AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

122) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301–6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. 95–224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017, as amended—Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement); Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants), implementing Executive Order 12549 on debarment and suspension and the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. 701).

7 CFR Part 3018—Restrictions on Lobbying, prohibiting the use of appropriated funds to influence Congress or a Federal agency in connection with the making of any Federal grant and other Federal contracting and financial transactions.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A–110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3051—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A–133 regarding audits of institutions of higher education and other nonprofit institutions.

29 U.S.C. 794, section 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.

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).

§ 3405.21 Confidential aspects of proposals and awards.

When a proposal results in a grant, it becomes a part of the record of the Agency's transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a privileged nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as privileged should be clearly marked as such and sent in a separate statement, two copies of which should accompany the proposal. The original copy of a proposal that does not result in a grant will be retained by the Agency for a period of one year. Other copies will be destroyed. Such a proposal will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. A proposal may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

§ 3405.22 Evaluation of program.

Grantees should be aware that CSREES may, as a part of its own program evaluation activities, carry out in-depth evaluations of assisted activities. Thus, grantees should be prepared to cooperate with CSREES personnel, or persons retained by CSREES, evaluating the institutional context and the impact of any supported project. Grantees may be asked to provide general information on any students and faculty supported, in whole or in part, by a grant awarded under this program; information that may be requested includes, but is not limited to, standardized academic achievement test scores, grade point average, academic standing, career patterns, age, race/ethnicity, gender, citizenship, and disability.

PART 3406—1890 INSTITUTION CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS PROGRAM

Subpart A—General Information

Sec.

3406.1 Applicability of regulations.
3406.2 Definitions.
3406.3 Institutional eligibility.

Subpart B—Program Description

3406.4 Purpose of the program.
3406.5 Matching support.
3406.6 USDA agency cooperator requirement.
3406.7 General scope of program.
3406.8 Joint project proposals.
3406.9 Complementary project proposals.
3406.10 Use of funds for facilities.

Subpart C—Preparation of a Teaching Proposal

3406.11 Scope of a teaching proposal.
3406.12 Program application materials—teaching.
3406.13 Content of a teaching proposal.

Subpart D—Review and Evaluation of a Teaching Proposal

3406.14 Proposal review—teaching.
3406.15 Evaluation criteria for teaching proposals.

Subpart E—Preparation of a Research Proposal

3406.16 Scope of a research proposal.
3406.17 Program application materials—research.
3406.18 Content of a research proposal.

Subpart F—Review and Evaluation of a Research Proposal

3406.19 Proposal review—research.
3406.20 Evaluation criteria for research proposals.

Subpart G—Submission of a Teaching or Research Proposal

3406.21 Intent to submit a proposal.
3406.22 When and where to submit a proposal.

Subpart H—Supplementary Information

3406.23 Access to peer review information.
3406.24 Grant awards.
3406.25 Use of funds; changes.
3406.26 Monitoring progress of funded projects.
3406.27 Other Federal statutes and regulations that apply.
3406.28 Confidential aspects of proposals and awards.
3406.29 Evaluation of program.

AUTHORITY: Sec. 1470, National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3316).

SOURCE: 62 FR 39331, July 22, 1997, unless otherwise noted.

Subpart A—General Information

§3406.1 Applicability of regulations.

(a) The regulations of this part apply only to capacity building grants awarded to the 1890 land-grant institutions and Tuskegee University under the provisions of section 1417(b)(4) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(4)) and pursuant to annual appropriations made available specifically for an 1890 capacity building program. Section 1417(b)(4) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture, who has delegated the authority to the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES), to make competitive grants to land-grant colleges and universities, to colleges and universities having significant minority enrollments and a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences, and to other colleges and universities having a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of food and agricultural sciences, for a period not to exceed 5 years, to design and implement food and agricultural programs to build teaching and research capacity at colleges and universities having significant minority enrollments. Based on and subject to the express provisions of the annual appropriations act, only 1890 land-grant institutions and Tuskegee University are eligible for this grants program.

(b) To the extent that funds are available, each year CSREES will publish a FEDERAL REGISTER notice announcing the program and soliciting grant applications.

(c)(1) Based on the amount of funds appropriated in any fiscal year, CSREES will determine and cite in the program announcement:

(i) The program area(s) to be supported (teaching, research, or both);

(ii) The proportion of the appropriation reserved for, or available to, teaching projects and research projects;

(iii) The targeted need area(s) in teaching and in research to be supported;

(iv) The degree level(s) to be supported;

(v) The maximum project period a proposal may request;

(vi) The maximum amount of funds that may be requested by an institution under a regular, complementary, or joint project proposal; and

(vii) The maximum total funds that may be awarded to an institution under the program in a given fiscal year, including how funds awarded for complementary and for joint projects will be counted toward the institutional maximum.

(2) The program announcement will also specify the deadline date for proposal submission, the number of copies of each proposal that must be submitted, the address to which a proposal must be submitted, and whether or not Form CSREES–711, ''Intent to Submit a Proposal,'' is requested.

(d)(1) If it is deemed by CSREES that, for a given fiscal year, additional

determinations are necessary, each, as relevant, will be stated in the program announcement. Such determinations may include:

(i) Limits on the subject matter/emphasis areas to be supported;

(ii) The maximum number of proposals that may be submitted on behalf of the same school, college, or equivalent administrative unit within an institution;

(iii) The maximum total number of proposals that may be submitted by an institution;

(iv) The maximum number of proposals that may be submitted by an individual in any one targeted need area;

(v) The minimum project period a proposal may request;

(vi) The minimum amount of funds that may be requested by an institution under a regular, complementary, or joint project proposal;

(vii) The proportion of the appropriation reserved for, or available to, regular, complementary, and joint project proposals;

(viii) The proportion of the appropriation reserved for, or available to, projects in each announced targeted need area;

(ix) The proportion of the appropriation reserved for, or available to, each subject matter/emphasis area;

(x) The maximum number of grants that may be awarded to an institution under the program in a given fiscal year, including how grants awarded for complementary and joint projects will be counted toward the institutional maximum; and

(xi) Limits on the use of grant funds for travel or to purchase equipment, if any.

(2) The program announcement also will contain any other limitations deemed necessary by CSREES for proper conduct of the program in the applicable year.

(e) The regulations of this part prescribe that this is a competitive program; it is possible that an institution may not receive any grant awards in a particular year.

(f) The regulations of this part do not apply to grants for other purposes awarded by the Department of Agriculture under section 1417 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3152) or any other authority.

§ 3406.2 Definitions.

As used in this part:

Authorized departmental officer 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 means the president of the 1890 Institution or the official, designated by the president of the institution, who has the authority to commit the resources of the institution.

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

Cash contributions means the applicant's cash outlay, including the outlay of money contributed to the applicant by non-Federal third parties.

Citizen or national of the United States means:

(1) A citizen or native resident of a State; or,

(2) a person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States.

College or *University* means an educational institution in any State which:

(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 a baccalaureate degree or any other higher degree is awarded;

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

(5) Is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.

Complementary project proposal means a proposal for a project which involves coordination with one or more other projects for which funding was awarded under this program in a previous fiscal year, or for which funding is requested

under this program in the current fiscal year.

Cost-sharing or *Matching* means that portion of project costs not borne by the Federal Government, including the value of in-kind contributions.

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

1890 Institution or *1890 land-grant institution* or *1890 colleges and universities* means one of those institutions eligible to receive funds under the Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 417–419, as amended; 7 U.S.C. 321–326 and 328), or a research foundation maintained by such institution, that are the intended recipients of funds under programs established in Subtitle G of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3221 *et seq.*), including Tuskegee University.

Eligible participant means, for purposes of §3406.11(b), Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching, and §3406.11(f), Student Recruitment and Retention, an individual who:

(1) Is a citizen or national of the United States, as defined in this section; or

(2) Is a citizen of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau. Where eligibility is claimed under paragraph (2) of the definition of ''citizen or national of the United States'' as specified in this section, documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to CSREES upon request.

Food and agricultural sciences means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in the food, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities concerned with the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, and inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, home economics, rural development, and closely allied disciplines.

Grantee means the 1890 Institution designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

Joint project proposal means a proposal for a project, which will involve the applicant 1890 Institution and two or more other colleges, universities, community colleges, junior colleges, or other institutions, each of which will assume a major role in the conduct of the proposed project, and for which the applicant institution will transfer at least one-half of the awarded funds to the other institutions participating in the project. Only the applicant institution must meet the definition of ''1890 Institution'' as specified in this section; the other institutions participating in a joint project proposal are not required to meet the definition of ''1890 Institution'' as specified in this section, nor required to meet the definition of ''college'' or ''university'' as specified in this section.

Peer review panel means a group of experts or consultants, qualified by training and experience in particular fields of science, education, or technology to give expert advice on the merit of grant applications in such fields, who evaluate eligible proposals submitted to this program in their personal area(s) of expertise.

Principal investigator/project director 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.

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

Project means the particular teaching or research activity within the scope of one or more of the targeted areas supported by a grant awarded under this program.

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

Research means any systematic inquiry directed toward new or fuller

knowledge and understanding of the subject studied.

Research capacity means the quality and depth of an institution's research infrastructure as evidenced by its: faculty expertise in the natural or social sciences, scientific and technical resources, research environment, library resources, and organizational structures and reward systems for attracting and retaining first-rate research faculty or students at the graduate and post-doctorate levels.

Research project grant means a grant in support of a project that addresses one or more of the targeted need areas or specific subject matter/emphasis areas identified in the annual program announcement related to strengthening research programs including, but not limited to, such initiatives as: Studies and experimentation in food and agricultural sciences, centralized research support systems, technology delivery systems, and other creative projects designed to provide needed enhancement of the Nation's food and agricultural research system.

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

State means any one of the fifty States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

Teaching means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters related thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by colleges and universities offering baccalaureate or higher degrees.

Teaching capacity means the quality and depth of an institution's academic programs infrastructure as evidenced by its: Curriculum, teaching faculty, instructional delivery systems, student experiential learning opportunities, scientific instrumentation for teaching, library resources, academic standing and racial, ethnic, or gender diversity of its faculty and student body as well as faculty and student recruitment and retention programs provided by a college or university in order to achieve maximum results in the development of scientific and professional expertise for the Nation's food and agricultural system.

Teaching project grant means a grant in support of a project that addresses one or more of the targeted need areas or specific subject matter/emphasis areas identified in the annual program announcement related to strengthening teaching programs including, but not limited to, such initiatives as: Curricula design and materials development, faculty preparation and enhancement for teaching, instruction delivery systems, scientific instrumentation for teaching, student experiential learning, and student recruitment and retention.

Third party in-kind contributions means non-cash contributions of property or services provided by non-Federal third parties, including real property, equipment, supplies and other expendable property, directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to a funded project or program.

USDA agency cooperator means any agency or office of the Department which has reviewed and endorsed an applicant's request for support, and indicates a willingness to make available non-monetary resources or technical assistance throughout the life of a project to ensure the accomplishment of the objectives of a grant awarded under this program.

