



North Central Risk Management Education Center

Extension Risk Management Education Grants Program

2010 Request for Applications (RFA)

Pre-proposal Opening Date: November 17, 2009

Pre-proposal Closing Date: December 15, 2009

OVERVIEW

Legislative Background

Section 133 of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act (ARPA) of 2000, Pub. L. 106-224 requires USDA/CSREES to establish a program under which competitive grants are made to qualified public and private entities for the purpose of educating agricultural producers about the full range of risk management activities including futures, options, agricultural trade options, crop insurance, cash forward contracting, debt reduction, production diversification, farm resources risk reduction, and other risk management strategies. Under this mandate the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) established four Regional Centers to address the educational needs within their regions. These four Regional Centers have together carried out a competitive Risk Management Education grants program on a national basis since 2001.

The 2008 Farm Bill, in Section 12026, amends this program by placing a special emphasis on risk management strategies, education, and outreach specifically targeted at:

- A. beginning farmers or ranchers;
- B. legal immigrant farmers or ranchers that are attempting to become established producers in the United States;
- C. socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers;
- D. farmers or ranchers that
 - a. are preparing to retire; and
 - b. are using transition strategies to help new farmers or ranchers get started; and
- E. new or established farmers or ranchers that are converting production and marketing systems to pursue new markets.

Section 133 of ARPA established the continuing intent of the program, which is to *educate agricultural producers about the full range of risk management activities*. All organizations serving agricultural producers, especially those serving the special emphasis audiences, are strongly encouraged to apply. Applications must clearly identify how agricultural producers will improve their risk management as a result of participating in the proposed project.

Program Purpose

The North Central Risk Management Education Center (North Central Center), in conjunction with the Northeast Center for Risk Management Education, the Southern Region Risk Management Education Center, and the Western Center for Risk Management Education, announces a funding opportunity for projects that help farm and ranch families succeed through implementing targeted risk management strategies. The return sought on the investment of the grant awards is the improved ability of farm and ranch families to manage the risks associated with farming and ranching businesses. Effective risk management involves selecting tools and approaches that reduce the adverse financial effects of the variability of weather, yields, prices, government policies, global markets and other factors that may threaten the economic viability of the business. Effective risk management education should help producers make a comparative risk assessment of alternative production or management practices.

The North Central Center will announce 12-month awards (with the possibility of one 6-month No Cost Extension) by May 3, 2010. The risk management education projects will begin on July 1, 2010 and be completed on or before June 30, 2011. If your project is funded, we will offer whatever help we can give you to make the project a success. Our goal is to partner with you to create improved risk management education results for agricultural producers and their families.

Size of Awards

Grant awards will normally not exceed \$50,000 for single region projects. Generally the range of awards for single region projects range from \$5,000 to \$50,000, however there is no absolute upper or lower limit on the funds provided to a project. The awards will reflect a mix of project sizes to meet our investment goal of a balanced portfolio. The Center is again offering “**Special Emphasis Challenge Grants**” for stakeholders representing a special emphasis group who wish to establish collaborative and planning groups. The award for this group is \$3,000 (see Risk Management Project Types, page 4).

Eligibility

Organizations eligible and encouraged to apply for grants are private and public groups, organizations and institutions including land grant colleges and universities, Cooperative Extension, other colleges and universities, and other qualified public and private entities in the region with a demonstrated capacity to develop and deliver educational programs for agricultural producers and their families. These entities include farm organizations, commodity groups, lenders, consultants, marketers, risk management service providers such as crop insurance agents, and other non-governmental and community-based organizations. Collaboration between the public and private sectors is strongly encouraged.

This program encourages applications that help producers belonging to the Special Emphasis groups identified in Section 12026 of the 2008 Farm Bill learn about risk management strategies and tools that can be applied to their farm businesses. Organizations that provide risk management education and assistance to these producers are eligible and encouraged to submit applications.

The North Central Center serves Illinois, Indiana, Iowa Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The North Central Risk Management Education Center welcomes comments, suggestions and/or recommendations regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the Extension Risk Management Education Grants Program. Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: H. Doug Jose, Director, North Central Risk Management Education Center, 304 Filley Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583-0922, or by email to Doug Jose at: hjose1@unl.edu.

