



**LEOPOLD CENTER  
FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE**

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LEOPOLD CENTER

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## **Request for pre-proposals (RFP) – Summer 2009**

The Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture was established by the Iowa Legislature as part of the Iowa Groundwater Protection Act of 1987. Its legislatively mandated *mission* is to identify and reduce negative environmental and socio-economic impacts of agricultural practices, contribute to the development of profitable farming systems that conserve natural resources, and cooperate with Iowa State University Extension to inform the public of new findings.

The Center's work is organized in three initiative areas—*ecology, marketing and food systems, and policy*—each aimed at enhancing the condition and viability of Iowa's natural resources in varying, yet integrated ways. Each initiative has a separate section in this RFP.

### **Important information about the RFP process**

**Who may submit a pre-proposal?** Investigators representing any *Iowa* nonprofit organization/agency and/or educational institution (such as soil and water conservation districts, schools and colleges, and regional development groups). The Center strongly encourages the involvement and collaboration of farmers, landowners, and farm-based businesses in the pre-proposal process.

Please refer to each initiative's RFP section to find the best fit for your pre-proposal, and follow these general directions. Prepare a **one- or two-page concept paper** containing these elements:

- Separate **cover page** with project title, complete contact information for the principal investigator including mailing address, phone number and email address, dollar request by year, and the initiative area—ecology, marketing and food systems, or policy—that best fits your pre-proposal. Do not count the cover page or letters of support as part of your page total.
- **Objectives**—What do you want to achieve? Must be well defined and measurable.
- **Strategies**—What activities will help you achieve project objectives? Describe by objective.
- **Focus areas**—How does your pre-proposal fit within one or more focus areas for one of the initiatives?

- **Outcomes**—What will happen in Iowa during the short and intermediate term if you achieve your objectives?
- **Outreach**—How (and with whom) will you share project results?
- **Evaluation**—How will you determine if you have achieved your objectives?
- **Budget** estimate and brief financial explanation by calendar year, starting February 1, 2010. Funding may be for multiple years, depending on initiative or special call area.
  - Estimate total expenses and itemize by: Salary and Wages; Equipment/Supplies/Materials; Travel; Consultants; and Other.
  - Which of the following best describes your estimated budget? Does this change per year of your request?
    - \_ LCSA will provide all funding.
    - \_ LCSA funds are a start, but work is contingent on other funds to meet all desired outcomes.
    - \_ LCSA funds are filling a gap in ongoing work sponsored by other funding.
    - \_ LCSA funds will support completing part of the work even if funds from other sources are not received.

**How to submit?** An electronic copy (sent via e-mail or delivered on a CD) *or* one hard copy must be received by **5:00 p.m., Wednesday, August 19, 2009**. No faxes, please. Electronic version should be a .doc or .txt file or contained within the body of the e-mail. Send your copy to the appropriate contact person listed in the RFP.

**What happens after submission?** An invitation to submit a full proposal will be based upon review of all pre-proposals by the Leopold Center Advisory Board and staff. Pre-proposals will be screened for adherence to recommendations found in this RFP as well as economic, environmental, and community/social sustainability. The Center will notify all applicants in late September 2009 as to whether they will be invited to submit a full proposal. Full proposals will be due in early November, and funding decisions made by mid-January 2010.

## **Policy Initiative** **(Contact: Jerry DeWitt)**

### **Policy Initiative Objectives:**

- Link potential local, state, or regional policies to enhanced sustainability of natural resources.
- Provide basic research or benchmark data analysis needed to help assess or implement possible new local or state policies and alternatives for Iowa.

### **Focus areas for Policy Initiative Summer 2009 RFP:**

- Research to identify policies that ease barriers to sustainability at various scales of farm operations.
- Research on effectiveness of existing land use policies or on what policies are needed for local and regional governments to encourage flood mitigation practices or improvements in land preservation and conservation on a watershed basis.
- Local or regional policy that encourages or enhances energy conservation and/or use of renewable energy in agricultural food, feed and fiber systems.

### *Some examples of local or state policy research ideas:*

- Assess the economic impacts of alternative or integrated production systems.
- Look at policies that provide conservation and/or marketing incentives that meet sustainability criteria.
- Assess the benefits to the (local) community and society of responsible natural resource stewardship.
- Explore policy options to encourage innovations and/or alternatives in agricultural energy production and use.
- Survey (or assess costs of) potential land use policies or practices that would mitigate effects of unprecedented climate events on a watershed basis.
- Examine policy options that promote the sustainable production of foods offering healthier choices for consumers.
- Weigh the benefits of regulatory versus incentive-based options for adoption of conservation or water quality practices.

*Please note:* The Center does not take positions on or advocate for specific legislation. It is our expectation that work in this area will help inform policy makers and stimulate creative thinking about potential policies and the impacts and consequences of those policies.

**Possible outcomes for research:**

Funded projects will deliver a broad range of measurable outcomes including (but not limited to):

- Data that will help policymakers formulate state, local, or regional agricultural policy measures.
- Analyses that inform and educate policymakers and the public about the impacts of policies within the community, area, or state.
- Background and analysis *both* are provided on a specific policy option.
- Adoption of new state or local policies informed by Leopold Center research.

**Important considerations:**

▶ Please articulate how your proposed work will address one or more of the objectives listed in this RFP.

▶ Suggested budget request terms are one to two years. Please contact the initiative leader if you are considering something different.

▶ Emphasis will be placed on pre-proposals with multiple benefits and clearly articulated and measurable outcomes; meaning, there should be at least one, and hopefully more than one, qualitative or quantitative impact that will arise from your project work.

**Other pre-proposal ideas?**

Other innovative policy ideas not fitting the specific focus areas will be considered. It is highly recommended, however, that you contact the Policy Initiative program leader *prior* to submitting the pre-proposal to discuss any ideas that are outside the area of interest topics in this RFP.

**Questions about your Policy pre-proposal?**

Contact: Jerry DeWitt, Director and Policy Program Leader

Phone: 515-294-3711

E-mail: [jdewitt@iastate.edu](mailto:jdewitt@iastate.edu), subject line: LCSA 2009 RFP - Policy