§ 3406.3 Institutional eligibility.

Proposals may be submitted by any of the 16 historically black 1890 land-grant institutions and Tuskegee University. The 1890 land-grant institutions are: Alabama A&M University; University of Arkansas—Pine Bluff; Delaware State University; Florida A&M University; Fort Valley State College; Kentucky State University; Southern University and A&M College; University of Maryland—Eastern Shore; Alcorn State University; Lincoln University; North Carolina A&T State University; Langston University;

South Carolina State University; Tennessee State University; Prairie View A&M University; and Virginia State University. An institution eligible to receive an award under this program includes a research foundation maintained by an 1890 land-grant institution or Tuskegee University.

Subpart B—Program Description

§3406.4 Purpose of the program.

(a) The Department of Agriculture and the Nation depend upon sound programs in the food and agricultural sciences at the Nation's colleges and universities to produce well trained professionals for careers in the food and agricultural sciences. The capacity of institutions to offer suitable programs in the food and agricultural sciences to meet the Nation's need for a well trained work force in the food and agricultural sciences is a proper concern for the Department.

(b) Historically, the Department has had a close relationship with the 1890 colleges and universities, including Tuskegee University. Through its role as administrator of the Second Morrill Act, the Department has borne the responsibility for helping these institutions develop to their fullest potential in order to meet the needs of students and the needs of the Nation.

(c) The institutional capacity building grants program is intended to stimulate development of quality education and research programs at these institutions in order that they may better assist the Department, on behalf of the Nation, in its mission of providing a professional work force in the food and agricultural sciences.

(d) This program is designed specifically to build the institutional teaching and research capacities of the 1890 land-grant institutions through cooperative programs with Federal and non-Federal entities. The program is competitive among the 1890 Institutions and encourages matching funds on the part of the States, private organizations, and other non-Federal entities to encourage expanded linkages with 1890 Institutions as performers of research and education, and as developers of scientific and professional talent for the United States food and agricultural system. In addition, through this program, CSREES will strive to increase the overall pool of qualified job applicants from underrepresented groups in order to make significant progress toward achieving the objectives of work force diversity within the Federal Government, particularly the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

§3406.5 Matching support.

The Department strongly encourages and may require non-Federal matching support for this program. In the annual program solicitation, CSREES will announce any incentives that may be offered to applicants for committing their own institutional resources or securing third party contributions in support of capacity building projects. CSREES may also announce any required fixed dollar amount or percentage of institutional cost sharing, if applicable.

§3406.6 USDA agency cooperator requirement.

(a) Each application must provide documentation that at least one USDA agency or office has agreed to cooperate with the applicant institution on the proposed project. The documentation should describe the expected benefits of the partnership venture for the USDA agency and for the 1890 Institution, and describe the partnership effort between USDA and the 1890 Institution in regard to the proposed project. Such USDA agency cooperation may include, but is not limited to, assisting the applicant institution with proposal development, identifying possible sources of matching funds, securing resources, implementing funded projects, providing technical assistance and expertise throughout the life of the project, participating in project evaluation, and disseminating project results.

(b) The designated CSREES agency contact can provide suggestions to institutions seeking to secure a USDA agency cooperator on a particular proposal.

(c) USDA 1890 Liaison Officers, and other USDA employees serving on the campuses of the 1890 colleges and universities, may assist with proposal development and project execution to

satisfy the cooperator requirement, in whole or in part, but may not serve as project directors or principal investigators.

(d) Any USDA office responsible for administering a competitive or formula grants program specifically targeted to 1890 Institutions may not be a cooperator for this program.

§ 3406.7 General scope of program.

This program supports both teaching project grants and research project grants. Such grants are intended to strengthen the teaching and research capabilities of applicant institutions. Each 1890 Institution may submit one or more grant applications for either category of grants (as allowed by the annual program notice). However, each application must be limited to either a teaching project grant proposal or a research project grant proposal.

§ 3406.8 Joint project proposals.

Applicants are encouraged to submit joint project proposals as defined in § 3406.2, which address regional or national problems and which will result overall in strengthening the 1890 university system. The goals of such joint initiatives should include maximizing the use of limited resources by generating a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on a targeted need area(s), increasing cost-effectiveness through achieving economies of scale, strengthening the scope and quality of a project's impact, and promoting coalition building likely to transcend the project's lifetime and lead to future ventures.

§ 3406.9 Complementary project proposals.

Institutions may submit proposals that are complementary in nature as defined in § 3406.2. Such complementary project proposals may be submitted by the same or by different eligible institutions.

§ 3406.10 Use of funds for facilities.

Under the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program, the use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility is not allowed. With prior approval, in accordance with the cost principles set forth in OMB Circular No. A–21, some grant funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations, or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching or research spaces in order to carry out a funded project. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must demonstrate that the alterations, renovations, or repairs are incidental to the major purpose for which a grant is made.

Subpart C—Preparation of a Teaching Proposal

§ 3406.11 Scope of a teaching proposal.

The teaching component of the program will support the targeted need area(s) related to strengthening teaching programs as specified in the annual program announcement. Proposals may focus on any subject matter area(s) in the food and agricultural sciences unless limited by determinations as specified in the annual program announcement. A proposal may address a single targeted need area or multiple targeted need areas, and may be focused on a single subject matter area or multiple subject matter areas, in any combination (e.g., curriculum development in horticulture; curriculum development, faculty enhancement, and student experiential learning in animal science; faculty enhancement in food science and agribusiness management; or instruction delivery systems and student experiential learning in plant science, horticulture, and entomology). Applicants are also encouraged to include a library enhancement component related to the teaching project in their proposals. A proposal may be directed toward the undergraduate or graduate level of study as specified in the annual program announcement. Targeted need areas for teaching programs will consist of one or more of the following:

(a) *Curricula design and materials development.* (1) The purpose of this need area is to promote new and improved curricula and materials to increase the quality of, and continuously renew, the Nation's academic programs in the food and agricultural sciences. The overall objective is to stimulate the development and facilitate the use of exemplary education models and materials that incorporate the most recent

advances in subject matter, research on teaching and learning theory, and instructional technology. Proposals may emphasize: The development of courses of study, degree programs, and instructional materials; the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects; or the introduction of new subjects, or new applications of knowledge, pertaining to the food and agricultural sciences.

(2) Examples include, but are not limited to, curricula and materials that promote:

(i) Raising the level of scholastic achievement of the Nation's graduates in the food and agricultural sciences.

(ii) Addressing the special needs of particular groups of students, such as minorities, gifted and talented, or those with educational backgrounds that warrant enrichment.

(iii) Using alternative instructional strategies or methodologies, including computer-assisted instruction or simulation modeling, media programs that reach large audiences efficiently and effectively, activities that provide hands-on learning experiences, and educational programs that extend learning beyond the classroom.

(iv) Using sound pedagogy, particularly with regard to recent research on how to motivate students to learn, retain, apply, and transfer knowledge, skills, and competencies.

(v) Building student competencies to integrate and synthesize knowledge from several disciplines.

(b) *Faculty preparation and enhancement for teaching.* (1) The purpose of this need area is to advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills. Teachers are central to education. They serve as models, motivators, and mentors—the catalysts of the learning process. Moreover, teachers are agents for developing, replicating, and exchanging effective teaching materials and methods. For these reasons, education can be strengthened only when teachers are adequately prepared, highly motivated, and appropriately recognized and rewarded.

(2) Each faculty recipient of support for developmental activities under § 3406.11(b) must be an ''eligible participant'' as defined in § 3406.2 of this part.

(3) Examples of developmental activities include, but are not limited to, those which enable teaching faculty to:

(i) Gain experience with recent developments or innovative technology relevant to their teaching responsibilities.

(ii) Work under the guidance and direction of experts who have substantial expertise in an area related to the developmental goals of the project.

(iii) Work with scientists or professionals in government, industry, or other colleges or universities to learn new applications in a field.

(iv) Obtain personal experience working with new ideas and techniques.

(v) Expand competence with new methods of information delivery, such as computer-assisted or televised instruction.

(c) *Instruction delivery systems.* (1) The purpose of this need area is to encourage the use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. The importance of this initiative is evidenced by advances in educational research which have substantiated the theory that differences in the learning styles of students often require alternative instructional methodologies. Also, the rising costs of higher education strongly suggest that colleges and universities undertake more efforts of a collaborative nature in order to deliver instruction which maximizes program quality and reduces unnecessary duplication. At the same time, advancements in knowledge and technology continue to introduce new subject matter areas which warrant consideration and implementation of innovative instruction techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems.

(2) Examples include, but are not limited to:

(i) Use of computers.

(ii) Teleconferencing.

(iii) Networking via satellite communications.

(iv) Regionalization of academic programs.

(v) Mobile classrooms and laboratories.

(vi) Individualized learning centers.

(vii) Symposia, forums, regional or national workshops, etc.

(d) *Scientific Instrumentation for teaching.* (1) The purpose of this need area is to provide students in science-oriented courses the necessary experience with suitable, up-to-date equipment in order to involve them in work central to scientific understanding and progress. This program initiative will support the acquisition of instructional laboratory and classroom equipment to assure the achievement and maintenance of outstanding food and agricultural sciences higher education programs. A proposal may request support for acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional scientific equipment, upgrading existing equipment, or replacing nonfunctional or clearly obsolete equipment.

(2) Examples include, but are not limited to:

(i) Rental or purchase of modern instruments to improve student learning experiences in courses, laboratories, and field work.

(ii) Development of new ways of using instrumentation to extend instructional capabilities.

(iii) Establishment of equipment-sharing capability via consortia or centers that develop innovative opportunities, such as mobile laboratories or satellite access to industry or government laboratories.

(e) *Student experiential learning.* (1) The purpose of this need area is to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs which provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. Effective experiential learning is essential in preparing future graduates to advance knowledge and technology, enhance quality of life, conserve resources, and revitalize the Nation's economic competitiveness. Such experiential learning opportunities are most effective when they serve to advance decision-making and communication skills as well as technological expertise.

(2) Examples include, but are not limited to, projects which:

(i) Provide opportunities for students to participate in research projects, either as a part of an ongoing research project or in a project designed especially for this program.

(ii) Provide opportunities for students to complete apprenticeships, internships, or similar participatory learning experiences.

(iii) Expand and enrich courses which are of a practicum nature.

(iv) Provide career mentoring experiences that link students with outstanding professionals.

(f) *Student recruitment and retention.* (1) The purpose of this need area is to strengthen student recruitment and retention programs in order to promote the future strength of the Nation's scientific and professional work force. The Nation's economic competitiveness and quality of life rest upon the availability of a cadre of outstanding research scientists, university faculty, and other professionals in the food and agricultural sciences. A substantial need exists to supplement efforts to attract increased numbers of academically outstanding students to prepare for careers as food and agricultural scientists and professionals. It is particularly important to augment the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the student body in order to promote a robust exchange of ideas and a more effective use of the full breadth of the Nation's intellectual resources.

