

# Extension Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program

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## Risk Management Education for Meat and Poultry Processing

### 2023 Request for Applications

Application Deadline: January 26, 2023



# WESTERN EXTENSION RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION CENTER

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITY TITLE: RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION FOR MEAT AND POULTRY PROCESSING COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM

#### ANNOUNCEMENT TYPE: Request for Applications (RFA)

Applications must be submitted through the Results Verification System (RVS) at <http://rvs.umn.edu>

**Dates:** Applications must be submitted to Extension Risk Management's Results Verification System (RVS) website by 5:00:59 PM Pacific Standard Time on January 26, 2023. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered for funding.

**Summary:** The four regional Extension Risk Management Education (ERME) Centers request applications for the Extension Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program. This announcement seeks applications from eligible organizations with a demonstrated capacity to develop and deliver outcome-based risk management education and training programs to meat and poultry professionals, producers, processors, and distributors.

**Funding/Awards:** The four regional Extension Risk Management Education Centers expect to award grants subject to the availability of funds and the quality of applications received. No award may exceed \$150,000 and/or 24 months duration.

## **Contents of this Announcement:**

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## **I. Funding Opportunity Description**

### **A. Legislative Authority and Background**

7 U.S.C. 1524(a) authorizes the Secretary, acting through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), to establish a competitive grants program, through regional risk management education centers and the Agriculture Risk Management Education Partnerships Program. Section 11125 of the 2018 Farm Bill, Public Law 115-334, reauthorized the program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will invest approximately \$2,500,000 to support the development of a well-trained meat and poultry processing workforce, to create a more competitive, fair, and resilient meat and poultry sector.

A food system that is more resilient against shocks, delivers greater value to growers and workers, and offers consumers an affordable selection of healthy food produced and sourced locally helps to address potential risks of supply chain disruptions. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the extent in which our food supply chain is susceptible to shocks. The support of small- and medium-sized meat and poultry processing capacity is needed to strengthen food systems and support local food production. This new funding opportunity will help augment the increased independent meat and poultry processing capacity USDA is creating through other related programs.

### **B. Stakeholder Input**

The four regional ERME Centers welcome comments, suggestions and/or recommendations regarding this RFA from any interested party. Written stakeholder comments should be submitted to the ERME Center in their region.

### **C. Making Application to More Than One Region**

Multi-regional projects are permitted, but an applicant seeking funding from more than one region must submit a separate application to each regional ERME Center for which their project is relevant. Letters of commitment must demonstrate a strong level of commitment and collaboration for the successful execution of a multi-regional project.

Each ERME Center Review Panel will make the funding decision for the application submitted to their region independently of the other regions to which the application was submitted. Please read the Application Resources (<http://extensionrme.org/Resources.aspx#RVS>) for guidance on applications being submitted to more than one region.

#### **D. Purpose and Priorities**

The purpose of this RFA is to award competitive grants to educational institutions, farm organizations, meat and poultry organizations, lenders, consultants, and other risk management education providers. Applications should focus on helping workers and producers in the meat and poultry processing sector across the farm, processing, and distribution levels to manage risk and enhance their performance and viability. Projects shall provide education and training for meat and poultry producers, processors, and distributors, which in turn will enable small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to make sound risk management decisions.

The increased focus and interest on meat and poultry processing across the United States has led to calls for additional processing capacity, particularly among small and mid-sized establishments. New interest and growth may bring new opportunities for SMEs across the sector, however they will need to understand the challenges and risks involved, including production risks of new or growing operations; marketing risks involved with new marketing channels; financial risks of growth amid production and economic cycles; legal risks and regulatory requirements related to food safety, marketing, and the workforce; and human risk of managing personnel and supporting workforce development. They will also need to develop and implement appropriate strategies and practices to address the risks involved.

Projects should address on-farm human resource management, and financial and market risk training to support SMEs that have meat and poultry processing operations, training for on-site meat and poultry processing skills, or workforce development related to risk management. Projects should lead to improved risk management strategies such that SMEs can more effectively address the demand from niche markets, including, but not limited to, foodservice and retail outlets, such as fresh markets, farm-to-fork (restaurants), and specialty grocers. This program encourages applications that will support outreach and assistance to disadvantaged or underserved communities.

#### **Extension Risk Management Education Objectives**

Risk management involves taking a deliberate and knowledgeable approach to dealing with one or more of the five primary sources of agricultural risk. Proposed educational programming should align with one or more of the five areas of risk.

1. **Production Risk** – A production risk is any production related activity or event that has a range of possible outcomes, such as uncertain natural growth processes of livestock.

