

Sample Narrative Format

RFA: Crop Insurance Education and Information Programs for Farmers and Ranchers in Targeted States

The narrative portion of your application provides you with the opportunity to describe your project in detail to the review panel. The project you describe in the narrative must be designed to help us, the Risk Management Agency (RMA), accomplish the purposes of the “Crop Insurance Education and Information Programs for Farmers and Ranchers in Targeted States”, or the “Targeted States Program” for short. In the narrative, you will describe your plan to reach farmers and ranchers in one of the Targeted States. A well-crafted narrative is important because:

- It will assist the review panel in understanding the merits of your project,
- It will be the basis for a “Statement of Work” section of a cooperative agreement with RMA, if your project receives funding, and
- It will help any partners you are working with understand their specific roles in the project.

We have instructed the panel members to examine each application with an eye on the results and benefits to farmers and ranchers that will likely be achieved if the project is funded, according to the evaluation criteria that are established in the *Federal Register* notice. To that end, we have asked the panel to disregard information in the narratives that does not directly contribute to an assessment of the application against the evaluation criteria. Therefore, providing extraneous commentary in a narrative will not benefit an application, regardless of how professionally polished or profound such commentary might be.

The only requirement for a narrative is that it be limited to ten single-sided pages, not including a title page. No set format for the narrative is required. However, it would help us if you provide a title page. The title page might include a brief 1-2 paragraph Executive Summary of your project proposal and any information that will help us in contacting you. You may also include an e-mail address that will help us in notifying you quickly when we receive your application. ***If you elect to include a title page for the narrative, it will NOT count as one of the ten narrative pages.***

The review panel that will examine your application will want to be able to match the information you provide in the narrative of your application with the evaluation criteria. We recommend that you refer often to the evaluation criteria in the *Federal Register* notice so that you have the criteria in mind as you construct your narrative. It would help the panel if you were to address each of the respective evaluation criteria directly. Therefore, we suggest that your narrative consists of five sections—one for each of the five criteria: “Management, Partnering, Goals and Objectives, Cost Effectiveness, and Delivery Plan.” The following suggestions for each of these sections may assist you further:

- **Management.** In this section you can introduce yourself to the review panel as the project leader along with the organization you represent and the Targeted State for which you are seeking funding. If you have assembled a project team, you might introduce the team members and briefly describe their experience. You may include a short resume from key project leaders in the appendix. It would also be helpful to touch on the following items:
 - Your relationship to farmers and ranchers in the Targeted State.
 - The organizational skills and other management resources you and your team will bring to the project.
 - Your experience in delivering programs to farmers, especially if the programs are educational or are related to risk management.

- **Partnering.** In this section you can describe your efforts in mobilizing partners across the Targeted State and the roles you expect these partners to play. You may document any commitments you have received from project partners by attaching copies of commitment letters as part of the appendix. Reviewers will be looking for you to describe the roles these partners will play in reaching and influencing local farmers and ranchers.

- **Goals and Objectives.** In this section you have the opportunity to specify those specific goals and milestones in your delivery plan that will ensure that the purpose of the Targeted States Program is achieved. It will be helpful for you to review the tasks that are listed for the program and then identify appropriate goals for each task that are measurable, realistic, have specific time frames for completion, and relate directly to the required activities and the Targeted States Program objectives.

- **Cost Effectiveness.** In this section, you can estimate the likely benefits to farmers and ranchers in the Targeted State from the project. Estimates of the number of farmers and ranchers reached through the program would be useful to reviewers as an initial “quantity” benchmark. In addition, the reviewers will be looking for information that will help them assess the “quality” of the educational experiences in the project. You might try to assess the quality of your educational activities by estimating the likelihood that participating farmers will take some positive risk management action that they would not take without the project. Such assessments are highly subjective, but are needed to compare different education programs. Together, information on the quantity and quality of educational experiences planned for a project provide an estimate of overall benefits. Likely project benefits, in turn, can be compared to project costs. Cost Effectiveness reflects the comparison of benefits to project costs. Reviewers will be looking for those projects with greater benefits relative to costs.

- **Program Delivery Plan.** In this section you can lay out the details of your plan for delivering crop insurance education and information to farmers and ranchers. Again, reviewers will be looking for those plans that are judged to be most effective in

reaching and influencing farmers and ranchers. In preparing this section, it would be useful to again refer to the specific, required tasks described in the *Federal Register* notice. The key tasks in the delivery plan you can describe in this section are:

- **Assemble a crop insurance curriculum for the State.** You can describe how you plan on examining existing instructional materials, identifying the gaps in existing materials, and developing new materials to fill existing gaps. In preparing this section, you might want to visit the Ag Risk Education Library web site, www.agrisk.umn.edu, to see the kinds of instructional materials that are currently available. By law, the Targeted States Program is to focus on crop insurance education and information. However, this focus includes the flexibility to inform certain small or new producers on topics such as the financial aspects of risk in agriculture and the importance of keeping accurate farm records so that those producers will be prepared to understand and use existing crop insurance tools. Also, certain producers need risk management education and information to be prepared to understand the kinds of insurance products that are envisioned in recent legislation. For instance, pilot insurance programs have been authorized for livestock, specialty crops, nursery, aquaculture, and other agricultural commodities not traditionally covered by crop insurance.
- **Develop and conduct a promotional program.** You can describe how you plan on using media, newsletters, publications, or other techniques to raise risk management awareness, inform producers of the availability of crop insurance tools, or promote the availability of educational opportunities to producers.
- **Deliver education and information to agribusiness professionals.** You can describe how you plan on identifying those agribusiness professionals in the Targeted State that have frequent opportunity to advise farmers. These professionals are in a position to use their opportunities with farmers to pass on the information they receive under this program. You can describe how you plan on using this method to reach farmers in the Targeted State.
- **Document all educational activities under this program.** You can describe what you plan on documenting, how you will collect this information, and how you plan on determining the success of the program, as indicated by your goals and objectives.