(2) Each student recipient of monetary support for education costs or developmental purposes under § 3406.11(f) must be enrolled at an eligible institution and meet the requirement of an ''eligible participant'' as defined in § 3406.2 of this part.

(3) Examples include, but are not limited to:

(i) Special outreach programs for elementary and secondary students as well as parents, counselors, and the general public to broaden awareness of the extensive nature and diversity of career opportunities for graduates in the food and agricultural sciences.

(ii) Special activities and materials to establish more effective linkages with high school science classes.

(iii) Unique or innovative student recruitment activities, materials, and personnel.

(iv) Special retention programs to assure student progression through and completion of an educational program.

(v) Development and dissemination of stimulating career information materials.

(vi) Use of regional or national media to promote food and agricultural sciences higher education.

(vii) Providing financial incentives to enable and encourage students to pursue and complete an undergraduate or graduate degree in an area of the food and agricultural sciences.

§ 3406.12 Program application materials—teaching.

Program application materials in an application package will be made available to eligible institutions upon request. These materials include the program announcement, the administrative provisions for the program, and the forms needed to prepare and submit teaching grant applications under the program.

§ 3406.13 Content of a teaching proposal.

(a) *Proposal cover page.* (1) Form CSREES–712, ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page,'' must be completed in its entirety. Note that providing a Social Security Number is voluntary, but is an integral part of the CSREES information system and will assist in the processing of the proposal.

(2) One copy of the Form CSREES–712 must contain the pen-and-ink signatures of the project director(s) and authorized organizational representative for the applicant institution.

(3) The title of the teaching project shown on the ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page'' must be brief (80-character maximum) yet represent the major thrust of the project. This information will be used by the Department to provide information to the Congress and other interested parties.

(4) In block 7. of Form CSREES–712, enter ''1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program.''

(5) In block 8.a. of Form CSREES–712, enter ''Teaching.'' In block 8.b. identify the code for the targeted need area(s) as found on the reverse of the form. If a proposal focuses on multiple targeted need areas, enter each code associated with the project. In block 8.c. identify the major area(s) of emphasis as found on the reverse of the form. If a proposal focuses on multiple areas of emphasis, enter each code associated with the project; however, limit the selection to three areas. This information will be used by program staff for the proper assignment of proposals to reviewers.

(6) In block 9. of Form CSREES–712, indicate if the proposal is a complementary project proposal or a joint project proposal as defined in § 3406.2 of this part. If it is not a complementary project proposal or a joint project proposal, identify it as a regular project proposal.

(7) In block 13. of Form CSREES–712, indicate if the proposal is a new, first-time submission or if the proposal is a resubmission of a proposal that has been submitted to, but not funded under, the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program in a previous competition.

(b) *Table of contents.* For ease in locating information, each proposal must contain a detailed table of contents just after the Proposal Cover Page. The Table of Contents should include page numbers for each component of the proposal. Pagination should begin immediately following the summary documentation of USDA agency cooperation.

(c) *USDA agency cooperator.* To be considered for funding, each proposal must include documentation of cooperation with at least one USDA agency or office. If multiple agencies are involved as cooperators, documentation must be included from each agency. When documenting cooperative arrangements, the following guidelines should be used:

(1) A summary of the cooperative arrangements must immediately follow the Table of Contents. This summary should:

(i) Bear the signatures of the Agency Head (or his/her designated authorized representative) and the university project director;

(ii) Indicate the agency's willingness to commit support for the project;

(iii) Identify the person(s) at the USDA agency who will serve as the liaison or technical contact for the project;

(iv) Describe the degree and nature of the USDA agency's involvement in the proposed project, as outlined in § 3406.6(a) of this part, including its role in:

(A) Identifying the need for the project;

(B) Developing a conceptual approach;

(C) Assisting with project design;

(D) Identifying and securing needed agency or other resources (e.g., personnel, grants/contracts; in-kind support, etc.);

(E) Developing the project budget;

(F) Promoting partnerships with other institutions to carry out the project;

(G) Helping the institution launch and manage the project;

(H) Providing technical assistance and expertise;

(I) Providing consultation through site visits, E-mail, conference calls, and faxes;

(J) Participating in project evaluation and dissemination of final project results; and

(K) Seeking other innovative ways to ensure the success of the project and advance the needs of the institution or the agency; and

(v) Describe the expected benefits of the partnership venture for the USDA agency and for the 1890 Institution.

(2) A detailed discussion of these partnership arrangements should be provided in the narrative portion of the proposal, as outlined in paragraph (f)(2)(iv)(C) of this section.

(3) Additional documentation, including letters of support or cooperation, may be provided in the Appendix.

(d) *Project summary*. (1) A Project Summary should immediately follow the summary documentation of USDA agency cooperation section. The information provided in the Project Summary will be used by the program staff for a variety of purposes, including the proper assignment of proposals to reviewers and providing information to reviewers prior to the peer panel meeting. The name of the institution, the targeted need area(s), and the title of the proposal must be identified exactly as shown on the ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page.''

(2) If the proposal is a complementary project proposal, as defined in § 3406.2 of this part, indicate such and identify the other complementary project(s) by citing the name of the submitting institution, the title of the project, the project director, and the grant number (if funded in a previous year) exactly as shown on the cover page of the complementary project so that appropriate consideration can be given to the interrelatedness of the proposals in the evaluation process.

(3) If the proposal is a joint project proposal, as defined in § 3406.2 of this part, indicate such and identify the other participating institutions and the key faculty member or other individual responsible for coordinating the project at each institution.

(4) The Project Summary should be a concise description of the proposed activity suitable for publication by the Department to inform the general public about awards under the program. The text must not exceed one page, single-spaced. The Project Summary should be a self-contained description of the activity which would result if the proposal is funded by USDA. It should include: The objectives of the project; a synopsis of the plan of operation; a statement of how the project will enhance the teaching capacity of the institution; a description of how the project will strengthen higher education in the food and agricultural sciences in the United States; a description of the partnership efforts between, and the expected benefits for, the USDA agency cooperator(s) and the 1890 Institution; and the plans for disseminating project results. The Project Summary should be written so that a technically literate reader can evaluate the use of Federal funds in support of the project.

(e) *Resubmission of a proposal*—(1) *Resubmission of previously unfunded proposals*. (i) If a proposal has been submitted previously, but was not funded, such should be indicated in block 13. on Form CSREES–712, ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page,'' and the following information should be included in the proposal:

(A) The fiscal year(s) in which the proposal was submitted previously;

(B) A summary of the peer reviewers' comments; and

(C) How these comments have been addressed in the current proposal, including the page numbers in the current proposal where the peer reviewers' comments have been addressed.

(ii) This information may be provided as a section of the proposal following the Project Summary and preceding the proposal narrative or it may be placed in the Appendix (see paragraph (j) of this section). In either case, the location of this information should be indicated in the Table of Contents, and the fact that the proposal is a resubmitted proposal should be stated in the proposal narrative. Further, when possible, the information should be presented in tabular format. Applicants who choose to resubmit proposals that were previously submitted, but not funded, should note that resubmitted proposals must compete equally with newly submitted proposals. Submitting a proposal that has been revised based on a previous peer review panel's critique of the proposal does not guarantee the success of the resubmitted proposal.

(2) *Resubmission of previously funded proposals.* Recognizing that capacity building is a long-term ongoing process, the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program is interested in funding subsequent phases of previously funded projects in order to build institutional capacity, and institutions are encouraged to build on a theme over several grant awards. However, proposals that are sequential continuations or new stages of previously funded Capacity Building Grants must compete with first-time proposals. Therefore, project directors should thoroughly demonstrate how the project proposed in the current application expands substantially upon a previously funded project (i.e., demonstrate how the new project will advance the former project to the next level of attainment or will achieve expanded goals). The proposal must also show the degree to which the new phase promotes innovativeness and creativity beyond the scope of the previously funded project. Please note that the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program is not designed to support activities that are essentially repetitive in nature over multiple grant awards. Project directors who have had their projects funded previously are discouraged from resubmitting relatively identical proposals for further funding.

(f) *Narrative of a teaching proposal.* The narrative portion of the proposal is limited to 20 pages in length. The one-page Project Summary is not included in the 20-page limitation. The narrative must be typed on one side of the page only, using a font no smaller than 12 point, and double-spaced. All margins must be at least one inch. All pages following the summary documentation of USDA agency cooperation must be paginated. It should be noted that peer reviewers will not be required to read beyond 20 pages of the narrative to evaluate the proposal. The narrative should contain the following sections:

(1) *Potential for advancing the quality of education*—(i) *Impact.* (A) Identify the targeted need area(s).

(B) Clearly state the specific instructional problem or opportunity to be addressed.

(C) Describe how and by whom the focus and scope of the project were determined. Summarize the body of knowledge which substantiates the need for the proposed project.

(D) Describe ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project for which previous funding was received under this program.

(E) Discuss how the project will be of value at the State, regional, national, or international level(s).

(F) Discuss how the benefits to be derived from the project will transcend the proposing institution or the grant period. Also discuss the probabilities of its adaptation by other institutions. For example, can the project serve as a model for others?

(ii) *Continuation plans.* Discuss the likelihood of, or plans for, continuation or expansion of the project beyond USDA support. For example, does the institution's long-range budget or academic plan provide for the realistic continuation or expansion of the initiative undertaken by this project after the end of the grant period, are plans

for eventual self-support built into the project, are plans being made to institutionalize the program if it meets with success, and are there indications of other continuing non-Federal support?

(iii) *Innovation.* Describe the degree to which the proposal reflects an innovative or non-traditional approach to solving a higher education problem or strengthening the quality of higher education in the food and agricultural sciences.

(iv) *Products and results.* Explain the kinds of results and products expected and their impact on strengthening food and agricultural sciences higher education in the United States, including attracting academically outstanding students and increasing the ethnic, racial, and gender diversity of the Nation's food and agricultural scientific and professional expertise base.

(2) *Overall approach and cooperative linkages*—(i) *Proposed approach*—(A) *Objectives.* Cite and discuss the specific objectives to be accomplished under the project.

(B) *Plan of operation.* (*1*) Describe procedures for accomplishing the objectives of the project.

(*2*) Describe plans for management of the project to enhance its proper and efficient administration.

(*3*) Describe the way in which resources and personnel will be used to conduct the project.

(C) *Timetable.* Provide a timetable for conducting the project. Identify all important project milestones and dates as they relate to project start-up, execution, dissemination, evaluation, and close-out.

(ii) *Evaluation plans.* (A) Provide a plan for evaluating the accomplishment of stated objectives during the conduct of the project. Indicate the criteria, and corresponding weight of each, to be used in the evaluation process, describe any data to be collected and analyzed, and explain the methodology that will be used to determine the extent to which the needs underlying the project are met.

(B) Provide a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the end results upon conclusion of the project. Include the same kinds of information requested in paragraph (f) (2)(ii)(A) of this section.

(iii) *Dissemination plans.* Discuss plans to disseminate project results and products. Identify target audiences and explain methods of communication.