2. **Marketing Risk** - Marketing risk is any related activity or event that leads to the variability of prices farmers receive for their products or pay for production inputs.

3. **Financial Risk** - Financial risk encompasses those risks that threaten the financial health of the business, such as the volatility of prices, yields and income as well as changing interest rates, credit rules, and the availability of credit.

4. **Legal Risk** – Legal risk is generated by uncertainties surrounding and resulting from government policies and regulations related to tax laws, food safety, labeling and marketing, protected species, water use, animal health and welfare, chemical use, animal waste, other environmental issues such as clean air and water, government commodity and income support programs, and the legal liabilities faced by farms and ranches.

5. **Human Risk** - Human risk refers to human relationships that impact the viability of farm and ranch businesses including communication, labor management and supply, intergenerational transition, estate planning, heir's property, and human health and relationship issues including accidents, illness, disability, death, and divorce.

Key objectives are to enable participants to make practical decisions with innovative programs and activities that deliver science-based education. Key strategic actions should support education in one or more of these areas: increase meat and poultry processing literacy; use of instructional tools and curriculum to increase technical competency and supply chain resilience; offer informal learning programs to increase accessibility to new audiences with new ideas and technologies tested and/or developed at the community level; and develop programs that increase public knowledge and citizen engagement leading to actions that protect or enhance the nations' meat and poultry supply, food safety, environmental quality, community vitality, and/or public health and well-being.

Projects should lead to measurable, documented changes in learning, actions, or conditions for the target audience.

Applications must achieve the objectives of the program by addressing one or more of the following risk management areas and topics:

1. Production Risk
  - a. Insurance products
  - b. Diversification
  - c. New production systems, technologies
  - d. Environmental and weather-related risks
  - e. Value-added enterprises
2. Marketing Risk
  - a. Forward pricing
  - b. Direct marketing
  - c. Marketing plans and strategies

- 3. Financial Risk
  - a. Asset management
  - b. Business and strategic planning
  - c. Cost of production and benchmarking
  - d. Financial records and analysis
- 4. Legal Risk
  - a. Contracts and leases
  - b. Environmental regulations
  - c. Liability, business & food safety
  - d. State and Federal farm programs
- 5. Human Risk
  - a. Labor management
  - b. Health, stress, family, & business relationships
  - c. Transition and estate planning

## **II. Award Information**

### **A. Type of Application**

**New application.** New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in Part V of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein. We will review all new applications competitively using the screening for administrative requirements, review panel evaluation of proposals using evaluation criteria and selection process described in Part V – Application Review Requirements.

### **B. Expected Amount of Funding**

The maximum amount of requested funding shall not exceed \$150,000.

### **C. Expected Number of Awards**

Each regional ERME Center anticipates awarding approximately 3-4 new grants from this announcement.

### **D. Project Period**

The estimated project period for awards will be 24 months beginning on **June 1, 2023** and completed no later than **May 31, 2025**

### **E. Award Type**

The funding for selected projects will be in the form of a sub-award agreement. Each regional ERME Center will determine the precise terms and conditions defining contractual obligations that are a part of the award process and will include, but may not be limited to the following:

1. Approval of your final budget and narrative that is part of the application submission.
2. Compliance with Uniform Guidance (UG).

3. Monitoring your (organization's) performance through quarterly and final reports.
4. Reviewing federal funds spent on requests for reimbursement (invoices).

#### **F. Project Director Training**

All Project Directors (PDs) will be required to attend a virtual Project Directors' Training in June 2023. Additionally, Project Directors will be required to attend the 2024 National ERME Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. Attendance at this 2-3 day conference should be considered when developing the project budget, with estimated costs included.

### **III. Eligibility Information**

#### **A. Eligible Entities**

1. Any public or private organization that has demonstrated experience in providing agricultural education or other agriculturally related training to the target audience group (See Section I. D. Purpose and Priorities). This includes, but is not limited to:
  - An 1862, 1890, or 1994 land grant institution, or other institutions of higher education, including community colleges, that deliver agricultural education.
  - An Indian tribal community college, an Alaska Native cooperative college, an Indian tribe, or a national tribal organization.
  - A Hispanic-serving institution of higher education.
  - Agricultural organizations, agencies, or other entities such as small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs).
2. Individuals are NOT eligible applicants.
3. Grant applicants and their partners, affiliates, and collaborators for this Announcement will not be allowed to receive funding to conduct activities that could be perceived by producers as promoting the services or products of one private company over the services and/or products of another company that provides the same or similar services or products. If applying for funding, such organizations must be aware of potential conflicts of interest and must describe in their application the specific actions they will take to avoid actual and perceived conflicts of interest. Applications from applicants who inadequately identify and/or disclose conflicts of interest may result in, among other possible outcomes, additional explanation of project activities, application rejection, funding reimbursement denial, and/or project termination.

