

## § 2901.8

§ 2901.6, may request a review of the denial by the Secretary within 30 days from the date of the denial.

(b) *Procedures.* Any request for review under § 2901.7(a) shall be in writing and shall set forth the specific ground upon which the request is based. There is no final agency action for purposes of judicial review under § 2901.8 until that request has been acted upon. If the request for review has not been acted upon within 30 days after it is received, the request shall be deemed to have been denied. That denial shall then constitute final agency action for the purpose of judicial review under § 2901.8.

### § 2901.8 Judicial review.

Any person aggrieved or adversely affected by a final agency action taken on a request for an adjustment under this section may obtain judicial review in accordance with section 506 of the Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978.

### § 2901.9 Effective date.

This rule shall become effective on October 29, 1979.

## PART 2902 [RESERVED]

## PART 2903—BIODIESEL FUEL EDUCATION PROGRAM

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AUTHORITY: 7 U.S.C. 8104; 5 U.S.C. 301.

SOURCE: 68 FR 56139, Sept. 30, 2003, unless otherwise noted.

## Subpart A—General Information

### § 2903.1 Applicability of regulations.

(a) The regulations of this part only apply to Biodiesel Fuel Education Program grants awarded under the provisions of section 9004 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (FSRIA) (7 U.S.C. 8104) which authorizes the Secretary to award competitive grants to eligible entities to educate governmental and private entities that operate vehicle fleets, other interested entities (as determined by the Secretary), and the public about the benefits of biodiesel fuel use. Eligibility is limited to nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education (as defined in sec. 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)) that have demonstrated both knowledge of biodiesel fuel production, use, or distribution and the ability to conduct educational and technical support programs. The Secretary delegated this authority to the Chief Economist, who in turn delegated this authority to the Director of OEPNU.

(b) The regulations of this part do not apply to grants awarded by the Department of Agriculture under any other authority.

### § 2903.2 Purpose of the program.

The Biodiesel Fuel Education Program seeks to familiarize public and

private vehicle fleet operators, other interested entities, and the public, with the benefits of biodiesel, a relatively new fuel option in the United States. It will also address concerns previously identified by fleet operators and other potential users of this alternative fuel, including the need to balance the positive environmental, social and human health impacts of biodiesel utilization with the increased per gallon cost to the user. It is the Program's goal to stimulate biodiesel demand and encourage the further development of a biodiesel industry in the United States.

#### § 2903.3 Eligibility.

(a) Eligibility is limited to nonprofit organizations and institutions of higher education that have demonstrated both knowledge of biodiesel fuel production, use, or distribution and the ability to conduct educational and technical support programs.

(b) Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

#### § 2903.4 Indirect costs.

(a) For the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program, applicants should use the current indirect cost rate negotiated with the cognizant Federal negotiating agency. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If no indirect cost rate has been negotiated, a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested.

(b) A proposer may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, charge only direct costs to grant funds. Grantees electing this alternative will not be allowed to charge, as direct costs, indirect costs that otherwise would be in the grantee's indirect cost pool under the applicable Office of Management and Budget cost principles. Grantees who request no indirect costs will not be permitted to revise their budgets at a later date to charge indirect costs to grant funds.

#### § 2903.5 Matching requirements.

There are no matching funds requirements for the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process as evaluation criteria.

### Subpart B—Program Description

#### § 2903.6 Project types.

OEPNU intends to award continuation grants to successful Biodiesel Fuel Education Program applicants. A continuation grant is a grant instrument by which the Department agrees to support a specified level of effort for a predetermined project period with a statement of intention to provide additional support at a future date, provided that performance has been satisfactory, appropriations are available for this purpose, and continued government support would be in the best interest of the Federal government and the public. If these three elements are met, OEPNU plans to provide additional support to the funded project(s).