(iv) *Partnerships and collaborative efforts.* (A) Explain how the project will maximize partnership ventures and collaborative efforts to strengthen food and agricultural sciences higher education (e.g., involvement of faculty in related disciplines at the same institution, joint projects with other colleges or universities, or cooperative activities with business or industry). Also explain how it will stimulate academia, the States, or the private sector to join with the Federal partner in enhancing food and agricultural sciences higher education.

(B) Provide evidence, via letters from the parties involved, that arrangements necessary for collaborative partnerships or joint initiatives have been discussed and realistically can be expected to come to fruition, or actually have been finalized contingent on an award under this program. Letters must be signed by an official who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization. Such letters should be referenced in the plan of operation, but the actual letters should be included in the Appendix section of the proposal. Any potential conflict(s) of interest that might result from the proposed collaborative arrangements must be discussed in detail. Proposals which indicate joint projects with other institutions must state which proposer is to receive any resulting grant award, since only one submitting institution can be the recipient of a project grant under one proposal.

(C) Explain how the project will create a new or enhance an existing partnership between the USDA agency cooperator(s) and the 1890 Institution(s). This section should expand upon the summary information provided in the documentation of USDA agency cooperation section, as outlined in paragraph (c)(1) of this section. This is particularly important because the focal point of attention in the peer review process is the proposal narrative. Therefore, a comprehensive discussion of the partnership effort between

USDA and the 1890 Institution should be provided.

(3) *Institutional capacity building*—(i) *Institutional enhancement.* Explain how the proposed project will strengthen the teaching capacity, as defined in § 3406.2 of this part, of the applicant institution and, if applicable, any other institutions assuming a major role in the conduct of the project. For example, describe how the proposed project is intended to strengthen the institution's academic infrastructure by expanding the current faculty's expertise base, advancing the scholarly quality of the institution's academic programs, enriching the racial, ethnic, or gender diversity of the student body, helping the institution establish itself as a center of excellence in a particular field of education, helping the institution maintain or acquire state-of-the-art scientific instrumentation or library collections for teaching, or enabling the institution to provide more meaningful student experiential learning opportunities.

(ii) *Institutional commitment.* (A) Discuss the institution's commitment to the project and its successful completion. Provide, as relevant, appropriate documentation in the Appendix. Substantiate that the institution attributes a high priority to the project.

(B) Discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution's long-term (five- to ten-year) goals and how the project will help satisfy the institution's high-priority objectives. Show how this project is linked to and supported by the institution's strategic plan.

(C) Discuss the commitment of institutional resources to the project. Show that the institutional resources to be made available to the project will be adequate, when combined with the support requested from USDA, to carry out the activities of the project and represent a sound commitment by the institution. Discuss institutional facilities, equipment, computer services, and other appropriate resources available to the project.

(g) *Key personnel.* A Form CSREES–708, ''Summary Vita—Teaching Proposal,'' should be included for each key person associated with the project.

(h) *Budget and cost-effectiveness*—(1) *Budget form.* (i) Prepare Form CSREES–713, ''Higher Education Budget,'' in accordance with instructions provided with the form. Proposals may request support for a period to be identified in each year's program announcement. A budget form is required for each year of requested support. In addition, a summary budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. Form CSREES–713 may be reproduced as needed by proposers. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable Federal cost principles, the administrative provisions in this part, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project.

(ii) The approved negotiated instruction rate or the maximum rate allowed by law should be used when computing indirect costs. If a reduced rate of indirect costs is voluntarily requested from USDA, the remaining allowable indirect costs may be used as matching funds.

(2) *Matching funds.* When documenting matching contributions, use the following guidelines:

(i) When preparing the column entitled ''Applicant Contributions To Matching Funds'' of Form CSREES–713, only those costs to be contributed by the applicant for the purposes of matching should be shown. The total amount of this column should be indicated in item M.

(ii) In item N of Form CSREES–713, show a total dollar amount for Cash Contributions from both the applicant and any third parties; also show a total dollar amount (based on current fair market value) for Non-cash Contributions from both the applicant and any third parties.

(iii) To qualify for any incentive benefits stemming from matching support or to satisfy any cost sharing requirements, proposals must include written verification of any actual commitments of matching support (including both cash and non-cash contributions) from third parties. Written verification means—

(A) For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized organizational representative(s) of the donor organization (or by the donor if the gift is from an individual) and the applicant institution, which must include:

(*1*) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor;

(*2*) The name of the applicant institution;

(*3*) The title of the project for which the donation is made;

(*4*) The dollar amount of the cash donation; and

(*5*) A statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period; and

(B) For any third party non-cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representative(s) of the donor organization (or by the donor if the gift is from an individual) and the applicant institution, which must include:

(*1*) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor;

(*2*) The name of the applicant institution;

(*3*) The title of the project for which the donation is made;

(*4*) A good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the non-cash contribution; and

(*5*) A statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

(iv) All pledge agreements must be placed in the proposal immediately following Form CSREES–713. The sources and amounts of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be summarized in the Budget Narrative section of the proposal.

(v) Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars A–110, ''Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Nonprofit Organizations,'' and A–21, ''Cost Principles for Educational Institutions,'' for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

(3) *Chart on shared budget for joint project proposal.* (i) For a joint project proposal, a plan must be provided indicating how funds will be distributed to the participating institutions. The budget section of a joint project proposal should include a chart indicating:

(A) The names of the participating institutions;

(B) the amount of funds to be disbursed to those institutions; and

(C) the way in which such funds will be used in accordance with items A through L of Form CSREES–713, ''Higher Education Budget.''

(ii) If a proposal is not for a joint project, such a chart is not required.

(4) *Budget narrative.* (i) Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed project activities. Explain how each budget item (such as salaries and wages for professional and technical staff, student stipends/scholarships, travel, equipment, etc.) is essential to achieving project objectives.

(ii) Justify that the total budget, including funds requested from USDA and any matching support provided, will be adequate to carry out the activities of the project. Provide a summary of sources and amounts of all third party matching support.

(iii) Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, or leverages additional funds. For example, discuss how the project has the potential to generate a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on a targeted need area or promote coalition building that could lead to future ventures.

(iv) Include the percentage of time key personnel will work on the project, both during the academic year and summer. When salaries of university project personnel will be paid by a combination of USDA and institutional funds, the total compensation must not exceed the faculty member's regular annual compensation. In addition, the total commitment of time devoted to the project, when combined with time for teaching and research duties, other sponsored agreements, and other employment obligations to the institution, must not exceed 100 percent of the normal workload for which the employee is compensated, in accordance

with established university policies and applicable Federal cost principles.

(v) If the proposal addresses more than one targeted need area (e.g., student experiential learning and instruction delivery systems), estimate the proportion of the funds requested from USDA that will support each respective targeted need area.

(i) *Current and pending support.* Each applicant must complete Form CSREES–663, ''Current and Pending Support,'' identifying any other current public- or private-sponsored projects, in addition to the proposed project, to which key personnel listed in the proposal under consideration have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for the person(s) involved is included in the budgets of the various projects. This information should also be provided for any pending proposals which are currently being considered by, or which will be submitted in the near future to, other possible sponsors, including other USDA programs or agencies. Concurrent submission of identical or similar projects to other possible sponsors will not prejudice the review or evaluation of a project under this program.

(j) *Appendix.* Each project narrative is expected to be complete in itself and to meet the 20-page limitation. Inclusion of material in an Appendix should not be used to circumvent the 20-page limitation of the proposal narrative. However, in those instances where inclusion of supplemental information is necessary to guarantee the peer review panel's complete understanding of a proposal or to illustrate the integrity of the design or a main thesis of the proposal, such information may be included in an Appendix. Examples of supplemental material are photographs, journal reprints, brochures and other pertinent materials which are deemed to be illustrative of major points in the narrative but unsuitable for inclusion in the proposal narrative itself. Information on previously submitted proposals may also be presented in the Appendix (refer to paragraph(e) of this section). When possible, information in the Appendix should be presented in tabular format. A complete set of the Appendix material must be attached to each copy of the grant application submitted. The Appendix must be identified with the title of the project as it appears on Form CSREES–712 of the proposal and the name(s) of the project director(s). The Appendix must be referenced in the proposal narrative.

Subpart D—Review and Evaluation of a Teaching Proposal

§ 3406.14 Proposal review—teaching.

The proposal evaluation process includes both internal staff review and merit evaluation by peer review panels comprised of scientists, educators, business representatives, and Government officials who are highly qualified to render expert advice in the areas supported. Peer review panels will be selected and structured to provide optimum expertise and objective judgment in the evaluation of proposals.

§ 3406.15 Evaluation criteria for teaching proposals.

The maximum score a teaching proposal can receive is 150 points. Unless otherwise stated in the annual solicitation published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, the peer review panel will consider the following criteria and weights to evaluate proposals submitted:

Evaluation criterion	Weight
(a) Potential for advancing the quality of education:	
This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have a substantial impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences higher education by strengthening institutional capacities through promoting education reform to meet clearly delineated needs.	
(1) Impact—Does the project address a targeted need area(s)? Is the problem or opportunity clearly documented? Does the project address a State, regional, national, or international problem or opportunity? Will the benefits to be derived from the project transcend the applicant institution or the grant period? Is it probable that other institutions will adapt this project for their own use? Can the project serve as a model for others?	15 points.