#### **B. Qualifying Criteria for Applications**

Any applications that are non-compliant with the following requirements will be at risk of being excluded from review. Applicants disqualified on these grounds will be notified via email.

1. Applications must comply with the submission instructions and content requirements set forth in this announcement, including the Required Documents Section (IV-B, Item 12).
2. Any application that arrives later than 5:00:59 PM Pacific Standard Time will be disqualified from competition.
3. Applications must be submitted via the online Results Verification System through the applicant's regional ERME Center website, except in extenuating circumstances as determined and documented by that Center.
4. Maximum amount of requested funding may not exceed \$150,000.

**C. Cost-Sharing or Matching**

ERME does **not** allow matching support, that includes in-kind services, for this program.

**IV. Application and Submission Information**

**A. Form of Application Submission**

All applications must be submitted through the Extension Risk Management online Results Verification System (RVS). First time applicants will be required to register in the RVS through their respective regional ERME Center's website. If an applicant experiences technical difficulty with the RVS, they may contact their regional ERME Center to obtain an alternate method of electronic submission (i.e., email).

All applicants will be notified, by e-mail, with confirmation of receipt of the application by ERME RVS.

**B. Content of Application Package Submission**

Applicants must complete the sections described below. Applicants are advised to review components/requirements of the online application system prior to filling out their application.

1. **Project Overview** – Describe: (i) the risk management education subject topic(s) the proposed project will cover; (ii) the methods used to deliver the project; (iii) the target audience, including the geographical location; (iv) the number of workshops or educational activities; (v) the risk management outcomes your target audience is expected to achieve through participation in the project; and (vi) the estimated number of participants who will achieve these outcomes. It is critical that there is a logical connection between the Project Overview and the Proposed Outcomes section of your application.
2. **Proposed Outcomes** – (i) Identify each risk management outcome that you want participants to understand, develop, or implement; (ii) identify, for each outcome, the risk area, risk management topic, participant action, and the number of participants you anticipate will achieve that action/outcome; and (iii) identify verification/performance measures for tracking achievement of each of the

proposed risk management outcomes. **You are limited to a total of 12 outcomes maximum.**

3. **Project Outcomes Narrative** – Describe the risk management issue(s) this project addresses and how it will help your target audience improve their economic viability. It is critical this section: (i) identifies the primary source(s) of risk for this target audience; (ii) demonstrates the education and/or training methods are appropriate; and (iii) discusses the potential and/or anticipated economic impact of this project upon the participants being trained.

Applicants should discuss their ability to be flexible with a contingency plan for delivering proposed training activities and adjusting evaluation methods in the event of unexpected program interruption. Please note that additional project steps related to a contingency plan should not be listed within this application.

However, discussing innovative program delivery alternatives in the case of unexpected program interruption is encouraged as part of your project narrative.

4. **Project Steps** – Describe a **logical progression** of the project’s plan of work that will lead your target audience to achieve the proposed outcomes. Map out the timeline for each task/project step to be accomplished during the proposed award period. Each project step needs to identify actions the **project team** will take to help participants accomplish the proposed risk management outcomes and where applicable, actions that participants will take toward achieving these outcomes.
5. **Target Audience** – Applicants must be able to describe the audience that they intend to target which includes their role within the meat and poultry processing sector (See Section I. D. Purpose and Priorities). This section needs to explain why this audience will be willing to participate and how the proposed risk management education will benefit them. While a statement of need is not required, it could help to identify why the proposed risk management education would be beneficial to the target audience and how it will motivate engagement and participation.
6. **Organizational Capacity** – Describe your organization’s history and experience delivering agricultural risk management education programs. Describe your organizational capacity to lead outcome-based projects; include the skills, knowledge and experience of your team members. Indicate the capability of the Project Director (Co-Project Director) to achieve the program purpose and priorities stated in this funding announcement, including evidence of solid working relationships within the agricultural community and/or with producers and others involved in the meat and poultry processing sector. Applicants demonstrating experience in providing agriculture training with the capacity to lead a program on risk management education for the target audience are preferred.

