



**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**



**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Fire and Aviation Directorate
National Interagency Fire Center
Lead Agency for the Joint Fire Science
Program**

Joint Fire Science Program

The Joint Fire Science Program provides funding for scientific studies to address problems associated with managing wildland fuels, fires, and fire-impacted ecosystems.

Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act for FY 1998 and subsequent years
(P.L. 105-83; H.R. Report 105-163)

**PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT No. FA-RFA011-0004
Regional Science Consortia (1 task statement)**

CFDA No. 15.232

ISSUE DATE: September 23, 2010

JFSP Request for Applications (RFA) 2011-4

CLOSING DATE & TIME

November 19, 2010 5:00 pm MST

NOTE: JFSP has changed methods for funding proposals. Please read the eligible applicants section and contacts sections closely. Further instructions for completing all templates are now instruction documents available on the appropriate tabs once a proposal has been initiated. If you have questions please call the program office.

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SECTION I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

- A. Legislative Authority:** Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act for FY 1998 and subsequent years (P.L. 105-83; H.R. Report 105-163).
- B. Project Background Information:** The Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) is a partnership of six federal wildland management and research agencies with a need to address problems associated with managing wildland fuels, fires, and fire-impacted ecosystems. The partnering agencies include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and five bureaus in the U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Geological Survey.
- For further background on the JFSP, those considering submitting proposals are encouraged to visit our website at www.firescience.gov.
- C. Program/Project Objective:** The U.S. Congress directed the Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service to develop a Joint Fire Science Program and Plan to prioritize and provide sound scientific studies to support land management agencies. Current priorities are identified as task statements in this Request for Applications (RFA).
- D. Statement of Joint Objectives/Project Management Plan:** The JFSP Governing Board and Program Manager will establish an oversight relationship with the Principal Investigator and Federal Cooperator on each funded project. Projects will be required, at a minimum, to provide a written progress report annually.
- E. Period of Project:** The JFSP Governing Board anticipates that individual projects will be accomplished within 6 months.

SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION

- A. Expected Number of Awards:** Approximately 25-30
- B. Estimated Total Program Funding:** Approximately \$8,000,000 - \$10,000,000
- C. Award Ceiling:** None
- D. Assistance Instrument:** To be determined at a later date by the JFSP.

SECTION III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

- A. Eligible Applicants:** The JFSP encourages proposals from all interested parties. However, if a federal agency is requesting funding, or if the work is being completed through a private business, or has international involvement, then you must have a Federal Cooperator and funding will go through the federal cooperating agency. If the Federal Cooperator is from the Forest Service they must be from a Forest Service research station.

Proposals that do not require a Federal Cooperator will be funded directly by an award document (e.g. a cooperative agreement) between JFSP and the PI institution and will be required to respond to a second posting on grants.gov. **NOTE:** This is a change from business practices in prior years.

Upon receipt of a fully executed award document, the institution receiving funds from JFSP will be responsible for all sub-award transactions to cooperators or contractors related to the

project. The end date for all sub-awards must match the end date in the original funding award document.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching: This program has no matching requirements.

SECTION IV. APPLICATION and SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. Proposal Submission and Agency Contact

Your proposal must be submitted by 5:00 pm MST November 19, 2010, using the electronic submission process provided on the JFSP website www.firescience.gov. Proposals should not be submitted in Grants.gov. There will be no exceptions to this closing date and time.

All proposals must meet all requirements in Section D (Proposal Application Requirements). Proposals that do not meet all requirements in this section will not be considered for funding.

Proposals must be submitted in the appropriate task statement being addressed. The proposal will be reviewed and its merits judged in the context of this one task statement only.

Questions should be directed to:

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B. Task Statement

1. Regional Science Exchange Consortia

The Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) is soliciting pre-proposals to support new regional consortia of fire science providers and managers to enhance fire science exchange and adoption. New consortia will be part of an existing national network of regional consortia. The intent of this solicitation is to support initial planning and assessment of management needs for regions not currently part of this network, as shown by the following map:



Please see the JFSP website (www.firescience.gov) for further information about the regional consortia network.

Pre-proposals submitted in response to this announcement are due on the same time schedule as other JFSP RFAs currently open (November 19, 2010), and can include requests for funding during the planning phase. **Pre-proposal reviews and decisions will be made on an expedited schedule and decisions will be announced by January 28, 2011. Investigators on selected pre-proposals will then have until September 30, 2011 to submit final proposals that detail plans for a two-year operating period.** Every attempt will be made to expedite transfer of funds for use during the planning phase, but investigators should expect 6-12 weeks after funding notification before funds are available. **Final funding decisions will be made in October or early November of 2011**, and funds for selected final proposals will be made available as soon as possible thereafter.

Proposals submitted in response to the current solicitation must include information regarding a statement of need, geographic region, consortium partners, end-user communities, existing science delivery partnerships, end-user interactions, intended focus, program effectiveness, and budget. Proposals should also describe how end-user communities will be engaged to determine their information needs and priorities. See the template and format overview on the JFSP website for more information.

Funds provided to successful pre-proposals are to support planning necessary for development of full proposals, especially to conduct an assessment of management needs. Successful pre-proposals and proposals will show a clear intent and mechanisms where management needs drive the design and operation of consortia. The expected product from funded pre-proposals is a full proposal for a two-year plan of activities and products that contribute to the objectives listed below. Plans for this two-year period will be documented in the form of a proposal to JFSP that includes specific activities to be implemented by the consortium. These follow-up

proposals must be submitted to JFSP via the JFSP website by September 30, 2011. A specific template and evaluation criteria for these proposals will be provided to Principal Investigators of funded pre-proposals. Funding provided to investigators of selected pre-proposals through the current solicitation does not guarantee further funding of full proposals.

Funding may be extended following the two-year initial implementation period, subject to an evaluation of accomplishments and approval of a new operating plan by JFSP.

Background

An often-heard phrase is “use the best available science”. But managers often don’t know what information is already available nor the quality and applicability of that research to their management plans and projects. Another problem is the research may not be integrated in a context meaningful to management. And while the research may be of the highest quality and peer-reviewed, demonstration of science findings in the field is often lacking.

Everett M. Rogers, author of **Diffusion of Innovations** (Free Press-Simon & Schuster, 2003) states, “Getting a new idea adopted, even when it has obvious advantages, is difficult. Many innovations require a lengthy period of many years from the time when they become available to the time when they are widely adopted. Therefore, a common problem for many individuals and organizations is how to speed up the rate of diffusion of an innovation”.

The Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) seeks to accelerate the awareness, understanding, and adoption of wildland fire science information by federal, tribal, state, local, and private stakeholders within identified regions. Our vision is a national network of regional consortia comprised of interested management and science stakeholders working together to tailor and actively demonstrate existing information to benefit management of a large ecologically similar region.

The JFSP Governing Board seeks proposals to form regional consortia focused on the goal of enhancing fire science delivery and adoption. This proposal solicitation identifies six key objectives and describes example activities that could contribute to each objective. Proposals are not required to address all of these objectives, but are encouraged to address as many as can be effectively managed, or suggest additional objectives identified through interactions with practitioners and managers.

Objectives and example activities

1. Dissemination of information and building relationships

It is essential that relationships be fostered between scientists, practitioners, and managers. A critical need is for regular, consistent, and timely dissemination of credible information tailored for the regional audience. This objective is central to building visibility, trust, and dialog among stakeholders in a region. The JFSP encourages the following activities:

- Periodic alerts or newsletters
- Publish and disseminate publications to all stakeholders
- Develop, promote, and manage regional communities of practice to support peer-to-peer networking and knowledge exchange
- Develop and manage a regional, web-based NEPA aid that allows fuels and resource planners to quickly access relevant research results

2. Listing and describing existing research and synthesis information

Managers often are not aware of existing research, and research is often not conducted or presented in a form where practical management implications are obvious. The following activities could support this objective:

- Develop and maintain a regional, quick-reference web catalog of existing fire and fuels research results
- Develop and maintain a regional, geo-spatial web catalog of new and ongoing research projects
- Develop regional specific information in the Fire Effects Information System database

3. Methods to assess the quality and applicability of research

While it is important to collect and display existing information and research in progress, managers also need to understand the quality and strength of available evidence relevant to specific management questions. The JFSP is interested in further development of systematic evidence reviews that address important regional fire and fuels management questions.

4. Demonstrating research on the ground

The JFSP Governing Board believes that demonstrating application of research discoveries in the field is essential to the rapid understanding and adoption of wildland fire science information. These activities could support this objective:

- Develop and conduct regional roadshows and field discussions to showcase recent fire research findings, demonstrate innovative practices, or highlight a fire research need
- Develop and manage a network of regional demonstration areas that highlight application of recent research findings

5. Adaptive management

The JFSP is interested in funding place-based adaptive management partnerships that promote adoption of fire science findings by fire, fuel, and land managers. The goal is to support a program of adaptive management activities in a specific place executed by a sustained science-management partnership. These activities could take any of the following forms, and are intended to be implemented as a coherent program rather than as unconnected, individual activities:

- Innovative project and/or landscape planning processes that illustrate application of recent fire science findings
- Application of innovative practices based on new science findings
- Monitoring project effectiveness and effects
- Management experiments implemented through ongoing fire and fuels management programs
- Outreach efforts to share results through field tours, workshops, publications, websites, or other suitable means

6. New research, synthesis, or validation needs

Each consortium should develop mechanisms where stakeholders can provide input about future fire and fuels research needs to the JFSP Governing Board. These priorities can then be considered for new research funding in support of the regional consortia. Regional consortia could develop and conduct stakeholder roundtables to identify regional fire and fuels research needs, or identify specific questions and topics that might be included in systematic evidence reviews.

C. Budget and Funding Policy

1. Federal Cooperator

Funding will be distributed from the JFSP to either the PI institution or the Federal Cooperating agency. The receiving institution will be responsible for any sub-awards to transfer funds to cooperating institutions. The JFSP will NOT issue funding to more than one institution on a proposal. If the Federal Cooperator is from the Forest Service they must be from a Forest Service research station.

If the PI for your project is a university or non-profit organization and no funds are being requested by a cooperating federal agency, the proposal will be funded through a cooperative agreement. Proposals selected for funding that do not require a Federal Cooperator will be required to respond to a second posting on grants.gov and will need to submit the necessary paperwork prior to receiving funding.

All selected awardees must be prepared to provide a valid Dun & Bradstreet Number (D&B). You can reactivate or obtain this at <http://www.dnb.com> or by calling 800-333-0505. There is a Federal Agency link on the Central Contractor Registration System (CCR) at <http://www.ccr.gov>.

2. Indirect costs

The JFSP Governing Board recognizes the need of agencies and organizations participating in the program to recover reasonable indirect costs. However, cost effectiveness of the individual projects is a determining factor in the final selection process. Indirect rates for JFSP proposals are limited to a maximum of twenty (20) percent of the direct costs. The maximum indirect rate that a federal agency may charge for pass-through costs is ten (10) percent. Proposal with indirect rates higher than (20) percent will not be considered. Proposal funded through a Federal Cooperator must reflect either the prevailing indirect rate for the cooperating federal agency or the JFSP maximum limit of (20) percent, whichever is less.

3. SBIR costs

Certain proposals may be required to pay a percentage of the project's costs into the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program. Proposals where the funds are transferred to a Forest Service institution and subsequently award a portion of the total budget to a non-federal entity through a sub-agreement or sub-contract may be required to pay 2.5% of the total funds awarded externally to the SBIR program. Check with your budget contact to determine if this applies to your proposal.

4. Salary policy

Normally, salaries of permanent full-time federal employees are expected to be provided by their agencies. This is also true of university faculty on 12-month tenure-track appointments. These employees are already fully funded by their institutions. However, the Governing Board recognizes there can be unique situations where the Governing Board may agree to fund the salary of permanent employees.

A detailed justification for funding the salary of permanent employees must be included in the proposal to be considered for funding. The justification should indicate all sources of funding, including other pending projects and associated full time equivalent (FTE) for the permanent

position for which salary funding is requested. The justification must be by the supervisor of the individual requesting salary.

You must use the format found in Attachment 2 in the database for the certification. In addition, permanent employee salary costs must be explicitly identified in the project budget. The Governing Board requires no special justification (other than a brief description of the need for the position in the budget justification section of the proposal) for funding part-time, temporary, term employees, post-doctoral employees, graduate, or undergraduate students. Stipends are normally funded, but tuition fees will not be funded.

D. Proposal Application Requirements

Proposals must meet all of the following requirements to be considered. Incomplete proposals will not be considered. There will be no exceptions to either the submission deadline or other submission requirements. If you have questions about these requirements, please contact the JFSP Program Office for clarification (Becky Jenison, 208.387.5958; John Cissel, 208.387.5349).

1. Proposal Submission – Proposals must be submitted electronically via the JFSP website (www.firescience.gov). Proposals should not be submitted in Grants.gov. Hard copy or facsimile proposals will not be accepted.

- Proposers must have a login and password to access the JFSP database to submit a proposal. Requests for access will be processed in approximately 24 hours.
- Only the PI can submit the proposal.
- Proposals can be saved in the JFSP system and submitted later if prior to the closing date and time. Submitted proposals can be reverted back to final draft by the PI prior to the closing date. If you revert a proposal back to draft you must resubmit the proposal before the closing date and time.
- The JFSP proposal submittal system will not allow proposals to be submitted after the closing date and time.

2. Contacts – Proposals must have the following contacts (see “Definitions”) assigned to a proposal to be submitted:

- Principal Investigator (only one Principal Investigator can be assigned)
 - PI institution will receive funding from JFSP and will be responsible for processing sub-awards to cooperating institutions, unless a federal cooperating agency is receiving funds.
- Federal Cooperator
 - JFSP proposals no longer require a Federal Cooperator if the PI is from a University or a non-profit organization. However, if a federal agency is requesting funding, or if the work is being completed through a private business, or has international involvement, then you must have a Federal Cooperator and funding will go through the federal cooperating agency. If the Federal Cooperator is from the Forest Service they must be from a Forest Service research station.
 - It is the PI’s responsibility to ensure a Federal Cooperator is listed as a contact on the contacts tab, if necessary.
- Budget contact

- Budget contact must be from the institution receiving funds from JFSP. If a federal agency is requesting funds the budget contact must be from the federal cooperating agency. This person is responsible for ensuring the budget is correct prior to proposal being submitted and is willing to facilitate the transfer of funds, if necessary.
- Grants and agreements contact
 - Grants and agreements contact must be from the institution receiving funding from JFSP. If a federal agency is requesting funds the grants and agreements contact must be from the federal cooperating agency. This person must be willing to facilitate the receipt of funds and execution of any sub-agreements or contracts necessary if your proposal is funded.
- All contacts must be entered on the contacts tab in the JFSP database by the Principal Investigator. Contacts must be registered and have a profile in the system to be added as a contact. If you have registered in the past you will still be in the system. New profiles may take up to 24 hours to be created.
- It is the responsibility of the individual contacts to ensure that the contact information in the JFSP electronic submission system is correct, including affiliation, e-mail, phone number and address.
- Co-PIs and collaborators are not required on a proposal; however, if they are involved with a proposal they must be entered on the contacts tab.

3. Confirmation Page – When you submit your proposal you will receive a confirmation page. We highly recommend that you save or print this page for your records. You should receive an e-mail from the JFSP Program Office letting you know that your proposal has either been forwarded for review, or rejected for not meeting administrative requirements. If you do not receive this e-mail by December 17, 2010 you should fax or e-mail your confirmation to Becky Jenison at Becky_Jenison@blm.gov or Fax: 208-387-5960 as soon as possible. **If you do not receive this confirmation page you have not submitted your proposal correctly.**

4. Attachments – All required documents must be attached before the proposal is submitted. Attachments over the page limit cannot be submitted. Extra graphs and text are not permitted and will not be reviewed.

Required attachments

- Attachment 1 – Details tab
 - The body of the proposal (must use required template)
- Attachment 2 – Details tab
 - C.V.s of the PI (2 page maximum) and co-PIs (1 page maximum)
 - Letter(s) of support (optional)
 - Salary justification (may be required, see below)
- Attachment 3 – Budget tab
 - Budget format (must use required template)

5. Budget – Budget summary numbers must be input in the JFSP database on the budget tab and the budget detail must be attached the spreadsheet template provided. Proposals cannot be submitted without completing these required fields. **NOTE:** This is a change from prior year business practices.

Budgets must be reviewed by your budget contact to ensure all costs have been included and the budget is correct. JFSP will not provide additional funds to cover errors discovered after the proposal submission deadline.

6. Task Statement – Proposals that do not clearly and directly meet the intent of the task statement selected will not be considered for funding. Please make sure you are submitting your proposal to the correct task statement in the system.

7. Format – Proposals not following the required template will not be considered. Proposals must use an 11 point font or larger. Additional guidance is in the proposal instruction document.

8. Page Limits – Proposals (Attachment 1 on the details tab) exceeding the page limit cannot be submitted. Page limits may vary by task statement; check the page limit in the JFSP database for each specific task statement.

9. Project Location - Project location fields must be completed on the location tab for a proposal to be successfully submitted. Instructions are listed on the project location tab.

10. Signatures – Handwritten signatures are no longer required. When Principal Investigators (PIs) submit proposals they will be prompted to input their password. By typing in the password PIs certify that “All contacts on this proposal have reviewed the proposal and understand what their role requires. As the Principal Investigator I am certifying that the budget contact and grants and agreements contact have reviewed the budget and are prepared to receive funds from JFSP and execute sub-agreements or contracts if the proposal is funded.”

11. Indirect Costs – JFSP will not consider proposals asking for more than 20% indirect costs and/or more than 10% pass-through costs.

12. In-kind Contributions – JFSP does not have a standard ratio or minimum requirement for in-kind contributions. However, in-kind contributions are an evaluation factor.

13. Support Letters – Support letters are encouraged, but not required. Support letters are useful if they show understanding of the proposed work and the author articulates how the work will benefit them. Support letters that appear to be ghost-written by the PI or are form letters are much less useful. If submitted, letters must be attached as part of Attachment 2. Support letters sent by hard copy or email directly to JFSP will not be considered.