RISK MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES, TOPIC AREAS OF INTEREST, PROJECT TYPES AND TARGETED GROUPS

While the ultimate clientele for this program is producers and their families, within that context regional needs have been identified which require additional emphasis. Therefore, this RFA solicits proposals which address the priorities discussed below:

Risk Management Priorities

The overview at the beginning of the RFA documented the mandate in the Farm Bill to target specific audiences. Even so, remember the purpose of this program is to “educate producers about the full range of risk management activities”. This includes all farmers and ranchers. This goal is particularly pertinent in the current economic environment. Educators and related organizations are encouraged to **focus on the educational needs** of farmers and ranchers in this period of financial instability in the economy and major volatility in prices. Once this is done, the subsequent steps in the proposal process are identifying the target audiences, specifying the measurable impacts desired and outlining the process to achieve those impacts.

The North Central Center recognizes that, in some cases, building collaborative stakeholder groups and planning feasible program development and delivery strategies may be necessary before effective risk management programs can be delivered to the special emphasis target groups. Accordingly, the Center is again offering “**Special Emphasis Challenge Grants**” this year for stakeholders representing a special emphasis group who wish to establish collaborative and planning groups. The purpose of these groups is to conduct a meeting or meetings of the stakeholders they represent, establish the educational needs of the target group they represent, and develop

collaboration with other state or regional stakeholders. The specific goal of these groups will be to establish a delivery plan for an educational program and in turn apply for a competitive grant in the 2011 grant cycle. This particularly applies to stakeholders representing legal immigrant farmers and ranchers and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers. Socially disadvantaged groups, as defined by USDA, includes farmers and ranchers who belong to a group “whose members have been subjected to racial and ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities”. USDA has, by regulation, further defined the term “socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher” to include groups subjected to gender prejudice as well. Thus, socially disadvantaged groups include women, African Americans, Native Americans, Alaskan Natives, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.” (Bridges to the Future: 2003 Annual Report of the Participation of Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers in USDA Programs -- Section 10708 of the 2002 Farm Bill, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Outreach, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 2004).

Risk Management Project Types

The grant programs established for the North Central Region for 2010 are:

- Value-Added Enterprises and Farm Diversification Risks. The structure of production agriculture is changing dramatically in response to consumer demands and preferences both domestically and in international markets. The Center wishes to promote producer entrepreneurship to meet these changing markets. To do this, the Center encourages the delivery of educational programs focused on the risks of entrepreneurial activity. The potential size of the target audience is not a limitation. These programs could have a high impact for a limited number of operators. A well defined target audience is more essential than the number of participants. Proposals in this category will also complement the Special Emphasis target group designated as “new or established farmers and ranchers that are converting production and marketing systems to pursue new markets”.
- Human Resources Risks. Human risks constitute the primary risk in many business decisions such as labor management and are an inherent or underlying issue in numerous other decisions such as financial management decisions. The North Central Center places a high priority on human risk management training through projects which will help agricultural producers to address their human resources challenges. In addition, all applicants are encouraged to include a human risk element in their projects. Other examples of human risk projects include: farm succession, farmer-to farmer communication, and the emotional and physical well being of the farm family.
- Unrestricted Grants. These educational programs can address any of the other four areas of risk; namely, production, marketing, financial or legal risks. The Center is particularly interested in financial risk management programs which address business planning in the current volatile economic environment. Potential topics include, but are not limited to: financial analysis and planning, analysis of costs of production, cash flow planning and business organization and structure.

- Special Emphasis Challenge Grants. The purpose of these grants is to initiate collaboration and planning to address the risk management educational needs of one of the Special Emphasis groups, with the goal of submitting a project proposal in 2011. The amount of these grants is \$3,000 each. The funds can be used only for travel and associated costs including meals and lodging. The funds cannot be used for other costs such as supplies and meeting room rental. Applicants are required to complete only the applicant information and the project summary sections of the pre-proposal. The “Proposed Results, Producer Demand, and Review of Past Projects” sections of the pre-proposal are not required. The Project Summary statement should focus on identifying the target audience, and describing the educational needs of the target group, the goals of the planning process and how the planning will be conducted to initiate a project proposal next year.

INVESTMENT CRITERIA

Please read the following information carefully. This RFA gives clear instructions on results-based grant awards. Closely following the principles and directions of results-based grant making will improve your chances for success. Proposals that fail to follow these principles and directions will be excluded from consideration.

Projects Must Be Results-Based

Awards will be made to projects that clearly identify risk management results for the participants and that have a well thought out approach for achieving those results. Risk Management Results (explained in the following section) are the results you believe the participants in your project will achieve. It is important to understand this concept because our application selection process focuses on the probability that the participants in your project will learn, achieve and apply the proposed risk management results you identify. The context and principles of our results-based process are described in detail in this RFA. Applicants who take the time to understand results-based grant making will have a far greater chance of success in receiving funds from the North Central Center.

Risk Management Results

The Proposed Risk Management Results for your participants are the key focus of project selection. They are the specific, measurable and verifiable results that participants will learn, achieve and apply immediately after or within six months to a year following completion of your project. At the end of your program delivery, the Proposed Results should translate into actual risk management tools and strategies that producers use to improve and manage their overall financial risk. Examples of risk management results are: (1) A producer completed a business plan as a result of participating in your project; (2) A producer identified a new market as a result of participating in your project; and (3) An extended family developed a succession plan as a result of participating in your project. The online application requires that you identify how many of your project participants will achieve each Proposed Result. Do not confuse the actions

your project team takes or materials they develop with actions that producers will take to improve their ability to manage risk.

Risk Management Education Defined

To put the investment criteria in context, you should understand our definition of Risk Management Education. Risk is an important aspect of the farming business. Risk management involves choosing among alternatives that reduce the adverse financial effects of the uncertainties of weather, yields, prices, government policies, global markets, and other factors that can cause wide swings in farm income. Risk Management Education, within the context of the enabling legislation for the Extension Risk Management Education Program, is defined as training that improves the ability of agricultural producers and their families to effectively manage risks. Five general risk categories associated with farm and ranch businesses are described below.

Production Risk – Production risk derives from the uncertain natural growth processes of crops and livestock. Weather, disease, pests, and other factors affect both the quantity and quality of commodities produced.

Price or Market Risk – Price or market risk refers to uncertainty about the prices producers will receive for commodities or the prices they must pay for inputs. The nature of price risk varies significantly from commodity to commodity.

Financial Risk – Financial risk results when the farm business borrows money and creates an obligation to repay debt. Rising interest rates, the prospect of loans being called by lenders, and restricted credit availability are also aspects of financial risk.

Institutional/Legal Risk – Institutional or legal risk results from uncertainties surrounding government actions. Tax laws, regulations for chemical use, rules for animal waste disposal, and the level of price or income support payments are examples of government decisions that can have a major impact on the farm business.

Human/Personal Risk – Human or personal risk refers to factors such as succession, disability, estate problems, wellness, or human relationships that impact the viability of the farm (i.e., divorce, sibling rivalry, and intergenerational issues). Labor relations or labor supply are another area of human risk that can impact the financial well-being of the farm or ranch business.

Risk Management Areas and Topics

For each Risk Management Result you propose for the producers participating in your project (Proposed Results), you will be asked to select a corresponding Risk Area (from the five categories listed above) and a specific Risk Management Topic within that area. The online application will ask you to identify a Risk Area and a Risk Management Topic from the following list for each Proposed Result:

- Production
 - Economic risks of new technologies
 - Insurance products

- Product and enterprise diversification
- Transition to new production systems
- Water use decisions
- Price
 - Analysis of market fundamentals
 - Cash and futures pricing tools
 - Marketing plans and strategies
 - Branded, certified or identity preserved marketing
 - Direct marketing
 - Contract Production
- Financial
 - Agri-tourism and alternative energy investments
 - Asset management including leasing and renting
 - Business and strategic planning
 - Cost of production and benchmarking
 - Economics of input decisions
 - Financial records and analysis
 - Returns to alternative energy investments
 - Value-added enterprises
- Legal
 - Contracts and leases
 - Environmental regulations
 - Food safety liability
 - Labor regulations
 - Personal and business liability
- Human
 - Employee management and communication
 - Health, stress, and well being
 - Interpersonal, family and business relationships
 - Labor supply, recruitment, and retention
 - Transition and estate planning

Portfolio Approach

In selecting projects for funding, North Central Center seeks to invest in a balanced portfolio of Risk Management Education projects that represent:

- Diversity in terms of different types of producers to be served
- Diversity in terms of risk management tools and strategies to be taught
- Diversity in terms of the organizations that receive support
- An array of public-private partnerships that will strengthen project results and continuity
- An approach that recognizes the importance of the family to farm/ranch businesses
- A geographical balance of funded projects in the region

PROJECT DIRECTOR DESIGNATION

The designated Project Director must be actively involved at all stages of the proposal process, from the Pre-Proposal through to the Full Proposal (if invited to submit a Full Proposal Application), and is responsible for completing the project. This includes project management, subcontracting, funds oversight, meeting project time schedules, reporting progress and submitting the final report. The Review Panel's assessment of whether or not producers can achieve the proposed risk management results will be based upon the capacity of the Project Director and team to deliver results-based risk management training.