Evaluation criterion	Weight
(2) Continuation plans—Are there plans for continuation or expansion of the project beyond USDA support with the use of institutional funds? Are there indications of external, non-Federal support? Are there realistic plans for making the project self-supporting?	10 points.
(3) Innovation—Are significant aspects of the project based on an innovative or a non-traditional approach toward solving a higher education problem or strengthening the quality of higher education in the food and agricultural sciences? If successful, is the project likely to lead to education reform?	10 points.
(4) Products and results—Are the expected products and results of the project clearly defined and likely to be of high quality? Will project results be of an unusual or unique nature? Will the project contribute to a better understanding of or an improvement in the quality, distribution, or effectiveness of the Nation's food and agricultural scientific and professional expertise base, such as increasing the participation of women and minorities?	15 points.
(b) Overall approach and cooperative linkages: This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach and the quality of the partnerships likely to evolve as a result of the project.	
(1) Proposed approach—Do the objectives and plan of operation appear to be sound and appropriate relative to the targeted need area(s) and the impact anticipated? Are the procedures managerially, educationally, and scientifically sound? Is the overall plan integrated with or does it expand upon other major efforts to improve the quality of food and agricultural sciences higher education? Does the timetable appear to be readily achievable?	15 points.
(2) Evaluation—Are the evaluation plans adequate and reasonable? Do they allow for continuous or frequent feedback during the life of the project? Are the individuals involved in project evaluation skilled in evaluation strategies and procedures? Can they provide an objective evaluation? Do evaluation plans facilitate the measurement of project progress and outcomes?	5 points.
(3) Dissemination—Does the proposed project include clearly outlined and realistic mechanisms that will lead to widespread dissemination of project results, including national electronic communication systems, publications, presentations at professional conferences, or use by faculty development or research/teaching skills workshops?	5 points.
(4) Partnerships and collaborative efforts—Does the project have significant potential for advancing cooperative ventures between the applicant institution and a USDA agency? Does the project workplan include an effective role for the cooperating USDA agency(s)? Will the project expand partnership ventures among disciplines at a university, between colleges and universities, or with the private sector? Will the project lead to long-term relationships or cooperative partnerships that are likely to enhance program quality or supplement resources available to food and agricultural sciences higher education?	15 points.
(c) Institutional capacity building: This criterion relates to the degree to which the project will strengthen the teaching capacity of the applicant institution. In the case of a joint project proposal, it relates to the degree to which the project will strengthen the teaching capacity of the applicant institution and that of any other institution assuming a major role in the conduct of the project.	
(1) Institutional enhancement—Will the project help the institution to: Expand the current faculty's expertise base; attract, hire, and retain outstanding teaching faculty; advance and strengthen the scholarly quality of the institution's academic programs; enrich the racial, ethnic, or gender diversity of the faculty and student body; recruit students with higher grade point averages, higher standardized test scores, and those who are more committed to graduation; become a center of excellence in a particular field of education and bring it greater academic recognition; attract outside resources for academic programs; maintain or acquire state-of-the-art scientific instrumentation or library collections for teaching; or provide more meaningful student experiential learning opportunities?	15 points.
(2) Institutional commitment—Is there evidence to substantiate that the institution attributes a high-priority to the project, that the project is linked to the achievement of the institution's long-term goals, that it will help satisfy the institution's high-priority objectives, or that the project is supported by the institution's strategic plans? Will the project have reasonable access to needed resources such as instructional instrumentation, facilities, computer services, library and other instruction support resources?	15 points.
(d) Personnel Resources: This criterion relates to the number and qualifications of the key persons who will carry out the project. Are designated project personnel qualified to carry out a successful project? Are there sufficient numbers of personnel associated with the project to achieve the stated objectives and the anticipated outcomes?	10 points.

Evaluation criterion	Weight
(e) Budget and cost-effectiveness: This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost-effective.	
(1) Budget—Is the budget request justifiable? Are costs reasonable and necessary? Will the total budget be adequate to carry out project activities? Are the source(s) and amount(s) of non-Federal matching support clearly identified and appropriately documented? For a joint project proposal, is the shared budget explained clearly and in sufficient detail?	10 points.
(2) Cost-effectiveness—Is the proposed project cost-effective? Does it demonstrate a creative use of limited resources, maximize educational value per dollar of USDA support, achieve economies of scale, leverage additional funds or have the potential to do so, focus expertise and activity on a targeted need area, or promote coalition building for current or future ventures?	5 points.
(f) Overall quality of proposal: This criterion relates to the degree to which the proposal complies with the application guidelines and is of high quality. Is the proposal enhanced by its adherence to instructions (table of contents, organization, pagination, margin and font size, the 20-page limitation, appendices, etc.); accuracy of forms; clarity of budget narrative; well prepared vitae for all key personnel associated with the project; and presentation (are ideas effectively presented, clearly articulated, and thoroughly explained, etc.)?	5 points.

Subpart E—Preparation of a Research Proposal

§ 3406.16 Scope of a research proposal.

The research component of the program will support projects that address high-priority research initiatives in areas such as those illustrated in this section where there is a present or anticipated need for increased knowledge or capabilities or in which it is feasible for applicants to develop programs recognized for their excellence. Applicants are also encouraged to include in their proposals a library enhancement component related to the initiative(s) for which they have prepared their proposals.

(a) *Studies and experimentation in food and agricultural sciences.* (1) The purpose of this initiative is to advance the body of knowledge in those basic and applied natural and social sciences that comprise the food and agricultural sciences.

(2) Examples include, but are not limited to:

(i) Conduct plant or animal breeding programs to develop better crops, forests, or livestock (e.g., more disease resistant, more productive, yielding higher quality products).

(ii) Conceive, design, and evaluate new bioprocessing techniques for eliminating undesirable constituents from or adding desirable ones to food products.

(iii) Propose and evaluate ways to enhance utilization of the capabilities and resources of food and agricultural institutions to promote rural development (e.g., exploitation of new technologies by small rural businesses).

(iv) Identify control factors influencing consumer demand for agricultural products.

(v) Analyze social, economic, and physiological aspects of nutrition, housing, and life-style choices, and of community strategies for meeting the changing needs of different population groups.

(vi) Other high-priority areas such as human nutrition, sustainable agriculture, biotechnology, agribusiness management and marketing, and aquaculture.

(b) *Centralized research support systems.* (1) The purpose of this initiative is to establish centralized support systems to meet national needs or serve regions or clientele that cannot otherwise afford or have ready access to the support in question, or to provide such support more economically thereby freeing up resources for other research uses.

(2) Examples include, but are not limited to:

(i) Storage, maintenance, characterization, evaluation and enhancement of germplasm for use by animal and plant breeders, including those using the techniques of biotechnology.

(ii) Computerized data banks of important scientific information (e.g., epidemiological, demographic, nutrition, weather, economic, crop yields, etc.).

(iii) Expert service centers for sophisticated and highly specialized methodologies (e.g., evaluation of organoleptic and nutritional quality of

foods, toxicology, taxonomic identifications, consumer preferences, demographics, etc.).

(c) *Technology delivery systems.* (1) The purpose of this initiative is to promote innovations and improvements in the delivery of benefits of food and agricultural sciences to producers and consumers, particularly those who are currently disproportionately low in receipt of such benefits.

(2) Examples include, but are not limited to:

(i) Computer-based decision support systems to assist small-scale farmers to take advantage of relevant technologies, programs, policies, etc.

(ii) Efficacious delivery systems for nutrition information or for resource management assistance for low-income families and individuals.

(d) *Other creative proposals.* The purpose of this initiative is to encourage other creative proposals, outside the areas previously outlined, that are designed to provide needed enhancement of the Nation's food and agricultural research system.

§ 3406.17 Program application materials—research.

Program application materials in an application package will be made available to eligible institutions upon request. These materials include the program announcement, the administrative provisions for the program, and the forms needed to prepare and submit research grant applications under the program.

§ 3406.18 Content of a research proposal.

(a) *Proposal cover page.* (1) Form CSREES–712, ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page,'' must be completed in its entirety. Note that providing a Social Security Number is voluntary, but is an integral part of the CSREES information system and will assist in the processing of the proposal.

(2) One copy of Form CSREES–712 must contain the pen-and-ink signatures of the principal investigator(s) and Authorized Organizational Representative for the applicant institution.

(3) The title of the research project shown on the ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page'' must be brief (80-character maximum) yet represent the major thrust of the project. This information will be used by the Department to provide information to the Congress and other interested parties.

(4) In block 7. of Form CSREES–712, enter ''Capacity Building Grants Program.''

(5) In block 8.a. of Form CSREES–712, enter ''Research.'' In block 8.b. identify the code of the targeted need area(s) as found on the reverse of the form. If a proposal focuses on multiple targeted need areas, enter each code associated with the project. In block 8.c. identify the major area(s) of emphasis as found on the reverse of the form. If a proposal focuses on multiple areas of emphasis, enter each code associated with the project; however, please limit your selection to three areas. This information will be used by the program staff for the proper assignment of proposals to reviewers.

(6) In block 9. of Form CSREES–712, indicate if the proposal is a complementary project proposal or joint project proposal as defined in § 3406.2 of this part. If it is not a complementary project proposal or a joint project proposal, identify it as a regular proposal.

(7) In block 13. of Form CSREES–712, indicate if the proposal is a new, first-time submission or if the proposal is a resubmission of a proposal that has been submitted to, but not funded under the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program in a previous competition.

(b) *Table of contents.* For ease of locating information, each proposal must contain a detailed table of contents just after the Proposal Cover Page. The Table of Contents should include page numbers for each component of the proposal. Pagination should begin immediately following the summary documentation of USDA agency cooperation.

(c) *USDA agency cooperator.* To be considered for funding, each proposal must include documentation of cooperation with at least one USDA agency or office. If multiple agencies are involved as cooperators, documentation must be included from each agency. When documenting cooperative

arrangements, the following guidelines should be used:

(1) A summary of the cooperative arrangements must immediately follow the Table of Contents. This summary should:

(i) Bear the signatures of the Agency Head (or his/her designated authorized representative) and the university project director;

(ii) Indicate the agency's willingness to commit support for the project;

(iii) Identify the person(s) at the USDA agency who will serve as the liaison or technical contact for the project;

(iv) Describe the degree and nature of the USDA agency's involvement in the proposed project, as outlined in § 3406.6(a) of this part, including its role in:

(A) Identifying the need for the project;

(B) Developing a conceptual approach;

(C) Assisting with project design;

(D) Identifying and securing needed agency or other resources (e.g., personnel, grants/contracts; in-kind support, etc.);

(E) Developing the project budget;

(F) Promoting partnerships with other institutions to carry out the project;

(G) Helping the institution launch and manage the project;

(H) Providing technical assistance and expertise;

(I) Providing consultation through site visits, E-mail, conference calls, and faxes;

(J) Participating in project evaluation and dissemination of final project results; and

(K) Seeking other innovative ways to ensure the success of the project and advance the needs of the institution or the agency; and

(v) Describe the expected benefits of the partnership venture for the USDA agency and for the 1890 Institution.

(2) A detailed discussion of these partnership arrangements should be provided in the narrative portion of the proposal, as outlined in paragraph (f)(2)(iv)(C) of this section.

(3) Additional documentation, including letters of support or cooperation, may be provided in the Appendix.

(d) *Project summary.* (1) A Project Summary should immediately follow the summary documentation of USDA agency cooperation. The information provided in the Project Summary will be used by the program staff for a variety of purposes, including the proper assignment of proposals to peer reviewers and providing information to peer reviewers prior to the peer panel meeting. The name of the institution, the targeted need area(s), and the title of the proposal must be identified exactly as shown on the ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page.''

(2) If the proposal is a complementary project proposal, as defined in § 3406.2 of this part, clearly state this fact and identify the other complementary project(s) by citing the name of the submitting institution, the title of the project, the principal investigator, and the grant number (if funded in a previous year) exactly as shown on the cover page of the complementary project so that appropriate consideration can be given to the interrelatedness of the proposals in the evaluation process.

(3) If the proposal is a joint project proposal, as defined in § 3406.2 of this part, indicate such and identify the other participating institutions and the key person responsible for coordinating the project at each institution.

(4) The Project Summary should be a concise description of the proposed activity suitable for publication by the Department to inform the general public about awards under the program. The text should not exceed one page, single-spaced. The Project Summary should be a self-contained description of the activity which would result if the proposal is funded by USDA. It should include: The objective of the project, a synopsis of the plan of operation, a statement of how the project will enhance the research capacity of the institution, a description of how the project will enhance research in the food and agricultural sciences, and a description of the partnership efforts between, and the expected benefits for, the USDA agency cooperator(s) and the 1890 Institution and the plans for disseminating project results. The Project Summary should be written so that a

technically literate reader can evaluate the use of Federal funds in support of the project.

