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equipment, proprietary data, technical expertise, or other such unique qualifications.

(5) The award implements an agreement between the United States Government and a foreign government to fund a foreign applicant.

(6) Time constraints associated with a public health, safety, welfare or national security requirement preclude competition.

(7) The proposed project was submitted as an unsolicited proposal and represents a unique or innovative idea, method, or approach which would not be eligible for financial assistance under a recent, current, or planned solicitation, and if, as determined by DOE, a competitive solicitation would not be appropriate.

(8) The responsible program Assistant Secretary (or official of equivalent authority), with the approval of the Secretary of Energy, determines that a noncompetitive award is in the public interest. This authority may not be delegated.

(d) *Approval requirements.* Determinations of noncompetitive awards shall be approved, prior to award, by the initiating program official, by the responsible program Assistant Secretary (or official of equivalent authority) or designee, who shall be not less than two organizational levels above that of the project officer, by the Contracting Officer and shall be concurred in by local legal counsel. Where the amount of DOE funds is less than \$1,000,000 for a noncompetitive financial assistance award, the determination shall be approved by the cognizant HCA and the Contracting Officer. Concurrence for a particular award or class of awards of \$1,000,000 or less may be waived by local legal counsel.

(e) *Documentation requirements.* A determination of noncompetitive financial assistance (normally prepared by the responsible program official) explaining the basis for the proposed noncompetitive award shall be placed in the award file.

[61 FR 7166, Feb. 26, 1996, as amended at 64 FR 56420, Oct. 20, 1999]

§ 600.7 Small and disadvantaged and women-owned business participation.

(a) DOE encourages the participation in financial assistance awards of small businesses, including those owned by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and women, of historically black colleges, and of colleges and universities with substantial minority enrollments.

(b) For definitions of the terms in paragraph (a) of this section, see the Higher Education Act of 1965, and 15 U.S.C. 644, as amended by the Federal Acquisition Streamlining Act (FASA), and implementing regulations under FASA issued by the Office of Federal Procurement Policy.

(c) When entering into contracts under financial assistance awards, recipients and subrecipients shall comply with the requirements of Section 600.144 or Section 600.236, as applicable.

§ 600.8 Solicitation.

(a) *General.* A solicitation for financial assistance applications shall be in the form of a program rule or other publicly available document which invites the submission of applications by a common due date or within a prescribed period of time.

(1) A Program Assistant Secretary (or official of equivalent authority) may annually issue a program notice describing research areas in which financial assistance is being made available. Such notice shall also state whether the research areas covered by the notice are to be added to those listed in a previously issued program rule. If they are to be included, then applications received as a result of the notice may be treated as having been in response to that previously published program rule. If they are not to be included, then applications received in response to the notice are to be treated as unsolicited applications. Solicitations may be issued by a DOE Contracting Officer or program office with prior concurrence of the contracting office.

(2) DOE shall publish either a copy or a notice of the availability of a financial assistance solicitation in the FEDERAL REGISTER. DOE shall publish solicitations or notices in the Commerce

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Business Daily when potential applicants include for-profit organizations or when there is the potential for significant contracting opportunities under the resulting financial assistance awards.

(b) *Subawards.* In accordance with the provisions of the applicable statute and program rules, if a DOE financial assistance program involves the award of financial assistance by a recipient to a subrecipient, the recipient shall provide sufficient advance notice so that potential subrecipients may prepare timely applications and secure pre-requisite reviews and approvals.

(c) *Contents of solicitation.* Each solicitation shall provide information as may be necessary to allow potential applicants to decide whether to submit an application, to understand how applications will be evaluated, and to know what the obligations of a recipient would be. At a minimum, each solicitation must include:

(1) A control number assigned by the issuing DOE office;

(2) The amount of money available for award and, if appropriate, the expected size of individual awards broken down by areas of priority or emphasis, and the expected number of awards;

(3) The type of award instrument or instruments to be used;

(4) The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number for the program;

(5) Who is eligible to apply;

(6) The expected duration of DOE support or the period of performance;

(7) An application form or the format to be used, location for application submission, and number of copies required;

(8) The name of the responsible DOE Contracting Officer (or, for program notices or solicitations issued by the program office, the program office contact) to contact for additional information, and, as appropriate, an address where application forms may be obtained;

(9) Whether loans are available under the DOE Minority Economic Impact (MEI) loan program, 10 CFR part 800, to finance the cost of preparing a financial assistance application, and, if MEI loans are available, a general description of the eligibility requirements for such a loan, a reference to Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number