#### § 2903.7 Project objectives.

(a) Successful projects will develop practical indicators or milestones to measure their progress towards achieving the following objectives:

(1) Enhance current efforts to collect and disseminate biodiesel information;

(2) Coordinate with other biodiesel educational or promotional programs, and with Federal, State and local programs aimed at encouraging biodiesel use, including the EPAct program;

(3) Create a nationwide networking system that delivers biodiesel information to targeted audiences, including users, distributors and other infrastructure-related personnel;

(4) Identify and document the benefits of biodiesel (e.g., lifecycle costing); and

(5) Gather data pertaining to information gaps and develop strategies to address the gaps.

(b) [Reserved]

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**Subpart C—Preparation of an Application**

**§ 2903.8 Program application materials.**

OEPNU will publish periodic program announcements to notify potential applicants of the availability of funds for competitive continuation grants. The program announcement will provide information about obtaining program application materials.

**§ 2903.9 Content of an application.**

(a) Applications should be prepared following the guidelines and the instructions in the program announcement. At a minimum, applications shall include: a proposal cover page, project summary, project description, information about key personnel, documentation of collaborative arrangements, information about potential conflicts-of-interest, budget forms and a budget narrative, information about current and pending support, and assurance statements.

(b) Proper preparation of applications will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion. Specific instructions regarding additional application content requirements and the ordering of application contents will be included in the program announcement. These will include instructions about paper size, margins, font type and size, line spacing, page numbering, the inclusion of illustrations, and electronic submission.

**§ 2903.10 Submission of an application.**

The program announcement will provide the deadline date for submitting an application, the number of copies of each application that must be submitted, and the address to which proposals must be submitted.

**§ 2903.11 Acknowledgment of applications.**

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged. Applicants who do not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline should contact the program contact indicated on the program announcement. Once the application has been assigned a

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proposal number, that number should be cited on all future correspondence.

**Subpart D—Application Review and Evaluation**

**§ 2903.12 Application review.**

(a) Reviewers will include government and non-government individuals. All reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

(1) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; and

(2) The need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.

(b) In addition, when selecting non-government reviewers, the following factors will be considered:

(1) The need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs;

(2) The need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations;

(3) The need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and

(4) The need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

(c) Authorized departmental officers will compile application reviews and recommend awards to OEPNU. OEPNU will make final award decisions.

**§ 2903.13 Evaluation criteria.**

(a) The following evaluation criteria will be used in reviewing applications submitted for the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program:

(1) Relevance of proposed project to current and future issues related to the production, use, distribution, fuel quality, and fuel properties of biodiesel, including:

(i) Demonstrated knowledge about markets, state initiatives, impacts on local economies, regulatory issues, standards, and technical issues;

(ii) Demonstrated knowledge about issues associated with developing a biodiesel infrastructure; and

(iii) Quality and extent of stakeholder involvement in planning and accomplishment of program objectives.

(2) Reasonableness of project proposal, including:

(i) Sufficiency of scope and strategies to provide a consistent message in keeping with existing standards and regulations;

(ii) Adequacy of Project Description, suitability and feasibility of methodology to develop and implement program;

(iii) Clarity of objectives, milestones, and indicators of progress;

(iv) Adequacy of plans for reporting, assessing and monitoring results over project's duration; and

(v) Demonstration of feasibility, and probability of success.

(3) Technical quality of proposed project, including:

(i) Suitability and qualifications of key project personnel;

(ii) Institutional experience and competence in providing alternative fuel education, including:

(A) Demonstrated knowledge about programs involved in alternative fuel research and education;

(B) Demonstrated knowledge about other fuels, fuel additives, engine performance, fuel quality and fuel emissions;

(C) Demonstrated knowledge about Federal, State and local programs aimed at encouraging alternative fuel use;

(D) Demonstrated ability in providing educational programs and developing technical programs; and

(E) Demonstrated ability to analyze technical information relevant to the biodiesel industry.

(iii) Adequacy of available or obtainable resources; and

(iv) Quality of plans to administer and maintain the project, including collaborative efforts, evaluation and monitoring efforts.

(b) [Reserved]

#### § 2903.14 Conflicts of interest and confidentiality.

(a) During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. Determinations of conflicts of interest will be based on the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution. The program announcement will specify the methodology for determining such autonomy.

