

3017, regarding Debarment and Suspension and Drug Free Workplace, and 7 CFR part 3018, regarding Lobbying. The certification forms are included in the application package for informational purposes only. These forms should not be submitted with the application since by signing form CSREES-2002 your organization is providing the required certifications. If the project will involve a subcontractor or consultant, the subcontractor/consultant should submit a form AD-1048, Certification regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion—Lower Tier Covered Transactions, to the grantee organization for retention in their records. This form should not be submitted to USDA.

17. Compliance With the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (Form CSREES-2006)

As outlined in 7 CFR part 3407 (the CSREES regulations implementing NEPA) and 14 CFR part 1216 (the NASA regulations regarding compliance with NEPA), the environmental data for any proposed project is to be provided to CSREES so that the Federal agency may determine whether any further action is needed. In some cases, however, the preparation of environmental data may not be required. Certain categories of actions are excluded from the requirements of NEPA.

In order for CSREES to determine whether any further action is needed with respect to NEPA, pertinent information regarding the possible environmental impacts of a proposed project is necessary; therefore, Form CSREES-2006, NEPA Exclusions Form, must be included in the application indicating whether the applicant is of the opinion that the project falls within a categorical exclusion and the reasons therefore. If it is the applicant's opinion that the proposed project falls within the categorical exclusions, the specific exclusion(s) must be identified.

Even though a project may fall within the categorical exclusions, CSREES may determine that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is necessary for an activity, if substantial controversy on environmental grounds exists or if other extraordinary conditions or circumstances are present which may cause such activity to have a significant environmental effect.

C. Submission of Applications

1. When To Submit (Deadline Date)

Applications must be received by COB on March 1, 2004 (5 p.m. eastern standard time). Applications received

after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

2. What To Submit

An original and fourteen (14) copies of the application must be submitted. In addition, submit ten (10) copies of the application's Project Summary, Form CSREES-2003. All copies of the application must be submitted in one package.

3. Where To Submit

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit completed applications via overnight mail or delivery service to ensure timely receipt by USDA. 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.

D. Acknowledgment of Applications

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the Form CSREES-2002. If the applicant's e-mail address is not indicated, CSREES will acknowledge receipt of the application by letter.

Applicants who do not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline should contact the program contact. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, that number should be cited on all future correspondence.

Part IV. Review Process

A. General

Each application will be evaluated in a two-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as stated in the RFA. Applications that do not fall within the guidelines as stated in the RFA will be eliminated from program competition and returned to applicants. Second, a review panel will technically evaluate

applications that meet these requirements. Written comments will be solicited from ad hoc reviewers when required, and individual written comments and in-depth discussions will be provided by a peer review panel prior to recommending applications for funding.

Reviewers will be selected based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields taking into account the following factors: (a) 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; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or resource managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as peer 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; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

B. Evaluation Criteria

Priority will be given to projects with a documented commitment to initiate or continue a Geospatial Extension Specialist position, that take full advantage of Space Grant and Cooperative Extension activities in the state, and that demonstrate links to the user communities within the state.

The following numbered evaluation criteria will be weighted equally and used to review all applications submitted in response to this RFA:

1. Technical Approach

(a) Suitability of the proposed project in terms of addressing significant issues and the probability of meeting stated objectives;

(b) Feasibility, soundness, logic and practicality of the proposed technical methods and concepts for achieving successful applications research;

(c) Clear identification of user needs and user benefits from proposed products or services; and