81.063, and the name and address of the DOE office from which additional information and loan application forms can be obtained;

(10) Appropriate periods or due dates for submission of applications and a statement describing the consequences of late submission. If programs have established a series of due dates to allow for the comparison of applications against each other, these dates shall be indicated in the solicitation;

(11) The types of projects or activities eligible for support;

(12) Evaluation criteria and the weight or relative importance of each, which may include one or more of the following or other criteria, as appropriate:

(i) Qualifications of the applicant's personnel who will be working on the project;

(ii) Adequacy of the applicant's facilities and resources;

(iii) Cost-effectiveness of the project;

(iv) Adequacy of the project plan or methodology;

(v) Management capability of the applicant;

(vi) Sources of financing available to the project. Any requirement concerning cost sharing shall be clearly stated (See also §600.30, Cost Sharing). Cost sharing is generally encouraged. However, unless cost sharing is required by the solicitation, it shall not be considered in the evaluation process and shall be considered only at the time the award is negotiated.

(vii) Relationship of the proposed project to the objectives of the solicitation;

(13) A listing of program policy factors, if any, indicating the relative importance of each, if appropriate. Examples of program policy factors are:

(i) Geographic distribution;

(ii) Diverse types and sizes of applicant entities;

(iii) A diversity of methods, approaches, or kinds of work; and

(iv) Projects which are complementary to other DOE programs or projects;

(14) References to or copies of:

(i) Statutory authority for the program;

(ii) Applicable rules, including the appropriate subparts of this part;

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(iii) Other terms and conditions applicable to awards to be made under the solicitation, including allowable and unallowable costs and reporting requirements;

(iv) Policies and procedures for patents, data, copyrights, audiovisual productions and exhibits;

(v) Any required assurances not included in the application form;

(15) The deadline for submission of required or optional preapplications;

(16) Date, time, and location of any briefing for applicants;

(17) Required presubmission reviews and clearances, including a statement as to whether review under E.O. 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs", is required.

(18) Dates by which selections and awards are expected to be made and whether unsuccessful applications will be returned to the applicant or be retained by DOE and for what period of time;

(19) A statement that DOE is under no obligation to pay for any costs associated with preparation or submission of applications if an award is not made. If an award is made, such costs may be allowable as provided in the applicable cost principles (See §§600.127 and 600.222);

(20) A statement that DOE reserves the right to fund, in whole or in part, any, all, or none of the applications submitted in response to the solicitation; and

(21) Any other relevant information, including explanatory information or factual basis for justifications required by this part.

§ 600.9 Notice of program interest.

(a) *General.* (1) DOE may publish periodic Notices of Program Interest in the FEDERAL REGISTER and other media, as appropriate, which describes broad, general, technical problems and areas of investigation for which DOE may award grants or cooperative agreements.

(2) DOE shall evaluate any application submitted under a Notice of Program Interest as an unsolicited application.

(b) *Contents.* The notice shall include:

(1) A brief description of the areas of interest for which DOE may provide financial assistance;

(2) A statement about how resulting applications will be evaluated and the criteria for selection and funding;

(3) An expiration date with an explanation that such a date does not represent a common deadline for applications but rather that applications may be submitted at any time before the notice expires; and

(4) The location for application submission.

§ 600.10 Form and content of applications.

(a) *General.* Applications shall be required for all financial assistance projects or programs.

(b) *Forms.* Applications shall be on the form and in the number of copies specified in a program rule, the solicitation, or these regulations. (See also §§600.112 and 600.210.) For unsolicited applications, a guide for preparation and submission is available from U.S. Department of Energy, Federal Energy Technology Center, Attn: Unsolicited Proposal Manager, Post Office Box 10940, Pittsburgh, PA, 15236-0940.

(c) *Contents of an application.* In general, a financial assistance application shall include:

(1) A facesheet containing basic identifying information. The facesheet shall be the Standard Form (SF)424 or other approved DOE application form;

(2) A detailed narrative description of the proposed project, including the objectives of the project and the applicant's plan for carrying it out;

(3) A budget with supporting justification; and

(4) Any required preaward assurances.

(d) *Incomplete applications.* DOE may return an application that:

(1) Is not signed, either in writing or electronically, by an official authorized to bind the applicant; or

(2) Omits any information or documentation required by statute, program rule, or the solicitation, if the nature of the omission precludes review of the application.

(e) *Supplemental information.* During the review of a complete application,