

(o) *USDA-EPSCoR States (Experimental Program for Stimulating Competitive Research)* means States which have had a funding level from the USDA NRICGP no higher than the 38th percentile of all States, based on a three-year rolling average, and all United States territories and possessions. A list of eligible States is published annually in the program solicitation.

[56 FR 57952, Nov. 14, 1991. Redesignated and amended at 60 FR 63368, 63369, Dec. 8, 1995; 61 FR 45319, Aug. 29, 1996; 71 FR 54896, Sept. 20, 2006]

#### § 3411.3 Eligibility requirements.

(a) For research projects, except where otherwise prohibited by law, State agricultural experiment stations, all colleges and universities, other research institutions and organizations, Federal agencies, private organizations or corporations, and individuals shall be eligible to apply for and receive a competitive grant under this part, provided that the applicant qualifies as a responsible grantee under the criteria set forth in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) To qualify as responsible, an applicant must meet the following standards as they relate to a particular project:

(1) Adequate financial resources for performance, the necessary experience, organizational and technical qualifications, and facilities, or a firm commitment, arrangement, or ability to obtain some (including by proposed sub-agreements);

(2) Ability to comply with the proposed or required completion schedule for the project;

(3) Satisfactory record of integrity, judgment, and performance, including, in particular, any prior performance under grants and contracts from the Federal government;

(4) Adequate financial management system and audit procedures that provide efficient and effective accountability and control of all funds, property, and other assets; and

(5) Otherwise qualified and eligible to receive a grant under the applicable laws and regulations; eligibility for specific program areas or categories of competitive grants to improve research

capabilities will be outlined in the program solicitation.

(c) Any applicant who is determined to be not responsible will be notified in writing of such finding and the basis therefor.

(d) *Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards*. In addition to paragraphs (a), (b), and (c) of this section, the following eligibility requirements apply to Agricultural Research Enhancement Awards for research projects (Program reserves the right to specify funding limitations and administrative requirements each year in the program solicitation):

(1) *Postdoctoral Fellowships*. In accordance with Section 2(b)(3)(D) of the Act of August 4, 1965, as amended, individuals who recently have received or will soon receive their doctoral degree may submit proposals for postdoctoral fellowships. The following eligibility requirements apply:

(i) The doctoral degree of the applicant must be received not earlier than January 1 of the fiscal year three years prior to the submission of the proposal and not later than nine months after the proposal due date;

(ii) The individual must be a citizen of the United States; and

(iii) The proposal must contain:

(A) documentation that arrangements have been made with an established investigator to serve as mentor;

(B) documentation that arrangements have been made for the necessary facilities, space, and materials for conduct of the research; and

(C) documentation from the host institution's authorized organizational representative indicating that the host institution concurs with these arrangements.

(2) *New Investigator Awards*. Pursuant to Section 2(b)(3)(E) of the Act of August 4, 1965, as amended, Project Directors who are beginning their research careers, do not have an extensive research publication record, and have less than 5 years of post-graduate, career-track research experience, may submit proposals as new investigators. Applicants may not have received competitively-awarded Federal research funds beyond the level of pre or postdoctoral research awards or USDA NRICGP seed grants.

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(3) *Strengthening Awards*. Applicants that are eligible for any grant under this part may also be eligible for Equipment Grants, Research Career Enhancement Awards, Seed Grants, and Strengthening Standard Research Project Awards pursuant to Sections 2(b)(3) (D) and (F) of the Act of August 4, 1965, as amended, subject to the following limitations on such eligibility:

(i) *Equipment Grants*. The following organizations are ineligible to apply for Equipment grants:

(A) Institutions which are among the top 100 universities and colleges for receiving Federal funds for science and engineering research as specified in the annual program solicitation; or

(B) non-degree granting institutions.

(ii) *Research Career Enhancement Awards, Seed Grants, and Strengthening Standard Research Project Awards*. The following eligibility requirements apply to Research Career Enhancement Awards, Seed Grants, and Strengthening Standard Research Project Awards:

(A) The Project Director listed on the Application For Funding must be from a small or mid-sized institution that is not among the top 100 universities and colleges for receiving Federal funds for science and engineering research as specified in the annual program solicitation or must be from an institution located in a USDA-EPSCoR state.

(B) Every investigator listed on the Application For Funding must have an appointment at a degree granting institution.

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#### § 3411.4 How to apply for a grant.

(a) Program solicitations will be prepared and announced through publication on the government-wide funding opportunities Web site (<http://www.grants.gov>) as early as practicable each fiscal year. It will contain information sufficient to enable all eligible applicants to prepare competitive grant proposals and will be as complete as possible with respect to:

(1) Descriptions of the specific research areas and the categories of competitive grants to improve research capabilities that the Department pro-

poses to support during the fiscal year involved, including anticipated funds to be awarded;

(2) Eligibility requirements;

(3) Obtaining application kits;

(4) Deadline dates for receipt of proposal packages;

(5) Submission addresses;

(6) Number of copies to submit;

(7) Special requirements.

(b) *NRICGP Application Kit*. A NRICGP Application Kit will be made available to any potential grant applicant who requests a copy. This kit contains required forms, certifications, and instructions applicable to the submission of grant proposals.

(c) *Format for grant proposals*. Specific instructions regarding page length, type of print, size of paper, and order of assembly, etc., of proposals will be provided in the program solicitation. However, unless otherwise stated in the program solicitation, the following general format applies:

(1) *Application for Funding form*. All grant proposals submitted by eligible applicants should contain an Application for Funding form, which must be signed by the proposing principal investigator(s) and endorsed by the cognizant authorized organizational representative who possesses the necessary authority to commit the applicant's time and other relevant resources. Investigators who do not sign the cover sheet will not be listed on the grant document in the event an award is made. The title of the proposal must be brief (80-character maximum), yet represent the major thrust of the project. Because this title will be used to provide information to those who may not be familiar with the proposed project, highly technical words or phraseology should be avoided where possible. In addition, phrases such as "investigation of" or "research on" should not be used.

(2) *Project Summary*. Each proposal must contain a project summary. This summary is not intended for the general reader; consequently, it may contain technical language comprehensible by persons in disciplines relating to the food and agricultural sciences. The project summary should be a self-contained, specific description of the