

Development through Geospatial Extension Specialists (GES) Program for fiscal year (FY) 2004 to support programmatic activities (1) in states that establish new Geospatial Extension Specialist positions, and (2) in on-going Geospatial Extension Specialist programs. Beginning with the use of FY 2003 funds in this RFA, the participating agencies anticipate allocating a total of approximately \$1 million over three years to fund the GES Program.

The GES Program is supported by CSREES, the Earth Science Enterprise (ESE) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), and the National Sea Grant College Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce (DOC) as described in this Request for Applications (RFA). CSREES will administer GES Program grants and cooperative agreements.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on March 1, 2004, (5 p.m. eastern standard time). Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this RFA are requested within three months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**ADDRESSES:** The address for hand-delivered applications or applications submitted using an express mail or overnight courier service is: Geospatial Extension Specialists Program; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; Room 1420, Waterfront Centre; 800 9th Street, SW.; Washington, DC 20024; Telephone: (202) 401-5048.

Applications sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be sent to the following address: Geospatial Extension Specialists Program; c/o Proposal Services Unit; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2245; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-2245.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy and Program Liaison Staff; Office of Extramural Programs; USDA-CSREES; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: *RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov*. (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are

responding to the Geospatial Extension Specialists Program RFA.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Greg Crosby; National Program Leader; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; U.S. Department of Agriculture; STOP 2210; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW.; Washington, DC 20250-2210; Telephone: (202) 401-6050; Fax: (202) 401-1706; E-mail:

*gcrosby@csrees.usda.gov*; or Mr. Edwin Sheffner; Earth Science Enterprise, Code YO; National Aeronautics and Space Administration; 300 E Street, SW.; Washington, DC 20546; telephone: (202) 358-0239; fax: (202) 358-2770; e-mail: *edwin.j.sheffner@nasa.gov*; or Mr. Rodney McKellip; Earth Science Applications Directorate; John C. Stennis Space Center; Code MA00 Bldg. 1100; SCC, MS 29529-6000; telephone: (228) 688-2984; fax: (228) 688-7455; e-mail: *rmckelli@ssc.nasa.gov*.

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##### **Stakeholder Input**

CSREES is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be

considered in the development of any subsequent RFA for the program. Such comments will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, extension and education for use in formulating future RFAs for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted as provided in the **ADDRESSES** and **DATES** portions of this announcement.

#### **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance**

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.206 for USDA and 43.002 for NASA.

#### **Part I. General**

##### *A. Legislative Authority and Background*

Section 737 of the General Provisions of the Consolidated Appropriations Resolution, 2003 (Division A of Pub. L. 108-7) provides CSREES with the authority to use up to twenty percent of the amount made available in the Act for the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program (NRI), to carry out a competitive grants program under the same terms and conditions as those provided in section 401 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) (7 U.S.C. 7621).

Section 401 of AREERA established in the Treasury of the United States an account and authorized the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a research, extension, and education competitive grants program to address critical emerging U.S. agricultural and rural issues related to future food production; environmental quality and natural resource management; farm income; or rural, economic and business and community development policy.

The authority for NASA participation in the GES Program is found in the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Act of 1958, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2473 (c)(5), and section 316 of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Authorization Act of 2000, Pub. L. 106-391 (7 U.S.C. 5935 *note*).

##### *B. Purpose, Priorities and Fund Availability*

The GES Program supports programmatic activities (1) in states that establish new Geospatial Extension Specialist positions, and (2) in on-going Geospatial Extension Specialist