.

IV. Application and Submission Information

1. *Address To Request Application Package:* Organizations are encouraged to submit their FMD applications to the FAS through the Unified Export Strategy (UES) application Internet Web site. The UES allows applicants to submit a single consolidated and strategically coordinated proposal that incorporates requests for funding and recommendations for virtually all of the FAS marketing programs, financial assistance programs, and market access programs. The suggested UES format encourages applicants to examine the constraints or barriers to trade that they face, identify activities that would help overcome such impediments, consider the entire pool of complementary marketing tools and program resources, and establish realistic export goals.

Applicants planning to use the Internet-based system must contact the FAS/Program Operations Division at (202) 720-4327 to obtain site access information. The Internet-based application, including a help file that contains step-by-step instructions, may be found at the following URL address: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/cooperators.html>.

The FAS highly recommends applying via the Internet-based application as this format virtually eliminates paperwork and expedites the FAS processing and review cycle. However, applicants also have the option of submitting an electronic version (along with two paper copies) of their application to the FAS on compact disc. Organizations that choose to submit applications on compact disc can obtain the application format by contacting the Program Operations Division on (202) 720-4327.

2. *Content and Form of Application Submission:* To be considered for the Cooperator program, an applicant must submit to the FAS information required by the Cooperator program regulations in section 1484.20. In addition, in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's policy (68 FR 38402 (June 27, 2003)) regarding the need to identify entities that are