

who can demonstrate favorable peer reviews of research in value-added agriculture will receive more points than positively reviewed research in other areas.

3. Work Plan/Budget (Maximum 20 points)

The work plan and budget will be reviewed for specificity, realistic timetables and detail. Logical, realistic, and economically efficient plans and budgets will result in higher scores.

4. Measuring Effectiveness of Value-Added Projects (Maximum 25 points)

Proposals that address performance measures applicable to a wide range of value-added products and for various stages of producer organizational development, will receive more points than those with a more narrow range of applicability. Also, those proposals that can effectively demonstrate that performance measures contain predictive success or failure thresholds will receive higher scores.

Deliverables

Interim and final project deliverables, inclusive of supporting documentation, are due in the form and on the due dates as specified in the applicable grant agreement.

Grant Amounts

USDA reserves the right to make a single grant award or multiple smaller awards. In the event an applicant is awarded a grant that is less than the amount requested, the applicant will be required to modify its application to conform to the reduced amount before execution of the grant agreement. The Agency reserves the right to reduce or de-obligate the award if acceptable modifications are not submitted by the awardee within 15 working days from the date the request for modification is made. Any modifications must be within the scope of the original application.

Other Considerations

1. *Environmental review.* Any grant made by the Agency is subject to the requirements of 7 CFR part 1940, subpart G or its successor regulation. Some applications may be generally excluded from the environmental review process by 7 CFR 1940.333. Applicants for grant funds must consider and document within their plans the important environmental factors and the potential environmental impacts of the activity proposed in the grant application.

2. *Civil rights.* Any grant made is subject to the requirements of title VI of

the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin as outlined in 7 CFR part 1901, subpart E. In addition, any grant made under this subpart is subject to the requirements of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability; the requirements of the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in places of public accommodations. This program will also be administered in accordance with 7 CFR part 15, subpart A and all other applicable Civil Rights laws.

3. *Other USDA regulations.* This grant program is subject to the provisions of the following regulations, as applicable: (a) 7 CFR part 3015, Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, (b) 7 CFR part 3017, Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (nonprocurement) and Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants), (c) 7 CFR part 3018, New Restrictions on Lobbying, and (d) 7 CFR part 3019, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and other Nonprofit Organizations.

4. *Audit requirements.* Any grantee must comply with the audit requirements of 7 CFR part 3052. The audit requirements apply to the years in which grant funds are received and years in which work is accomplished using grant funds.

Grant Closing

1. *Letter of conditions.* The Agency will notify an approved applicant in writing, setting out the conditions under which the grant will be made.

2. *Applicant's intent to meet conditions.* Upon reviewing the conditions and requirements in the letter of conditions, the applicant must complete, sign and return the Agency's "Letter of Intent To Meet Conditions," or, if certain conditions cannot be met, the applicant may propose alternate conditions to the Agency. The Agency must concur with any changes proposed to the letter of conditions by the applicant before the application will be further processed.

3. *Grant agreement.* The grantee must enter into a grant agreement with USDA in form and substance similar to the form of agreement as published at the end of this NOFA prior to the advance of funds.

Award Requirements

Any approved applicant will be required to do the following:

1. Execute a "Request for Obligation of Funds". The following statement will be entered in the comment section of the Request for Obligation of Funds, and must be signed by the grantee:

"The grantee certifies that it is in compliance with and will continue to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, Executive Orders and other generally applicable requirements, including those contained in 7 CFR parts 3015, 3017, 3018, 3019 and 3052 in effect on the date of grant approval, and the approved Letter of Conditions."

2. Use SF-270 "Request for Advance or Reimbursement" to request advances or reimbursements, as applicable, but not more frequently than once a month. (This form can be downloaded from the following Web site: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/sf270.pdf>);

3. Maintain a financial management system that is acceptable to the Agency;

4. Collect and maintain data on race, sex and national origin of the beneficiaries of the project.

Reporting Requirements

Grantee must submit the following to the Agency;

1. 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 milestones 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 for interim and final project deliverables is not being met, the report should discuss the problems or delays that may affect completion of the study. Objectives for the next reporting period should be listed. Compliance with any special condition on the use of award funds should be discussed. Reporting periods end each March 31 and September 30. Reports are due 30 days after the reporting period ends.

Grant Servicing

The grant will be serviced in accordance with 7 CFR parts 1951, 3015 and 3019. Grantee will permit periodic inspection of the program operations by a representative of the Agency. All non-confidential information resulting from the Grantee's activities shall be made available to the general public on an equal basis.