

## Sample (Written) Narrative

### Requests For Applications (RFA):

- 1. Commodity Partnerships for Risk Management Education (Commodity Partnerships program)**
- 2. Crop Insurance Education in Targeted States (Targeted States program)**

This sample narrative may be used for additional guidance in the preparation of an application in response to the RFA for two risk management education programs—Commodity Partnerships and Targeted States—that was published in the *Federal Register* on June 13, 2003, beginning on page 35363. **This sample narrative does not address all relevant requirements of the RFA and should be used only as supplemental guidance. Complete requirements can be found only in the RFA.**

The narrative portion of your application provides you the opportunity to describe your project in detail to the review panel. The project you describe in the narrative must be designed to accomplish the purposes of either the Commodity Partnerships or Targeted States programs. Although the two programs have a number of similarities, there are also some important differences. The Commodity Partnership program, for instance, allows education regarding financial management, crop insurance marketing contracts, and other existing and emerging risk management tools. But it requires an emphasis on the training of producers of “Priority Commodities”, which are defined in the RFA. The Targeted States program, on the other hand, seeks to reach producers of all commodities in the fifteen Targeted States, which are listed in the RFA, but restricts the training and informational activities to crop insurance. You should read the RFA carefully to understand the particular features of the program for which you wish to apply for funding and ensure that the narrative reflects these features.

In the narrative, you will describe your plan to reach farmers and ranchers in a specific geographical area designated within one of the two education programs. 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 partnership or 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.

The only requirement for a narrative is that it be limited to ten single-sided pages. No set format for the narrative is required. We strongly suggest that you number each page of the proposal.

Although not required, it would help if you provide a title page (see title page instructions) that includes a brief, 1-2 paragraph Executive summary of your application and any information that will help us in notifying you quickly. **If you elect to include a title page for the narrative, it will NOT count as one of the ten narrative pages.**

Although also not required, it would help if you provide your plan for delivery in a specific format that can become a statement of work for a partnership or cooperative agreement if your application is funded. A table format for the statement of work is provided as a separate file with this application kit. **If you elect to include a delivery plan (statement of work) in the suggested table format, it will NOT be included in the ten page limit.**

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 in addition to any introductory information, your narrative contain sections corresponding to each of the evaluation criteria: Project Management, Partnering, Delivery Plan, and Project Benefits. For certain applications a bonus criteria—drought mitigation—also applies. The following suggestions for each of these sections may assist you further:

- **Project Management.** In this section you can introduce yourself to the review panel as the project leader along with the organization you represent and the geographical area for which you are seeking funding. If you have already assembled a project team that would manage the project if it receives funding, 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 geographical area.
  - 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 geographical area 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.

- **Delivery Plan** 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 education 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. All agreements that result from the RFA will include statements of work that are prepared in a specific table format. Therefore, you are strongly encouraged to use this format to itemize the specific tasks of your delivery plan and attach it in the appendix of your application. The “Statement of Work” table format is provided as a separate file with this application kit. If you use this table format to provide the details of your delivery plan, you may attach it in full in the appendix and summarize it in the narrative. The key tasks you can describe in this section are:
  - ***Finalize the delivery plan.*** You can describe the steps you will take, if you receive funding for the project, to finalize the project’s details. Normally, this objective would be completed soon after a project receives funding.
  - ***Assemble instructional materials.*** You can describe the steps you will take to examine existing instructional materials, identify the gaps in existing materials, and develop new materials to fill existing gaps for the geographical area you intend to reach with the project. In preparing this section, you might want to visit the Ag Risk Education Library web site, [www.agrisk.umn.edu](http://www.agrisk.umn.edu), to see the kinds of instructional materials that are currently available. By law, the Commodity Partnership program can include education in the financial management, crop insurance, marketing contracts, and other existing and emerging risk management tools. On the other hand, the Targeted States program is to focus on crop insurance education and information.
  - ***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. For Commodity Partnerships, the promotional program can include the broader risk management scope identified in the RFA.
  - ***Deliver training and information to agricultural producers and agribusiness professionals.*** This portion of the delivery plan identifies the specific steps you will take to reach agricultural producers within the geographical area with education and information, including the methods you will employ.

- ***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.
  
- **Benefits.** 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. Reviewers will be looking for information that will help them link the estimates of farmers reached with the delivery plans. Most importantly, reviewers will want information to help them evaluate the quality of the educational experiences in the project—that is, the likelihood that participating farmers will take some positive action because of the project. Finally, reviewers will be looking for specific measurements you propose for determining the results of the project. These factors together constitute the benefits that the reviewers will evaluate.
  
- **Bonus—Drought Mitigation** (Does not apply to Targeted States program and certain areas under the Commodity Partnerships program.) This evaluation element applies to the Commodity Partnerships program only for the states of Montana, South Dakota, Arizona, Multi-state Area 1 (Utah, Nevada, Wyoming), New Mexico, Texas, Idaho, Oregon, Colorado, Louisiana, and Nebraska. If you are applying for funding under the Commodity Partnerships program for these states, then you should indicate the extent to which you will address the educational needs of agricultural producers who have been severely affected by drought, especially livestock and forage producers and those who use rangeland.