7. **Project Team** – Team members are the Project Director, (Co-Project Director) and all other individuals who will actively participate in the development, delivery and management of the project - whether from the applicant organization or not. For each team member provide: (i) name; (ii) organization; (iii) email address; (iv) telephone number; (v) describe their role and responsibility in the project; and (vi) describe and address actions related to conflict(s) of interest, if this is an issue (see section III.A.3).
8. **Project Collaborators** – Collaborators are outside people or organizations who will bring expertise or provide access to your target audience, but who are not involved in the day-to-day management of the project. For each project collaborator provide: (i) name; (ii) organization; (iii) email address; (iv) telephone number; (v) describe their role and responsibility in the project; (vi) describe and address actions related to conflict(s) of interest, if this is an issue (see section III.A.3) and (vii) upload their letter of commitment. Letter must clearly state their contributing role, expertise, and/or knowledge that will support the delivery of proposed outcomes. Letters must be signed and dated and addressed to the Regional Center’s Director but delivered to applicant for inclusion with the application. Applicants must upload the letters as PDF documents. **Form letters are not allowed.**
9. **Tools and Curriculum** – Describe the educational tools and/or curriculum your project will develop or utilize to train the target audience; include software, manuals, worksheets, notebooks and/or other educational resources and tools. Describe the delivery methodology and why it is appropriate for your audience.
10. **Budget** – Enter the total amount of funds requested. A separate, detailed budget form must be uploaded to the application as a required document. The budget form is available for download in the online application system and detailed instructions for each line item are available in Appendix A to this RFA (Budget and Budget Narrative Instructions).
  - i. **Indirect Costs** – Indirect costs allowed for projects submitted under this RFA may not exceed the lesser of the institution’s official federally negotiated indirect cost rate or 30% of the total Federal funds awarded. If your organization does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, an F&A rate of 10% Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) will be allowed.
  - ii. **Proposed or Pending Applications** – Identify the source and amount of funding, if any, received for this project; and/or funding pending from other sources.
11. **Budget Narrative** – Enter your Budget Narrative information directly into the online application system. Identify and describe costs associated with each budget line-item amount; include sub-awards or sub-contracts, consultants, and indirect costs. Detailed instructions are available in: (i) Appendix A to this RFA (Budget

and Budget Narrative Instructions); (ii) the online application Instructions; and (iii) Application Resources (<http://extensionrme.org/Resources.aspx#RVS>).

**12. Required Documents** – All submitted applications must contain a completed and signed ERME Cover Sheet, and an ERME Budget Form. Letters of commitment from project collaborators, consultants and sub-awards should be uploaded in the Project Team or Project Collaborators sections.

- i. **ERME Cover Sheet (SF424)** - Is a fillable PDF template that must be completed and signed by applicant organization's authorized representative or fiscal agent. Applicants must upload as a PDF document.
- ii. **ERME Budget Form** - Is a fillable PDF template that must be completed and uploaded as a PDF document.

### **C. Sub-awards and Consultants**

Funding may be used to provide sub-awards not to exceed 49 percent of the requested budget. All sub-awardees must comply with applicable requirements for sub-awards. Detailed instructions for sub-awards and consultants are available in Appendix A to this RFA (Budget and Budget Narrative Instructions) and in the online application Instructions. Consultants are subject to the allowable rates of pay as identified in Appendix A. Sections A & B Salaries.

### **D. Submission Dates and Times**

We recommend that you conduct a thorough review of the application before submission via the Results Verification System. A checklist is included in Appendix B of this RFA to assist with the review. Applications must be submitted to the RVS no later than 5:00:59 PM Pacific Standard Time on **January 26, 2023**. Email confirmation of receipt will be sent to all applicants.

### **E. Confidential Information**

In accordance with 7CFR 2500.017, the names of entities submitting applications, as well as application contents and evaluations, except those involved in the review process, will be kept confidential to the extent permissible by law. If an applicant chooses to include confidential or proprietary information in the application, it will be treated in confidence to the extent permitted by law, provided that the information is clearly marked by the applicant with the term "confidential and proprietary information."

### **F. Pre-Submission Application Assistance**

1. Links to assist in the application process and to access application resources will be provided on each regional ERME Center's website.
2. Each regional ERME Center will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the application, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Such questions should be submitted to the appropriate

regional ERME Center. **Regional ERME Centers may not assist individual applicants by reviewing draft applications.**

**G. RFA Definitions**

A list of definitions for terms found in this RFA, as they relate to the ERME Program, is available in the RVS Resources page (<http://extensionrme.org/Resources.aspx#RVS>).

**V. Application Review Requirements**

**Evaluation Criteria**

Applications that meet the threshold criteria in Section III of this announcement will be reviewed according to the evaluation criteria set forth below.

Applications are evaluated on their strengths and weaknesses relative to the merits of all other applications. Final funding decisions will be made based on the final rankings and recommendation of each regional ERME Center’s review panel. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions no later than April 2023.

**A. Evaluation Criteria for Applications**

| Criteria   | Weight |
|--|--------|
| 1. <b>Proposed Outcomes:</b> ERME will evaluate the extent to which the proposed risk management outcomes include clear statements of what you anticipate participants will understand, develop, or implement through participation in the project; how realistic and attainable estimated participant numbers are; and the relative level of rigor associated with the progression of participant actions - from understanding to implementation. | 40     |
| 2. <b>Outcomes Verification:</b> ERME will evaluate the effectiveness of the applicant’s plan for evaluating and tracking achievement of the proposed risk management outcomes.  | 15     |
| 3. <b>Target Audience:</b> Applicants will be evaluated based on their ability to: (i) define the participants that they intend to target and their role within the meat and poultry processing sector, (ii) provide a clear statement of why the proposed risk management education is needed; and (iii) identify how participation will benefit the target audience.   | 15     |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <p>4. <b>Team/Organizational Capacity and Collaborators:</b> ERME will attribute equal value to: (i) evaluating the skills, knowledge and experience of the project team and organization to effectively deliver risk management education projects; and (ii) evaluating how well-engaged collaborating public or private organizations will increase the likelihood of participation by meat and poultry producers, processors, and distributors and strengthen the project.</p>  | <p>15</p> |
| <p>5. <b>Innovative Approach and Wide Application:</b> ERME will evaluate: (i) the extent to which the project employs innovative approaches to develop or deliver training, materials, or tools – how it is a totally unique and innovative project; and (ii) the extent to which the proposed project might have wide application; including adapting materials to specialized audiences, marketing and promotion techniques, eliciting high interest in basic risk management principles with new methodologies, or other ideas that would enable the project to have wide application.</p> | <p>15</p> |

**B. Selection of Reviewers**

Reviewers are selected based upon training and experience in relevant agricultural fields. Reviewers are drawn from a diverse group of experts to create balance in terms of gender, ethnicity, age and professional expertise.

**VI. Award Administration Information**

**A. Award Notices**

Following evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status.

1. **Application Notifications and Feedback:** ERME anticipates notification of successful and unsuccessful applicants via email or postal mail by **April 2023**. This notification will be sent only to the Project Director. Applicant feedback will be provided using the procedures established in the Operational Guidelines for the regional ERME Centers.

2. **Successful Applicants:** ERME will advise the applicant that their proposed project has been successfully evaluated and recommended for funding. This notification is not an authorization to begin work. The sub-award agreement is the authorizing document and will be provided to each awardee organization electronically or via postal mail. All sub-award agreements will be finalized by

**June 1, 2023**; however, situations may arise over which the regional ERME Center has no control, and which could delay this date.

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

A listing and description of general federal regulation and cost principles applicable to sub-award agreements under this RFA are available in Appendix A to the RFA (Budget and Budget Narrative Instructions).

### **C. SAM Registration and Unique Entity Identifier Number**

In accordance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), all applicants must register with the System for Award Management ([SAM.gov](http://SAM.gov)) and obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. There is no cost to use SAM.gov and you can use this site to update, renew, or check the status of your entity's registration. After your entity is successfully registered with SAM.gov, your Unique Entity ID will be automatically generated and viewable in SAM.gov's workspace. If your entity is registered in SAM.gov today, your UEI has already been assigned and is viewable in SAM.gov. This includes inactive registrations. The UEI is located on your entity registration record. The UEI replaces the DUNS number previously used when doing business with the federal government.

### **D. Reporting Requirements**

The following reporting requirements will apply to awards provided under this RFA. ERME reserves the right to revise the schedule and format of reporting requirements as necessary in the sub-award agreement.

Award recipients must submit their reports online via the Results Verification System website – the same system where the Application was submitted. The Proposed Outcomes and Project Steps sections of the Application are auto-populated in the online reporting system. A complete set of reporting instructions is provided in the RVS.

1. **Quarterly Progress Reports:** Quarterly Progress reports are due on the dates specified by the respective regional ERME Center, to be determined, but consistent across Centers. Additional progress reports may be submitted, or report information entered at any time throughout the project period.
2. **Invoices (Financial Reports):** Invoices must be submitted at least quarterly but may be submitted monthly.
3. **Final Report:** The Final Report is due within the time frame directed by each regional ERME Center and must demonstrate that participants achieved the risk management outcomes identified in the Application. After the Final Report has been approved by the regional ERME Center, it becomes a public document available for viewing through the national ERME website: <http://www.ExtensionRME.org>.
4. **Final Invoice:** A Final Invoice must be submitted to the regional ERME Center within the time frame directed by the Center. Final payment may be withheld until all reporting requirements are met.

