

**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE****Cooperative State Research,  
Education, and Extension Service****7 CFR Part 3405****Higher Education Challenge Grants  
Program; Administrative Provisions**

**AGENCY:** Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, USDA.

**ACTION:** Notice of proposed rulemaking.

**SUMMARY:** The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) proposes to add a new Part 3405 to title 7, subtitle B, Chapter XXXIV of the Code of Federal Regulations, for the purpose of administering Higher Education Challenge Grants Program conducted under the authority of section 1417(b)(1) of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3152). This action establishes and codifies the administrative procedures to be followed annually in the solicitation of competitive proposals, the evaluation of such proposals, and the award of grants under this program.

**DATES:** Written comments are invited from interested individuals and organizations. To be considered in the formulation of a final rule, comments must be received on or before January 18, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be sent to Dr. Jeffrey L. Gilmore, Higher Education Grant Programs Manager, Science and Education Resources Development, Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Ag Box 2251, Washington, DC 20250-2251.

Comments may also be sent via electronic mail to [jgilmore@reeusda.gov](mailto:jgilmore@reeusda.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Jeffrey L. Gilmore at 202-720-1973 (voice), 202-720-2030 (fax) or via electronic mail at [jgilmore@reeusda.gov](mailto:jgilmore@reeusda.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:****Paperwork Reduction**

Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1980, as amended (44 U.S.C. Chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this proposed rule have been reviewed and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and given the OMB Document Nos. 0524-0022, 0524-0024, and 0524-0030. The public reporting burden for the information collections contained in these regulations (Forms CSRS-663, CSRS-708, CSRS-711, CSRS-712, and

CSRS-713 as well as the Proposal Summary and Proposal Narrative) is estimated to be 39½ hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the Department of Agriculture, Clearance Analyst, OIRM, Ag Box 7630, Washington, DC 20250-7630, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project, Washington, DC 20503.

**Executive Order No. 12866**

This proposed rule has been reviewed under Executive Order No. 12866, and it has been determined that it is not a "significant regulatory action" rule because it will not have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more or adversely and materially affect a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local, or tribal governments or communities. This rule will not create any serious inconsistencies or otherwise interfere with actions taken or planned by another agency. It will not materially alter the budgetary impact of entitlements, grants, user fees, or loan programs, or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof, and does not raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities, or principles set forth in Executive Order No. 12866.

**Regulatory Flexibility Act**

The Administrator, CSREES, certifies that this proposed rule will not have a significant impact on a substantial number of small entities as defined in the Regulatory Flexibility Act, Pub. L. 96-534, as amended (5 U.S.C. 601 *et seq.*).

**Executive Order No. 12612**

This rule involves no policies that have federalism implications under Executive Order No. 12612, Federalism, dated October 26, 1987.

**Executive Order No. 12778**

This rule has been reviewed in accordance with Executive Order No. 12778, Civil Justice Reform, and the required certification has been made to OMB. All State and local laws and regulations that are in conflict with this rule are preempted. No retroactive effect is to be given to this rule. This rule does

not require administrative proceedings before parties may file suit in court.

**Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance**

This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under No. 10.217, Higher Education Challenge Grants Program. For the reasons set forth in the Final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V, 57 FR 15278, April 27, 1992, this program is excluded from the scope of Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials.

**Background and Purpose**

This document proposes to add a new part 3405 to title 7, subtitle B, chapter XXXIV of the Code of Federal Regulations, for the purpose of administering the Higher Education Challenge Grants Program. Under the authority of section 1417(b)(1) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (7 U.S.C. 3152(b)(1)), the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to conduct competitive grant programs to strengthen institutional capacities, including curriculum, faculty, scientific instrumentation, instruction delivery systems, and student recruitment and retention, to respond to identified State, regional, national, or international educational needs in the food and agricultural sciences. The issuance of this rule will establish and codify the administrative procedures to be followed annually in the solicitation of competitive grant proposals, the evaluation of such proposals, and the award of grants under this program.

The Challenge Grants Program is intended to assist colleges and universities in the United States, having a demonstrable capacity to carry out the teaching of the food and agricultural sciences, in providing high quality educational programs in the food and agricultural sciences. These programs will, in turn, attract outstanding students and produce graduates capable of strengthening the Nation's food and agricultural scientific and professional work force.

**List of Subjects in 7 CFR Part 3405**

Grant programs—agriculture, Agriculture higher education.

For the reasons set forth in the preamble, it is proposed to amend title 7, subtitle B, chapter XXXIV, of the Code of Federal Regulations by adding part 3405 to read as follows: