



**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-RFA012-0003
Graduate Research Innovation (GRIN) Award (1 Task Statement)**

**CFDA No. 15.232
ISSUE DATE: September 26, 2011**

JFSP Request for Applications (RFA) 2012-3

CLOSING DATE & TIME

November 18, 2011 5:00 p.m. MST

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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 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 generally anticipates that individual projects can be accomplished within two years or less.

SECTION II. AWARD INFORMATION

- A. Expected Number of Awards:** Approximately 3-5
- B. Estimated Total Program Funding:** Approximately \$100,000
- C. Award Ceiling:** \$25,000
- 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.
- B. Funding Cooperator:** Funds will be awarded through a federal agency, a university, or a non-governmental organization (NGO). Funds will go to the PI's institution. Proposals with federal funds requested that do not have a federal PI must list a federal funding cooperator. Similarly, proposals with a university or NGO PI that do not include funding for federal agencies do not need a funding cooperator and funds will route through the PI's institution.

All proposals with a PI from other organizations, e.g., states or private business, or have any international funding, must also identify a funding cooperator to receive and process the funds. If the funding cooperator is from the Forest Service, the cooperator must be from a Forest Service research station. The grant contact and budget contact must be from the funding cooperator's institution.

Proposals where the PI or funding cooperator is an employee of a university or NGO will be funded directly by an award document (e.g., a cooperative agreement) between JFSP and the PI's institution. The institution will be required to respond to a second non-competitive posting on grants.gov to initiate funding.

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 and indirect costs for all sub-awards must match the end date in the original funding award document.

All selected awardees must 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>.

C. 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 18, 2011, 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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Joint Fire Science Program
National Interagency Fire Center
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B. Task Statement

1. Graduate Research Innovation (GRIN) Award

In partnership with the Association for Fire Ecology, the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) invites current MS and PhD graduate students in the fields of wildland fire and related human dimensions and ecological sciences to apply for a Graduate Research Innovation (GRIN) award. JFSP recognizes that graduate students of today are the managers, scientists, and leaders of tomorrow. These awards allow graduate students to conduct research that will supplement and enhance the quality, scope, or applicability of their thesis or dissertation, and to build skills needed for independent inquiry.

Proposals must describe new, unfunded work that extends ongoing or planned research that is the subject of a thesis or dissertation that has been approved by the graduate student's advisory committee.

Proposals must be directly related to the mission and goals of JFSP to be considered. Applicants are encouraged to search the JFSP website (www.firescience.gov) to learn more about the scope of JFSP activities. Proposals must directly address one of the following topics:

- Climate change and fire (e.g., fire behavior, fire effects, fire regime)
- Fuel management effectiveness and effects (e.g., treatment longevity, T&E or invasive species, carbon balance, pile burning, mastication treatments, WUI issues)
- Smoke or emissions assessments
- Social issues and fire (e.g., community preparation, transfer and use of science, public perceptions)

Proposals on other topics will not be reviewed.

Proposals must be written by the student and must be reviewed and submitted by the student's advisor, who acts as the formal Principal Investigator (PI) for the project. **A letter of recommendation from the student's advisor is required, and must indicate that student's thesis/dissertation topic has been approved by the student's advisory committee.** If the student can not complete the project, the student's advisor (project PI) must return unspent funds to JFSP. The student must be listed as a Student Investigator on the proposal.

Funding can be used to conduct a significant field or laboratory data collection campaign; a comprehensive synthesis, modeling, or data analysis; or to develop an appropriate application or tool for fire and fuels managers. Appropriate budget items include: graduate student stipend, field or laboratory assistance, research equipment or materials, and travel. Each award is capped at \$25,000, including university indirect costs as limited in the proposal instructions.

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of their scientific merit, the credentials of the applicant, the extent to which the proposed work extends or enhances an approved thesis or dissertation, and the relevance of the research to JFSP goals. Review may be conducted in two stages. If so, applicants may not receive detailed review comments if their proposal is not forwarded for a second-stage review.

Recipients of the GRIN award are expected to produce at least one peer-reviewed publication or a management tool based on the funded project. Awardees are expected to present their work at one regional, national, or international fire conference or workshop. The awardee is also expected to write a final report for the JFSP prior to the project end date. These are one-time awards, and no supplemental funds will be granted.

C. Budget and Funding Policy

1. Funding Cooperator

Proposals may require a funding cooperator. See Section III.B above.

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 funding cooperating institution may charge for pass-through costs is ten (10) percent. Proposal with indirect rates higher than (20) percent will not be considered. Proposals funded through a federal funding 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 signed by the supervisor of the individual requesting salary.