## **VII. Program Contacts**

### **Southern Extension Risk Management Education Center**

#### **University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture**

Ron Rainey, Director  
2301 South University Ave  
Little Rock, AR 72204

Contact: Erica B. Fields at 501-671-2146 or [efields@uada.edu](mailto:efields@uada.edu)

### **Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Center**

#### **University of Delaware**

Laurie Wolinski, Director  
112 Townsend Hall  
Newark, DE 19716-2130

Contact: Michelle McCullough at 302-831-6621 or [mmccull@udel.edu](mailto:mmccull@udel.edu)

### **North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center**

#### **University of Nebraska-Lincoln**

Brad Lubben, Director  
303 Filley Hall  
Lincoln, NE 68583

Contact: Christine Lockert at 402-472-2039 or [clockert2@unl.edu](mailto:clockert2@unl.edu)

### **Western Extension Risk Management Education Center**

#### **Washington State University Extension**

Shannon Neibergs, Director  
Jo Ann Warner, Associate Director  
222 N. Havana  
Spokane, WA 99202

Contact: Jo Ann Warner at 509-477-2168 or [warnerj@wsu.edu](mailto:warnerj@wsu.edu)  
Heather Schriver at 541-891-9190 or [hschriver@wsu.edu](mailto:hschriver@wsu.edu)

## Appendix A

### *Extension Risk Management Education Competitive Grants Program*

#### **BUDGET AND BUDGET NARRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS**

The Extension Risk Management Education Centers review proposed project costs to make certain those costs are reasonable to the project and allowable per the following federal statutes and regulations that apply to project grants awarded under this program. The statutes include but are not limited to:

- **2 CFR, Part 200** – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

**Copies of the applicable Code of Federal Regulations and USDA Federal Assistance Regulations may be found at the following web-site: <https://nifa.usda.gov/federal-regulations>**

To assist in this review, as well as to expedite the award process, applications are required to have both a budget and budget narrative detailing the various line items. The categories listed below are examples of some of the more common items found in project budgets. All items should be described in the narrative in sufficient detail to enable the Centers to determine that the costs are reasonable and allowable for the project per the regulations.

#### **BUDGET SECTIONS A & B:**

**Salaries** – Show the number of work months that will be charged to the project for which salary is paid by USDA [e.g., two project directors on a 12-month project – one will spend 100% of time (12 months) and one will spend 50% of time (6 Months); total work months would be 18 months]. List the funded months in either Academic and Summer or Calendar months depending on the academic appointment of the person. Non-academic institutions would report salary months under the Calendar category.

Profit and Non-Profit organizations salary rates of pay should not exceed an Executive Level IV salary range (\$176,300/year or \$84.76/hour, effective January 2022). This rate does not include any fringe benefits, G&A, overhead, or other expenses. Rates exceeding this amount must be documented and justified as to why the person or persons command a higher salary rate. Information on future Executive Level IV salary rates may be found at the Office of Personnel Management website: <http://opm.gov>. Click on “Policy”, “Pay & Leave”, then “Salaries and Wages”.

Please note that only persons employed by the recipient organization should be listed in this category. Those employed elsewhere would be listed as subcontractors or consultants in the “Other Direct Costs” (ODC) category.

Secretarial and Clerical Salaries – The salaries of administrative and clerical staff should normally be treated as indirect (F&A) costs. Direct charging of these costs may be appropriate only if all of the following conditions are met: 1) Administrative or clerical services are integral

to a project or activity; 2) Individuals involved can be specifically identified with the project or activity; 3) Such costs are explicitly included in the budget or have the prior written approval of the Federal awarding agency; and 4) The costs are not also recovered as indirect costs.

**Fringe Benefits** – Show the total of allowable fringe benefits.

#### **BUDGET SECTION C:**

**Equipment** – The purchase of equipment is not allowed under the program. Equipment is defined as an article of equipment equal to or in excess of \$5,000 and having a useful life of more than one year. See Budget Section F.6. for possible alternatives.

#### **BUDGET SECTION D:**

**Travel** – Domestic travel (includes Canada, Mexico and U.S. Possessions). Provide information used in estimating the cost such as: the destination if known, purpose, number of travelers, and estimated cost per trip (e.g., St. Louis, Missouri to attend a conference, 2 persons - \$1,000 ea.). This includes all travel paid for directly by the grantee organization.