(b) Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of reviewers will be made available in such a way that the reviewers cannot be identified with the review of any particular application.

### Subpart E—Award Administration

#### § 2903.15 General.

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this part. The date specified by the ADO as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by OEPNU under this program shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance

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with the approved application and budget, the regulations of this part, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the applicable Department assistance regulations (including part 3019 of this title).

**§ 2903.16 Organizational management information.**

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one-time basis as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this program, if such information has not been provided previously. Copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements will be provided as part of the preaward process.

**§ 2903.17 Award document and notice of award.**

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

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom OEPNU has issued an award under this program;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by OEPNU during the project period;
- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and
- (10) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by OEPNU and the Authorized Departmental Officer to carry out the awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

(b) [Reserved]

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**Subpart F—Supplementary Information**

**§ 2903.18 Access to review information.**

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

**§ 2903.19 Use of funds; changes.**

(a) *Delegation of fiscal responsibility.* Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

(b) *Changes in project plans.* (1) The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

(2) Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

(3) Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

(4) Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

(5) *Changes in project period.* The project period may be extended by

OEPNU without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

(6) *Changes in approved budget.* Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

#### § 2903.20 Reporting requirements.

The award document will give instructions regarding the submission of progress reports, including the frequency and required contents of the reports.

#### § 2903.21 Applicable Federal statutes and regulations.

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

(a) 7 CFR part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.

(b) 7 CFR part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.

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

(d) 2 CFR part 417, Nonprocurement Debarment and Suspension.

(e) 2 CFR part 418, 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.

(f) 2 CFR part 200, subparts B—General Provisions, C—Pre-Federal Award Requirements and Contents of Federal Awards, and D—Post-Federal Award

Requirements, as adopted by USDA through 2 CFR part 400.

(g) 2 CFR part 421, Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance).

(h) 2 CFR part 200, subpart F—Audit Requirements, as adopted by USDA through 2 CFR part 400. Title 29 U.S.C. 794 (sec. 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR part 15b (USDA implementation of statute)—prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in federally assisted programs. Title 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).

[85 FR 31939, May 28, 2020]

#### § 2903.22 Confidential aspects of applications and awards.

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of USDA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of one year. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

#### § 2903.23 Definitions.

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

*Authorized departmental officer* or *ADO* means the Secretary or any employee of the Department who has the authority to issue or modify grant instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

*Authorized organizational representative* or *AOR* means the president or chief executive officer of the applicant

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organization or the official, designated by the president or chief executive officer of the applicant organization, who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

*Biodiesel* means a monoalkyl ester that meets the requirements of an appropriate American Society for Testing and Materials Standard.

*Budget* period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.

*Department* or *USDA* means the United States Department of Agriculture.

*Education activity* means an act or process that imparts knowledge or skills through formal or informal training and outreach.

*Grant* means the award by the Secretary of funds to an eligible recipient for the purpose of conducting the identified project.

*Grantee* means the organization designated in the award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

*Institution of higher education*, as defined in sec. 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001), means an educational institution in any State that:

(1) Admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;

(2) Is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;

(3) Provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a two-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;

(4) Is a public or other nonprofit institution; and

(5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or associa-

tion, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted preaccreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education for the granting of preaccreditation status, and the Secretary of Education has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

*OEPNU* means the Office of Energy Policy and New Uses.

*Peer review* is an evaluation of a proposed project performed by experts with the scientific knowledge and technical skills to conduct the proposed work whereby the technical quality and relevance to the program are assessed.

*Prior approval* means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer (as defined in this section).

*Program* means the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program.

*Project* means the particular activity within the scope of the program supported by a grant award.

*Project director* or *PD* means the single individual designated by the grantee in the grant application and approved by the Secretary who is responsible for the direction and management of the project, also known as a principal investigator for research activities.

*Project period* means the period, as stated in the award document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

*Secretary* means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved may be delegated.

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