You must use the format found on the attachments tab 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. Additional 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 JFSP database login and password 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 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 may be required to have the following contacts (see “Definitions”) assigned to a proposal:

- Principal Investigator (required, 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.
- Funding Cooperator (may be required, see Section III.B. funding cooperator)
 - It is the PI’s responsibility to ensure a funding cooperator is listed as a contact on the contacts tab, if necessary.
- Budget Contact (required)
 - Budget contact must be from the institution receiving funds from JFSP. This person is responsible for ensuring the budget is correct prior to proposal being submitted and is able to facilitate the transfer of funds, if necessary.
- Grants and Agreements Contact (required)
 - Grants and agreements contact must be from the institution receiving funding from JFSP. This person must be able to facilitate the receipt of funds and execution of any sub-agreements or contracts necessary if your proposal is funded.
- Co-PIs and Collaborators (optional)
 - If the proposal includes Co-PI(s) or collaborator(s) they must be entered on the contacts tab.
- 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 current and correct, including affiliation, e-mail, phone number and address.

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 16, 2011 you should fax or e-mail your confirmation to Becky Jenison at bjenison@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 and must use the required templates. Attachments over the page limit cannot be submitted. Extra graphs and text are not permitted and will not be reviewed.

Required attachments for all proposals

- Proposal body

- C.V.s (PI: two- page maximum, Co-PI(s): one- page maximum)
- Budget spreadsheet (Excel spreadsheet, includes a separate worksheet for each institution requesting funding)
- Budget narrative (bullet statements explaining specific budget assumptions and costs)

Additional attachments

- Letter(s) of support (optional, but recommended)
- Salary justification (may be required, see below)
- Specific to a task statement (check the applicable task statement for additional requirements)

5. Budget – Budget summary numbers must be input in the JFSP database on the budget tab. The budget detail must be attached on the attachments tab using the spreadsheet template provided. Proposals cannot be submitted without completing these required fields and attachments.

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 Intent – 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 for the correct task statement.

7. Format – Proposals not following the required template will not be considered. Proposals must use an 11 point font or larger. Additional guidance is included in the beginning of each template.

8. Page Limits – Attachments exceeding the page limit cannot be submitted. Page limits may vary by task statement and attachment; check the page limit in the template and 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 not required. When Principal Investigators (PIs) submit proposals they will be prompted to input their password. By typing in the password and submitting a proposal PIs are certifying that all contacts on the proposal have reviewed the proposal and understand what their role requires.

11. Indirect Costs – JFSP will not consider proposals asking for more than 20% indirect costs and/or more than 10% pass-through costs. Pass-through costs are for administrative costs for the PI or funding cooperator institution to administer sub-agreements. These same indirect rate caps will be applicable to proposals funded through cooperative agreements that require a second posting on Grants.gov.

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 on the attachments tab. 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. 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 on the attachments tab.

15. Past-Due Projects – The past-due policy does not apply to this RFA.

SECTION V. APPLICATION REVIEW AND EVALUATION INFORMATION

Overview

Proposals will be reviewed in stages:

1. JFSP Program Office – Administrative requirements and task statement intent
2. Peer Review – Relevancy, technical merit, products, and feasibility. Note: peer review may be conducted in two stages. If so, applicants may not receive detailed review comments if their proposal is not forwarded for a second-stage review.
3. Governing Board Review – Funding decisions
4. Statistical Review (optional) – Adequacy of study design and analysis methods

Review Criteria

Student Qualifications

- Academic (Note: undergraduate and graduate GPA must be on the student's C.V.)
- Work experience
- Research experience

Scientific Merit

- Potential contribution to scientific understanding
- Merit of hypothesis, question, or objective
- Well described and appropriate methods
- Creativity

Management Relevance

- Utility of results to managers
- Communication with managers

Linkage to Ongoing or Planned Thesis or Dissertation

- Ongoing or planned thesis or dissertation clearly described
- Proposed work extends and enhances thesis/dissertation

Feasibility

- Administrative adequacy
 - Budget
 - Skills and qualifications
 - Probability of success
 - Barriers
 - NEPA
- Collaboration
 - Manager/scientist and scientist/scientist partnerships
 - Local management commitment

SECTION VI. DEFINITIONS

Request for Applications (RFA): The official label for the 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.

Funding Cooperator: The funding cooperator receives from funds from JFSP and is responsible for distributing funds to other cooperators. A funding cooperator is only required if the PI is non-federal and a federal institution is requesting funding, if the work is being completed through a private business, or has international funding. The funding cooperator is responsible for coordinating with the PI, the grants and agreements contact, and the budget contact on administrative activities for this project. The funding cooperator will be one of the primary contacts for the project and should stay informed and involved in project activities.

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. Co-PIs are 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 Exchange and Application: The exchange 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. Collaboration with the regional JFSP Knowledge Exchange Consortia is recommended.

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