(e) *Resubmission of a proposal*—(1) *Resubmission of previously unfunded proposals.* (i) If the proposal has been submitted previously, but was not funded, such should be indicated in block 13. on Form CSREES–712, ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page,'' and the following information should be included in the proposal:

(A) The fiscal year(s) in which the proposal was submitted previously;

(B) A summary of the peer reviewers' comments; and

(C) How these comments have been addressed in the current proposal, including the page numbers in the current proposal where the peer reviewers' comments have been addressed.

(ii) This information may be provided as a section of the proposal following the Project Summary and preceding the proposal narrative or it may be placed in the Appendix (see paragraph (j) of this section). In either case, the location of this information should be indicated in the Table of Contents, and the fact that the proposal is a resubmitted proposal should be stated in the proposal narrative. Further, when possible, the information should be presented in a tabular format. Applicants who choose to resubmit proposals that were previously submitted, but not funded, should note that resubmitted proposals must compete equally with newly submitted proposals. Submitting a proposal that has been revised based on a previous peer review panel's critique of the proposal does not guarantee the success of the resubmitted proposal.

(2) *Resubmission of previously funded proposals.* Recognizing that capacity building is a long-term ongoing process, the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program is interested in funding subsequent phases of previously funded projects in order to build institutional capacity, and institutions are encouraged to build on a theme over several grant awards. However, proposals that are sequential continuations or new stages of previously funded Capacity Building Grants must compete with first-time proposals. Therefore, principal investigators should thoroughly demonstrate how the project proposed in the current application expands substantially upon a previously funded project (i.e., demonstrate how the new project will advance the former project to the next level of attainment or will achieve expanded goals). The proposal must also show the degree to which the new phase promotes innovativeness and creativity beyond the scope of the previously funded project. Please note that the 1890 Institution Capacity Building Grants Program is not designed to support activities that are essentially repetitive in nature over multiple grant awards. Principal investigators who have had their projects funded previously are discouraged from resubmitting relatively identical proposals for future funding.

(f) *Narrative of a research proposal.* The narrative portion of the proposal is limited to 20 pages in length. The one-page Project Summary is not included in the 20-page limitation. The narrative must be typed on one side of the page only, using a font no smaller than 12 point, and double-spaced. All margins must be at least one inch. All pages following the summary documentation of USDA agency cooperation must be paginated. It should be noted that peer reviewers will not be required to read beyond 20 pages of the narrative to evaluate the proposal. The narrative should contain the following sections:

(1) *Significance of the problem*—(i) *Impact*—(A) *Identification of the problem or opportunity.* Clearly identify the specific problem or opportunity to be addressed and present any research questions or hypotheses to be examined.

(B) *Rationale.* Provide a rationale for the proposed approach to the problem or opportunity and indicate the part that the proposed project will play in advancing food and agricultural research and knowledge. Discuss how the project will be of value and importance at the State, regional, national, or international level(s). Also discuss how the benefits to be derived from the project will transcend the proposing institution or the grant period.

(C) *Literature review.* Include a comprehensive summary of the pertinent scientific literature. Citations may be

footnoted to a bibliography in the Appendix. Citations should be accurate, complete, and adhere to an acceptable journal format. Explain how such knowledge (or previous findings) is related to the proposed project.

(D) *Current research and related activities.* Describe the relevancy of the proposed project to current research or significant research support activities at the proposing institution and any other institution participating in the project, including research which may be as yet unpublished.

(ii) *Continuation plans.* Discuss the likelihood or plans for continuation or expansion of the project beyond USDA support. Discuss, as applicable, how the institution's long-range budget, and administrative and academic plans, provide for the realistic continuation or expansion of the line of research or research support activity undertaken by this project after the end of the grant period. For example, are there plans for securing non-Federal support for the project? Is there any potential for income from patents, technology transfer or university-business enterprises resulting from the project? Also discuss the probabilities of the proposed activity or line of inquiry being pursued by researchers at other institutions.

(iii) *Innovation.* Describe the degree to which the proposal reflects an innovative or non-traditional approach to a food and agricultural research initiative.

(iv) *Products and results.* Explain the kinds of products and results expected and their impact on strengthening food and agricultural sciences higher education in the United States, including attracting academically outstanding students or increasing the ethnic, racial, and gender diversity of the Nation's food and agricultural scientific and professional expertise base.

(2) *Overall approach and cooperative linkages*—(i) *Approach*—(A) *Objectives.* Cite and discuss the specific objectives to be accomplished under the project.

(B) *Plan of operation.* The procedures or methodologies to be applied to the proposed project should be explicitly stated. This section should include, but not necessarily be limited to a description of:

(*1*) The proposed investigations, experiments, or research support enhancements in the sequence in which they will be carried out.

(*2*) Procedures and techniques to be employed, including their feasibility.

(*3*) Means by which data will be collected and analyzed.

(*4*) Pitfalls that might be encountered.

(*5*) Limitations to proposed procedures.

(C) *Timetable.* Provide a timetable for execution of the project. Identify all important research milestones and dates as they relate to project start-up, execution, dissemination, evaluation, and close-out.

(ii) *Evaluation plans.* (A) Provide a plan for evaluating the accomplishment of stated objectives during the conduct of the project. Indicate the criteria, and corresponding weight of each, to be used in the evaluation process, describe any performance data to be collected and analyzed, and explain the methodologies that will be used to determine the extent to which the needs underlying the project are being met.

(B) Provide a plan for evaluating the effectiveness of the end results upon conclusion of the project. Include the same kinds of information requested in paragraph (f)(2)(ii)(A) of this section.

(iii) Dissemination plans. Provide plans for disseminating project results and products including the possibilities for publications. Identify target audiences and explain methods of communication.

(iv) *Partnerships and collaborative efforts.* (A) Explain how the project will maximize partnership ventures and collaborative efforts to strengthen food and agricultural sciences higher education (e.g., involvement of faculty in related disciplines at the same institution, joint projects with other colleges or universities, or cooperative activities with business or industry). Also explain how it will stimulate academia, the States, or the private sector to join with the Federal partner in enhancing food and agricultural sciences higher education.

(B) Provide evidence, via letters from the parties involved, that arrangements necessary for collaborative partnerships or joint initiatives have been discussed and realistically can be expected to come to fruition, or actually have been finalized contingent on an award under this program. Letters must be signed by an official who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization. Such letters should be referenced in the plan of operation, but the actual letters should be included in the Appendix section of the proposal. Any potential conflict(s) of interest that might result from the proposed collaborative arrangements must be discussed in detail. Proposals which indicate joint projects with other institutions must state which proposer is to receive any resulting grant award, since only one submitting institution can be the recipient of a project grant under one proposal.

(C) Explain how the project will create a new or enhance an existing partnership between the USDA agency cooperator(s) and the 1890 Institution(s). This section should expand upon the summary information provided in the documentation of USDA agency cooperation section, as outlined in paragraph (c)(1) of this section. This is particularly important because the focal point of attention in the peer review process is the proposal narrative. Therefore, a comprehensive discussion of the partnership effort between USDA and the 1890 Institution should be provided.

(3) *Institutional capacity building*—(i) *Institutional enhancement.* Explain how the proposed project will strengthen the research capacity, as defined in § 3406.2 of this part, of the applicant institution and, if applicable, any other institutions assuming a major role in the conduct of the project. For example, describe how the proposed project is intended to strengthen the institution's research infrastructure by advancing the expertise of the current faculty in the natural or social sciences; providing a better research environment, state-of-the-art equipment, or supplies; enhancing library collections; or enabling the institution to provide efficacious organizational structures and reward systems to attract and retain first-rate research faculty and students—particularly those from underrepresented groups.

(ii) *Institutional commitment.* (A) Discuss the institution's commitment to the project and its successful completion. Provide, as relevant, appropriate documentation in the Appendix. Substantiate that the institution attributes a high priority to the project.

(B) Discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution's long-term (five- to ten-year) goals and how the project will help satisfy the institution's high-priority objectives. Show how this project is linked to and supported by the institution's strategic plan.

(C) Discuss the commitment of institutional resources to the project. Show that the institutional resources to be made available to the project will be adequate, when combined with the support requested from USDA, to carry out the activities of the project and represent a sound commitment by the institution. Discuss institutional facilities, equipment, computer services, and other appropriate resources available to the project.

(g) *Key personnel.* A Form CSREES–710, ''Summary Vita—Research Proposal,'' should be included for each key person associated with the project.

(h) *Budget and cost-effectiveness*—(1) *Budget form.* (i) Prepare Form CSREES–713, ''Higher Education Budget,'' in accordance with instructions provided with the form. Proposals may request support for a period to be identified in each year's program announcement. A budget form is required for each year of requested support. In addition, a summary budget is required detailing the requested total support for the overall project period. Form CSREES–713 may be reproduced as needed by proposers. Funds may be requested under any of the categories listed on the form, provided that the item or service for which support is requested is allowable under the authorizing legislation, the applicable Federal cost principles, the administrative provisions in this part, and can be justified as necessary for the successful conduct of the proposed project.

(ii) The approved negotiated research rate or the maximum rate allowed by

law should be used when computing indirect costs. If a reduced rate of indirect costs is voluntarily requested from USDA, the remaining allowable indirect costs may be used as matching funds. In the event that a proposal reflects an incorrect indirect cost rate and is recommended for funding, the correct rate will be applied to the approved budget in the grant award.

(2) *Matching funds.* When documenting matching contributions, use the following guidelines:

(i) When preparing the column entitled ''Applicant Contributions To Matching Funds'' of Form CSREES–713, only those costs to be contributed by the applicant for the purposes of matching should be shown. The total amount of this column should be indicated in item M.

(ii) In item N of Form CSREES–713, show a total dollar amount for Cash Contributions from both the applicant and any third parties; also show a total dollar amount (based on current fair market value) for Non-cash Contributions from both the applicant and any third parties.

(iii) To qualify for any incentive benefits stemming from matching support or to satisfy any cost sharing requirements, proposals must include written verification of any actual commitments of matching support (including both cash and non-cash contributions) from third parties. Written verification means—

(A) For any third party cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each donation, signed by the authorized organizational representative(s) of the donor organization (or by the donor if the gift is from an individual) and the applicant institution, which must include:

(*1*) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor;

(*2*) The name of the applicant institution;

(*3*) The title of the project for which the donation is made;

(*4*) The dollar amount of the cash donation; and

(*5*) A statement that the donor will pay the cash contribution during the grant period; and

(B) For any third party non-cash contributions, a separate pledge agreement for each contribution, signed by the authorized organizational representative(s) of the donor organization (or by the donor if the gift is from an individual) and the applicant institution, which must include:

(*1*) The name, address, and telephone number of the donor;

(*2*) The name of the applicant institution;

(*3*) The title of the project for which the donation is made;

(*4*) A good faith estimate of the current fair market value of the non-cash contribution; and

(*5*) A statement that the donor will make the contribution during the grant period.