Use the GSA Domestic Per Diem Rate Schedule if you are unsure of the maximum rates allowable for specific locations. Travel and subsistence should be in accordance with organizational policy. Regardless of the organizational policy, allowances for airfare will not normally exceed round trip jet economy air accommodations.

#### **BUDGET SECTION E:**

**Participant/Trainee Support Costs** – If you are conducting a train-the-trainer project and/or your project has a train-the-trainer component, please consult with your regional Center to determine how these and other similar type costs should be listed.

#### **BUDGET SECTION F:**

**Other Direct Costs (ODC)** are those anticipated direct project charges not included in other budget categories. A description and cost must be included in the budget narrative for each item. Items in ODC should be listed with the corresponding dollar amounts, along with an explanation of the costs provided in the Budget Narrative. Examples of items are:

**1. Materials and Supplies** – List project specific materials and supplies with estimated costs. This could include items such as educational or field supplies, software, or office supplies. For items that are not typical materials & supplies, a detailed narrative of how the item fits the program must be included. If you are requesting funds for generic or bulk office materials and supplies, these would normally be considered as organizational F&A costs and not treated as Direct Costs.

**2. Publication Costs** – This line is associated with costs related to the publishing of articles in a scientific or technical journal or other type of field/program related publication and is not allowed under this program. Printing of program materials should

be included under “Materials and Supplies”. Photocopying costs should be included under the “Other” category.

**3. Consultants** – A consultant is someone who renders expert advice in his/her field. The consultant should not be affiliated with the performing organization. This line item in the applicant budget narrative should include the name of the consultant and his/her organization, and a breakdown of the amount being charged to the project (e.g., number of days of service, rate of pay per hour, travel, per diem, etc.). See Sections A&B, Salaries for allowable rates of pay. Each consultant must provide the following documentation to be uploaded as part of the application: 1) Signed Letter of Commitment that also outlines their Scope of Work, rate of pay, # of hours to be paid, travel, etc.; and 2) An abbreviated resume or vita no more than 2 pages in length. These documents should be combined into a complete package and uploaded as a PDF in the Project Team or Project Collaborators section of the application.

**4. Computer (ADP) Services** – Computer services are not allowed under the program. This represents the charges associated with the organization’s shared computer system (i.e., line charges or computer processing usage costs). Charges for Internet access may be included in this category. Equipment purchases should be listed under “Materials and Supplies” as appropriate.

**5. Sub-awards/Consortium/Contractual Costs** – When a portion of the work proposed will be performed by outside sources, funding may be used to provide sub-awards not to exceed 49 percent of the total funds awarded. All sub-awardees must comply with applicable requirements for sub-awards. The level of detail required for the sub-award budget is the same as the applicant organization. See Sections A&B, Salaries for allowable rates of pay. Please note that any limitation or prohibition of indirect costs on the Program also applies to the sub-awards. This line item in the budget narrative of the applicant organization should list the total amount of funding that will go to the sub-award. The sub-award organization must provide the following documentation to be uploaded as part of the application: 1) Letter of Commitment signed by the authorizing representative that also includes a clear Scope of Work outlining their portion of the work to be completed; 2) Separate Budget for their portion of the funding; and 3) A detailed Budget Narrative supporting their portion of the budget. These documents should be combined into a complete package and uploaded as a PDF in the Project Team or Project Collaborators section of the application.

**6. Equipment/Facility Rentals/User Fees** –

a. **Equipment Rental** – When there is a need to rent equipment for use on the project, provide information regarding the type of equipment to be rented, the purpose or use on the project, the length of time needed, and the rental rate.

b. **Facility** – When it is necessary to rent office or other facility spaces for project implementation, and the space(s) are located off-site from the organization’s main facility in space not owned by the recipient organization, the cost of the rent may

be charged against the award if the space is used specifically for the project. The budget narrative should provide details on the normal monthly rental charge and how the rent is pro-rated to the project.

7. **Alterations/Renovations** – Alterations/Renovations are not allowed under the program.

8. **Other** – For other costs not specifically listed above. Identify and provide details of the costs involved. Some of the more common items included in this category are:

a. **Communications** – Mailings, postage, express mail, faxes, and telephone long distance charges. Specific dollar amounts are not required.

b. **Photocopying** – In-house photocopying of materials associated with the program. Photocopying should not be confused with Publications/Page Charges which are costs related to publishing in a journal or commercial printing of brochures and other materials. Specific dollar amounts may not be required.

c. **Service or Maintenance Contracts** – Costs should be in direct correlation to the use of the equipment for the project (i.e., if a particular machine is used 50% of the time for the project, the project should only be charged 50% of the service/maintenance costs). Provide details of the type of equipment and the amount of the service contract to be paid from Federal funds.

d. **Conferences/Meetings** – Costs of holding a conference or meeting are included in this category. Some examples are the rental of facilities and equipment for the meeting, honorariums or fees for trainers or guest speakers, and travel and per diem for participants and speakers. Details of costs for each conference or meeting should be broken out and provided in the budget narrative.