14. Salary Justifications - Salary justifications are only required if the proposal is requesting funds for salary of permanent or tenured employees for a portion of the year normally covered by permanent or tenured funding. If required, salary justifications must contain all of the requested information and be signed electronically by the supervisor of the individual requesting salary coverage. Salary justifications must be attached as part of Attachment 2.

15. Past-due Projects – No proposals will be considered if the work will include a PI or Co-PI who is a PI or Co-PI on a JFSP project that is past due as of the closing date of this announcement. See the JFSP website for the complete JFSP past due and extension request policy.

SECTION V. APPLICATION REVIEW and EVALUATION INFORMATION

Review Overview

Proposals will be reviewed in two stages:

1. JFSP Program Office – Administrative requirements and task statement intent
2. Governing Board – Proposal merit and support

Review Criteria

Geographic Region

- Is the geographic region to be served clearly articulated?
- Does proposed area have similar ecological, environmental, climatic, and cultural attributes and drivers at a broad scale?
- Have all relevant institutions been included in coordination at this scale?
- Does the proposed geographic region overlap well with research and management history?

Consortium partners

- Is there a clear description of the partner organizations and their science delivery capabilities?
- What are the science delivery skills and experience of the investigators?
- Will the work be accomplished by a collaborative, multi-institution team?
- How does this proposal build on existing partnerships?

End-user communities

- Are the intended end users clearly described?
- How were end users consulted?
- Is there evidence that end-user communities see a need for this proposal?
- Are end-users supportive of this proposal, e.g., letters of support, in-kind contributions, participation as an investigator?

Program effectiveness

- Are intended activities clearly described?
- Do the intended activities meet JFSP task statement objectives?
- Are there innovative approaches to science delivery planned?
- Is there a clear methodology for evaluating program effectiveness?

SECTION VI. DEFINITIONS

Request for Applications (RFA): Joint Fire Science Program method of requesting project proposals. The RFA includes task statements for which proposals are sought, instructions for proposal submission, and related information.

Principal Investigator (PI): The individual identified in a proposal who is the research lead for the project. This individual is responsible for coordinating all research related activities and will be the primary science contact for the project. In addition the PI is responsible for communicating and coordinating with Co-PIs and others on the research team. The PI is responsible to JFSP for completion of the project.

Federal Cooperator: Federal Cooperator is only required on a proposal if a federal institution is requesting funding in a proposal, or if the work is being completed through a private business, or has international involvement. This individual **must be a federal employee** and is responsible for coordinating with the PI, the grants and agreements contact, and the budget contact on administrative activities for this project. The Federal Cooperator will be one of the primary contacts for the project and should stay informed and involved in project activities. If the Federal Cooperator is from the Forest Service they must be from a Forest Service research station.

Budget Contact: Budget person from the institution receiving funds from JFSP that is responsible for ensuring budget detail is correct and agrees to receive funds if a proposal is selected for funding. If a federal agency is requesting funds the budget contact must be from the federal cooperating agency.

Grants and Agreements Contact: Person from institution receiving funds from JFSP that is responsible for facilitating the receipt of funds and the execution of any agreements or contracts necessary for a proposal if it is selected for funding. If a federal agency is requesting funds the grants and agreements contact must be from the federal cooperating agency.

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI): The individual(s) identified in a proposal who will work with the research lead on the project and makes a substantial contribution to the project. The Co-PI is responsible for communicating and coordinating with the PI.

Indirect Costs: Those costs that are a percentage of the total cost used to pay for overhead/administrative costs attributable to a specific research project. Examples include the cost of operations and maintenance such as janitorial, phone, and clerical services. The Joint Fire Science Program recognizes two types of indirect costs: 1) “in-house” costs incurred by the agency, institution, or unit completing the research; and 2) “pass-through” costs associated with sub-awarding project funds to another agency, institution, or entity for the purpose of completing research or science delivery.

Joint Fire Science Program Governing Board: An appointed, 10-person Board representing the JFSP partnering agencies. The Board provides strategic direction and oversight to JFSP, identifies important research questions, selects proposals for funding, supervises the JFSP Program Manager, and conducts related business.

Science Delivery and Application: The transfer of information, materials, models and other research deliverables to end users, along with adequate information and training to apply the

deliverables. Examples of active methods include workshops, training sessions, guided field tours, conferences, meetings, and symposia. Examples of passive methods include published papers and websites. A combination of active and passive methods is preferred.

Task Statement: A specific area of interest, identified in the RFA, for which proposed project applications are sought.