(iv) All pledge agreements must be placed in the proposal immediately following Form CSREES–713. The sources and amounts of all matching support from outside the applicant institution should be summarized in the Budget Narrative section of the proposal.

(v) Applicants should refer to OMB Circulars A–110, ''Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals and Other Nonprofit Organizations,'' and A–21, ''Cost Principles for Educational Institutions,'' for further guidance and other requirements relating to matching and allowable costs.

(3) *Chart on shared budget for joint project proposal.* (i) For a joint project proposal, a plan must be provided indicating how funds will be distributed to the participating institutions. The budget section of a joint project proposal should include a chart indicating:

(A) The names of the participating institutions;

(B) the amount of funds to be disbursed to those institutions; and

(C) the way in which such funds will be used in accordance with items A through L of Form CSREES–713, ''Higher Education Budget.''

(ii) If a proposal is not for a joint project, such a chart is not required.

(4) *Budget narrative.* (i) Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed project activities. Explain how each budget item (such as salaries and wages for professional and technical staff, student workers, travel,

equipment, etc.) is essential to achieving project objectives.

(ii) Justify that the total budget, including funds requested from USDA and any matching support provided, will be adequate to carry out the activities of the project. Provide a summary of sources and amounts of all third party matching support.

(iii) Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes research value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, or leverages additional funds. For example, discuss how the project has the potential to generate a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on a high-priority research initiative(s) or promote coalition building that could lead to future ventures.

(iv) Include the percentage of time key personnel will work on the project, both during the academic year and summer. When salaries of university project personnel will be paid by a combination of USDA and institutional funds, the total compensation must not exceed the faculty member's regular annual compensation. In addition, the total commitment of time devoted to the project, when combined with time for teaching and research duties, other sponsored agreements, and other employment obligations to the institution, must not exceed 100 percent of the normal workload for which the employee is compensated, in accordance with established university policies and applicable Federal cost principles.

(v) If the proposal addresses more than one targeted need area, estimate the proportion of the funds requested from USDA that will support each respective targeted need area.

(i) *Current and pending support.* Each applicant must complete Form CSREES–663, ''Current and Pending Support,'' identifying any other current public- or private-sponsored projects, in addition to the proposed project, to which key personnel listed in the proposal under consideration have committed portions of their time, whether or not salary support for the person(s) involved is included in the budgets of the various projects. This information should also be provided for any pending proposals which are currently being considered by, or which will be submitted in the near future to, other possible sponsors, including other USDA programs or agencies. Concurrent submission of identical or similar projects to other possible sponsors will not prejudice the review or evaluation of a project under this program.

(j) *Appendix.* Each project narrative is expected to be complete in itself and to meet the 20-page limitation. Inclusion of material in the Appendix should not be used to circumvent the 20-page limitation of the proposal narrative. However, in those instances where inclusion of supplemental information is necessary to guarantee the peer review panel's complete understanding of a proposal or to illustrate the integrity of the design or a main thesis of the proposal, such information may be included in the Appendix. Examples of supplemental material are photographs, journal reprints, brochures and other pertinent materials which are deemed to be illustrative of major points in the narrative but unsuitable for inclusion in the proposal narrative itself. Information on previously submitted proposals may also be presented in the Appendix (refer to paragraph (e) of this section). When possible, information in the Appendix should be presented in tabular format. A complete set of the Appendix material must be attached to each copy of the grant application submitted. The Appendix must be identified with the title of the project as it appears on Form CSREES–712 of the proposal and the name(s) of the principal investigator(s). The Appendix must be referenced in the proposal narrative.

(k) *Special considerations.* A number of situations encountered in the conduct of research require special information or supporting documentation before funding can be approved for the project. If such situations are anticipated, proposals must so indicate via completion of Form CSREES–662, ''Assurance Statement(s).'' It is expected that some applications submitted in response to these guidelines will involve the following:

(1) *Recombinant DNA research.* All key personnel identified in the proposal and all endorsing officials of the proposing

organization are required to comply with the guidelines established by the National Institutes of Health entitled ''Guidelines for Research Involving Recombinant DNA Molecules,'' as revised. All applicants proposing to use recombinant DNA techniques must so indicate by checking the appropriate box on Form CSREES–712, ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page,'' and by completing the applicable section of Form CSREES–662. In the event a project involving recombinant DNA or RNA molecules results in a grant award, the Institutional Biosafety Committee of the proposing institution must approve the research plan before CSREES will release grant funds.

(2) *Protection of human subjects.* Responsibility for safeguarding the rights and welfare of human subjects used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. Guidance on this is contained in Department of Agriculture regulations under 7 CFR part 1c. All applicants who propose to use human subjects for experimental purposes must indicate their intention by checking the appropriate block on Form CSREES–712, ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page,'' and by completing the appropriate portion of Form CSREES–662. In the event a project involving human subjects results in a grant award, the Institutional Review Board of the proposing institution must approve the research plan before CSREES will release grant funds.

(3) *Laboratory animal care.* Responsibility for the humane care and treatment of laboratory animals used in any grant project supported with funds provided by CSREES rests with the performing organization. All key project personnel and all endorsing officials of the proposing organization are required to comply with the Animal Welfare Act of 1966, as amended (7 U.S.C. 2131 *et seq.*), and the regulations promulgated thereunder by the Secretary of Agriculture in 9 CFR parts 1, 2, 3, and 4 pertaining to the care, handling, and treatment of laboratory animals. All applicants proposing a project which involves the use of laboratory animals must indicate their intention by checking the appropriate block on Form CSREES–712, ''Higher Education Proposal Cover Page,'' and by completing the appropriate portion of Form CSREES–662. In the event a project involving the use of living vertebrate animals results in a grant award, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee of the proposing institution must approve the research plan before CSREES will release grant funds.

(l) *Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).* As outlined in 7 CFR Part 3407 (the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service regulations implementing NEPA), the environmental data for any proposed project is to be provided to CSREES so that CSREES 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.

(1) *NEPA determination.* 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 particular project is necessary; therefore, Form CSREES–1234, ''NEPA Exclusions Form,''ust be included in the proposal indicating whether the applicant is of the opinion that the project falls within a categorical exclusion and the reasons therefor. If it is the applicant's opinion that the proposed project falls within the categorical exclusions, the specific exclusion must be identified. Form CSREES–1234 and any supporting documentation should be placed at the end of the proposal and identified in the Table of Contents.

(2) *Exceptions to categorical exclusions.* Even though a project may fall within the categorical exclusions, CSREES may determine that an Environmental Assessment or an 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.

Subpart F—Review and Evaluation of a Research Proposal

§ 3406.19 Proposal review—research.

The proposal evaluation process includes both internal staff review and merit evaluation by peer review panels comprised of scientists, educators, business representatives, and Government officials who are highly qualified to render expert advice in the areas supported. Peer review panels will be selected and structured to provide optimum expertise and objective judgment in the evaluation of proposals.

§ 3406.20 Evaluation criteria for research proposals.

The maximum score a research proposal can receive is 150 points. Unless otherwise stated in the annual solicitation published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, the peer review panel will consider the following criteria and weights to evaluate proposals submitted:

Evaluation criterion	Weight
(a) Significance of the problem:	
This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will advance or have a substantial impact upon the body of knowledge constituting the natural and social sciences undergirding the agricultural, natural resources, and food systems.	
(1) Impact—Is the problem or opportunity to be addressed by the proposed project clearly identified, outlined, and delineated? Are research questions or hypotheses precisely stated? Is the project likely to further advance food and agricultural research and knowledge? Does the project have potential for augmenting the food and agricultural scientific knowledge base? Does the project address a State, regional, national, or international problem(s)? Will the benefits to be derived from the project transcend the applicant institution or the grant period?	15 points.
(2) Continuation plans—Are there plans for continuation or expansion of the project beyond USDA support? Are there plans for continuing this line of research or research support activity with the use of institutional funds after the end of the grant? Are there indications of external, non-Federal support? Are there realistic plans for making the project self-supporting? What is the potential for royalty or patent income, technology transfer or university-business enterprises? What are the probabilities of the proposed activity or line of inquiry being pursued by researchers at other institutions?	10 points.
(3) Innovation—Are significant aspects of the project based on an innovative or a non-traditional approach? Does the project reflect creative thinking? To what degree does the venture reflect a unique approach that is new to the applicant institution or new to the entire field of study?	10 points.
(4) Products and results—Are the expected products and results of the project clearly outlined and likely to be of high quality? Will project results be of an unusual or unique nature? Will the project contribute to a better understanding of or an improvement in the quality, distribution, or effectiveness of the Nation's food and agricultural scientific and professional expertise base, such as increasing the participation of women and minorities?	15 points.
(b) Overall approach and cooperative linkages:	
This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach and the quality of the partnerships likely to evolve as a result of the project.	
(1) Proposed approach—Do the objectives and plan of operation appear to be sound and appropriate relative to the proposed initiative(s) and the impact anticipated? Is the proposed sequence of work appropriate? Does the proposed approach reflect sound knowledge of current theory and practice and awareness of previous or ongoing related research? If the proposed project is a continuation of a current line of study or currently funded project, does the proposal include sufficient preliminary data from the previous research or research support activity? Does the proposed project flow logically from the findings of the previous stage of study? Are the procedures scientifically and managerially sound? Are potential pitfalls and limitations clearly identified? Are contingency plans delineated? Does the timetable appear to be readily achievable?	5 points.