Meals may not be charged as project costs when individuals decide to go to breakfast, lunch, or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered to be an entertainment cost. In contrast, it is NIFA policy that a formal group meeting being conducted in a business atmosphere may charge meals to the project if such activity maintains the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants. Breakfast meals are generally not allowable because no continuity of the meeting exists.

e. **Speaker/Trainer Fees** – Information on speakers should include the fee and a description of the services they are providing.

f. **Honorariums** – Honorariums to persons providing a service are allowable. Provide information regarding the honorarium amount (rate of pay) and a brief statement regarding what the person is doing to earn the honorarium.

## **BUDGET SECTION H:**

**Indirect Costs** – Indirect costs on awards supported by USDA/NIFA under this program may not exceed the lesser of the institution’s official federally negotiated indirect cost rate or 30% of the total Federal funds awarded. If your organization does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, an F&A rate of 10% Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) will be allowed. The budget narrative should identify the percentage rate used when calculating the total indirect costs.

### **Other Items of Note:**

**Cost Sharing/Matching** – ERME does **not** allow matching support, that includes in-kind services, for this program.

## **UNALLOWABLE COSTS**

The following is a list of selected items of costs which are usually unallowable. This list is not all inclusive. For more information on whether costs are allowable, please refer to 2 CFR 200.420-475 General Provisions for Selected Items of Cost, in the Uniform Guidance:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/part-200/subpart-e>

- Alcoholic beverages
- Entertainment costs
- Promotional give away items such as tote bags, coffee mugs, t-shirts, etc.
- Incentives such as gift certificates, cash, etc. given to entice participation in meetings, surveys, and other events.
- Rent for grantee owned facilities
- Award ceremonies
- Receptions
- Application writing costs
- Meals –

Meals are allowable when they are part of the cost of meetings and conferences, the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of technical information (in such instances the cost of transportation, rental of facilities, speakers’ fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences are also allowable). On the other hand, business meals may not be charged as project costs when individuals decide to go to breakfast, lunch, or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting. Such activity is considered to be an entertainment cost.

Note: Meals consumed while in official travel status do not fall in this category. They are considered to be per diem expenses and should be reimbursed in accordance with the organization’s established travel policies subject to statutory limitations.

## Appendix B

### **EXTENSION RISK MANAGEMENT EDUCATION COMPETITIVE GRANTS PROGRAM APPLICATION PACKAGE CHECKLIST**

- 1. Content of Application Package** - Each section of the application in the RVS should be completed, to include:
  - a. Project Information
  - b. Project People
  - c. Project Overview
  - d. Proposed Outcomes
  - e. Project Outcomes Narrative
  - f. Project Steps
  - g. Target Audience
  - h. Organizational Capacity
  - i. Project Team
  - j. Project Collaborators
  - k. Tools and Curriculum
  - l. Budget
  - m. Budget Narrative
  - n. Required Documents
  
- 2. ERME Budget Form** – upload as PDF under Required Documents and confirm that the file uploads correctly.
  
- 3. Signed ERME Cover Sheet (SF-424)** – upload as PDF under Required Documents and confirm that the file uploads correctly.
  
- 4. Collaborator Letters of Commitment** (Letters not required for Exploratory Projects)
  - a. A letter is required from each listed Project Collaborator that clearly states their contributing role, expertise, and/or knowledge that will support the delivery of proposed outcomes (upload as PDF under Project Collaborators).
  
- 5. IF the Project Includes Consultants**
  - a. Letter of Commitment from each consultant outlining role, hours and rate of pay.
  - b. Abbreviated (2-page maximum) Resume or Curriculum Vitae for each consultant.
  - c. Upload complete package as PDF under Project Team or Project Collaborators.
  
- 6. IF the Project Includes a Sub-Award**
  - a. Sub-award Budget Form.
  - b. Separate detailed Budget Narrative.
  - c. Letter of Commitment from the sub-award organization outlining the statement of work for that organization.
  - d. Upload complete package as PDF under Project Team or Project Collaborators.

**SUBMIT your application prior to the deadline specified in your region’s RFA.**

*11/29/2022 FINAL*