Evaluation criterion	Weight
(2) Evaluation—Are the evaluation plans adequate and reasonable? Do they allow for continuous or frequent feedback during the life of the project? Are the individuals involved in project evaluation skilled in evaluation strategies and procedures? Can they provide an objective evaluation? Do evaluation plans facilitate the measurement of project progress and outcomes?	5 points
(3) Dissemination—Does the proposed project include clearly outlined and realistic mechanisms that will lead to widespread dissemination of project results, including national electronic communication systems, publications and presentations at professional society meetings?	5 points.
(4) Partnerships and collaborative efforts—Does the project have significant potential for advancing cooperative ventures between the applicant institution and a USDA agency? Does the project workplan include an effective role for the cooperating USDA agency(s)? Will the project encourage and facilitate better working relationships in the university science community, as well as between universities and the public or private sector? Does the project encourage appropriate multi-disciplinary collaboration? Will the project lead to long-term relationships or cooperative partnerships that are likely to enhance research quality or supplement available resources?	15 points.
(c) Institutional capacity building:	
This criterion relates to the degree to which the project will strengthen the research capacity of the applicant institution. In the case of a joint project proposal, it relates to the degree to which the project will strengthen the research capacity of the applicant institution and that of any other institution assuming a major role in the conduct of the project.	
(1) Institutional enhancement—Will the project help the institution to advance the expertise of current faculty in the natural or social sciences; provide a better research environment, state-of-the-art equipment, or supplies; enhance library collections related to the area of research; or enable the institution to provide efficacious organizational structures and reward systems to attract, hire and retain first-rate research faculty and students—particularly those from underrepresented groups?	15 points.
(2) Institutional commitment—Is there evidence to substantiate that the institution attributes a high-priority to the project, that the project is linked to the achievement of the institution's long-term goals, that it will help satisfy the institution's high-priority objectives, or that the project is supported by the institution's strategic plans? Will the project have reasonable access to needed resources such as scientific instrumentation, facilities, computer services, library and other research support resources?	15 points.
(d) Personnel Resources	10 Points
This criterion relates to the number and qualifications of the key persons who will carry out the project. Are designated project personnel qualified to carry out a successful project? Are there sufficient numbers of personnel associated with the project to achieve the stated objectives and the anticipated outcomes? Will the project help develop the expertise of young scientists at the doctoral or post-doctorate level?	
(e) Budget and cost-effectiveness:	
This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost-effective.	
(1) Budget—Is the budget request justifiable? Are costs reasonable and necessary? Will the total budget be adequate to carry out project activities? Are the source(s) and amount(s) of non-Federal matching support clearly identified and appropriately documented? For a joint project proposal, is the shared budget explained clearly and in sufficient detail?	10 points.
(2) Cost-effectiveness—Is the proposed project cost-effective? Does it demonstrate a creative use of limited resources, maximize research value per dollar of USDA support, achieve economies of scale, leverage additional funds or have the potential to do so, focus expertise and activity on a high-priority research initiative(s), or promote coalition building for current or future ventures?	5 points.
(f) Overall quality of proposal	5 points
This criterion relates to the degree to which the proposal complies with the application guidelines and is of high quality. Is the proposal enhanced by its adherence to instructions (table of contents, organization, pagination, margin and font size, the 20-page limitation, appendices, etc.); accuracy of forms; clarity of budget narrative; well prepared vitae for all key personnel associated with the project; and presentation (are ideas effectively presented, clearly articulated, thoroughly explained, etc.)?	

Subpart G—Submission of a Teaching or Research Proposal

§ 3406.21 Intent to submit a proposal.

To assist CSREES in preparing for the review of proposals, institutions planning to submit proposals may be requested to complete Form CSREES–711, ''Intent to Submit a Proposal,'' provided in the application package. CSREES will determine each year if Intent to Submit a Proposal forms will be requested and provide such information in the program announcement. If Intent to Submit a Proposal forms are required, one form should be completed and returned for each proposal an institution anticipates submitting. Submitting this form does not commit an institution to any course of action, nor does failure to send this form prohibit an institution from submitting a proposal.

§ 3406.22 When and where to submit a proposal.

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

Subpart H—Supplementary Information

§ 3406.23 Access to peer review information.

After final decisions have been announced, CSREES will, upon request, inform the principal investigator/project director of the reasons for its decision on a proposal. Verbatim copies of summary reviews, not including the identity of the peer reviewers, will be made available to the respective principal investigator/project directors upon specific request.

§ 3406.24 Grant awards.

(a) *General.* Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the authorized departmental officer shall make project grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose proposals are judged most meritorious in the announced targeted need areas under the evaluation criteria and procedures set forth in this part. The beginning of the project period shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support. All funds granted under this part shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance 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 Department's Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations (7 CFR part 3019).

(b) *Organizational management information.* Specific management information relating to a proposing institution shall be submitted on a one-time basis prior to the award of a project grant identified under this part if such information has not been provided previously under this or another program for which the sponsoring agency is responsible. Copies of forms used to fulfill this requirement will be sent to the proposing institution by the sponsoring agency as part of the pre-award process.

(c) *Notice of grant award.* The grant award document shall include at a minimum the following:

(1) Legal name and address of performing organization.

(2) Title of project.

(3) Name(s) and address(es) of principal investigator(s)/project director(s).

(4) Identifying grant number assigned by the Department.

(5) Project period, which specifies how long the Department intends to support the effort without requiring reapplication for funds.

(6) Total amount of Federal financial assistance approved during the project period.

(7) Legal authority(ies) under which the grant is awarded.

(8) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the grant award.

(9) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by the Department to carry out its granting activities or to accomplish the purpose of this particular project grant.

(d) *Obligation of the Federal Government.* Neither the approval of any application nor the award of any project grant shall legally commit or obligate CSREES or the United States to provide further support of a project or any portion thereof.

§ 3406.25 Use of funds; changes.

(a) *Delegation of fiscal responsibility.* The grantee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of grant funds.

(b) *Change in project plans.* (1) The permissible changes by the grantee, principal investigator(s)/project director(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project grant shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the grantee or the principal investigator(s)/project director(s) are uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Department for a final determination.

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

(3) Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the authorized departmental officer 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 grantee and approved in writing by the authorized departmental officer prior to effecting such transfers.

(c) *Changes in project period.* The project period may be extended by the authorized departmental officer without additional financial support for such additional period(s) as the authorized departmental officer determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project. However, due to statutory restriction, no grant may be extended beyond five years from the original start date of the grant. Grant extensions shall be conditioned upon prior request by the grantee and approval in writing by the authorized departmental officer, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of a grant.

(d) *Changes in approved budget.* Changes in an approved budget must be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by the authorized departmental officer prior to instituting such changes if the revision will:

(1) Involve transfers of amounts budgeted for indirect costs to absorb an increase in direct costs;

(2) Involve transfers of amounts budgeted for direct costs to accommodate changes in indirect cost rates negotiated during a budget period and not approved when a grant was awarded; or

(3) Involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or in the grant award.

§ 3406.26 Monitoring progress of funded projects.

(a) During the tenure of a grant, principal investigators/project directors must attend at least one national principal investigators/project directors meeting, if offered, in Washington, DC or any other announced location. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, future directions for education reform, research project management, advancing a field of science, and opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results.

(b) An Annual Performance Report must be submitted to the USDA program contact person within 90 days after the completion of the first year of the project and annually thereafter during the life of the grant. Generally, the Annual Performance Reports should include a summary of the overall progress toward project objectives, current problems or unusual developments, the next year's planned activities, and any other information that is

pertinent to the ongoing project or which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award. These reports are in addition to the annual Current Research Information System (CRIS) reports required for all research grants under the award's ''Special Terms and Conditions.''

(c) A Final Performance Report must be submitted to the USDA program contact person within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The expiration date is specified in the award documents and modifications thereto, if any. Generally, the Final Performance Report should be a summary of the completed project, including: A review of project objectives and accomplishments; a description of any products and outcomes resulting from the project; activities undertaken to disseminate products and outcomes; partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from the project; future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project; the impact of the project on the principal investigator(s)/project director(s), the institution, and the food and agricultural sciences higher education system; and data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The Final Performance Report should be accompanied by samples or copies of any products or publications resulting from or developed by the project. The Final Performance Report must also contain any other information which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award.

§ 3406.27 Other Federal statutes and regulations that apply.

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

7 CFR Part 1, Subpart A—USDA implementation of Freedom of Information Act.

7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A–129 regarding debt collection.

7 CFR Part 15, Subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.

7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., Circular Nos. A–21 and A–122) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301–6308 (the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. 95–224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.

7 CFR Part 3017—Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement); Governmentwide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants), implementing Executive Order 12549 on debarment and suspension and the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 (41 U.S.C. 701).

7 CFR Part 3018—Restrictions on Lobbying, prohibiting the use of appropriated funds to influence Congress or a Federal agency in connection with the making of any Federal grant and other Federal contracting and financial transactions.

7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A–110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3051—Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and other Nonprofit Institutions.

29 U.S.C. 794, section 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.

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).

§ 3406.28 Confidential aspects of proposals and awards.

When a proposal results in a grant, it becomes a part of the record of the Agency's transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a privileged nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as privileged should be clearly marked as such and sent in a separate statement, two copies of which should accompany the proposal. The original copy of a proposal that does not result in a grant will be retained by the Agency for a period of one year. Other copies will be destroyed. Such a proposal will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. A proposal may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

§3406.29 Evaluation of program.

Grantees should be aware that CSREES may, as a part of its own program evaluation activities, carry out in-depth evaluations of assisted activities. Thus, grantees should be prepared to cooperate with CSREES personnel, or persons retained by CSREES, evaluating the institutional context and the impact of any supported project. Grantees may be asked to provide general information on any students and faculty supported, in whole or in part, by a grant awarded under this program; information that may be requested includes, but is not limited to, standardized academic achievement test scores, grade point average, academic standing, career patterns, age, race/ethnicity, gender, citizenship, and disability.

PART 3407—IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

Sec.

3407.1 Background and purpose.
3407.2 Definitions.
3407.3 Policy.
3407.4 Responsibilities.
3407.5 Classes of action.
3407.6 Categorical exclusions.
3407.7 Actions normally requiring an environmental assessment.
3407.8 Actions normally requiring an environmental impact statement.
3407.9 Use of environmental documents in decisionmaking.
3407.10 Preparation of environmental assessments.
3407.11 Preparation of environmental impact statements.

AUTHORITY: National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*; E.O. 11514, 34 FR 4247, as amended by E.O. 11991, 42 FR 26927; E.O. 12144, 44 FR 11957; 5 U.S.C. 301; 40 CFR parts 1500–1508; and 7 CFR part 1b.

SOURCE: 56 FR 49245, Sept. 27, 1991, unless otherwise noted.

§3407.1 Background and purpose.

(a) The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) establishes national policies and goals for the protection of the human environment. Section 102(2) of NEPA directs all Federal agencies to give appropriate consideration to the environmental consequences of proposed actions in their decisionmaking and to prepare detailed environmental statements on major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

(b) The purpose of this regulation is to supplement the regulations for implementation of NEPA established by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and codified at 40 CFR parts 1500–1508, as adopted by USDA in 7 CFR part 1b.

(c) Unless otherwise noted, parenthetical citations throughout this part refer to the CEQ regulations.

§3407.2 Definitions.

(a) *Authorized Departmental Officer* means the CSREES official, acting within the scope of delegated authority, who is responsible for awarding and administering project grants on behalf of USDA and for carrying out NEPA responsibilities as outlined in §3407.4(d) of this part. The Authorized Departmental Officer's responsibilities do not include the review, approval, management, or similar activity relating to programs or projects funded by CSREES on the basis of statutory formula and also do not include parallel responsibilities relating to the management or administration of cooperative agreements awarded by CSREES.

(b) Other terms used in this regulation have the same meaning as they have in the CEQ regulations.

§3407.3 Policy.

(a) It is CSREES policy to comply with the provisions of NEPA and related laws and policies and with the implementing regulations cited in §3407.1(b) of this part.

(b) Environmental documents should be concise, written in plain language, and address the issues pertinent to the decision being made.

(c) Environmental documents may be substituted for or combined with other reports which serve to facilitate decisionmaking (40 CFR 1506.4).

(d) CSREES personnel will cooperate with other Federal and State agencies or units thereof, as well as with grantees, contractors, and other cooperating individuals or entities undertaking activities funded or recommended for