Change in Project Director Designation

The Project Director will be responsible for the entire project. Change in project director designation requires approval from the Center Director, H Doug Jose, North Central Center. The existing Project Director must send a letter to the Center Director requesting the change. In addition, the newly designated Project Director must also provide a letter which states his/her qualifications and experiences for assuming the responsibilities associated with the project. Failure to notify the Center of a change in project director designation could result in a pre- or full proposal being withdrawn from consideration, or the withholding of funds if an award has been made.

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Applicants must indicate the collaborators they will use to strengthen their project. A project will not be considered for funding unless it identifies meaningful collaborators. Collaborators are outside people and organizations from both the public and private sectors that will provide technical expertise and/or access to producers. Collaborators need only to be identified in the Pre-Proposal. Letters of commitment from Co-Project Directors, Team Members and Collaborators or their organizations are required as part of the Full Proposal Application.

APPLICATIONS THAT CROSS REGIONAL BOUNDARIES

All four regional Extension Risk Management Education Centers welcome RME project proposals that cross regional boundaries. You may apply for funding for projects that cross these boundaries by submitting a separate application to each regional RME Center. The application requests that you identify the additional regional RME Center(s) to which you will be applying. You should also be aware that applications made to more than one region will be shared across regions during the proposal review process. For instance, if you submit an application to two regions, the Review Panels from both regions will review both applications. However, each Review Panel will only make the funding decision for the application submitted to their region.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following evaluation criteria will guide our selection of projects. Because we believe the risk management results producers achieve are the return on investment of our funds, the highest priority will be placed on the Proposed Results for participants. An application that does not identify the risk management results that participants will achieve has a limited chance of success. Strong emphasis will also be placed on Results Verification, Producer Demand, and Collaborators. Although we are interested in the criteria that deal with innovative approaches and wide application, our primary focus will be on whether or not a project can deliver the proposed risk management results.

Successful applications will address the following criteria by showing the direct connection between what you propose to do and how these activities will lead to risk management results for participants. The evaluation criteria are listed in the order of their importance, with the first one being the most important.

Proposed Results (40 percent weight). Proposed risk management results are what you anticipate participants will learn, achieve, and apply through their participation in your project. At the end of your program delivery, the proposed risk management results should put producers in a better position to manage their overall financial risk, and are the single most important factor the panel considers when deciding whether your project is funded.

Results Verification (20 percent weight). Results Verification identifies the method and/or tool that you will use to verify (measure) how many participants are able to accomplish the proposed risk management results listed in your application. Careful consideration should be given to the type of verification tool(s) that can most effectively measure the risk management accomplishments of the producers.

Producer Demand (20 percent weight). Producer Demand describes why your target audience will choose to participate in your project. You must be able to provide evidence that there is clearly a need, expressed by producers, for the project being proposed. Although market research data is not required, evidence of producer demand through a market analysis of your anticipated audience can help to strengthen your application.

Collaborators (10 percent weight). Collaborators are outside people or organizations that can provide either technical expertise or access to producers. This may include partners, either individuals or groups, in the public and/or private sectors, working through the joint efforts of existing networks, or the formation of new educational networks. (This criterion will require reviewers to come to the conclusion that the proposal adequately indicates that the collaborators are really part of the project, and that their participation strengthens the project.)

Innovative Approaches (5 percent weight). This may include approaches and methods that further contribute to the existing knowledge base, materials and/or tools available. Innovation may also deal with approaches that address the lack of time producers have, the marketing and

delivery of the proposed project to potential participants, and other creative techniques that may further motivate producers and their families to participate in the project.

Wide Application (5 percent weight). Demonstration or description of how the proposed project or its inherent techniques and strategies developed and delivered might have wide application. Descriptions of program techniques might include adapting materials to specialized audiences, marketing and promotion techniques, eliciting high interest in basic risk management principles with new methodologies, or other ideas that might make the project have wide application if others were to pick up on the idea or processes involved. Will aspects of the project contribute to the work of others who may wish to borrow or adopt the processes and procedures being proposed?

HOW TO APPLY

Online Application Website

The Pre-Proposal application (and later Full Proposal application, if requested) must be submitted online through the North Central Center's website <http://www.ncrme.org>. If you are unable to complete the application online, please call the North Central Center at 402-472-5740 or email us at cgriffith2@unl.edu.

Grant Application Process

There are **two stages** in the RME Program grant application process, which are described below.

Stage One: Submit Pre-Proposal – Pre-Proposals are due by 5 pm CST on Tuesday, December 15, 2009.

Pre-Proposal Defined – The Pre-Proposal is a short application that must be completed online. The information provided in the Pre-Proposal will become part of your Full Proposal application if you are selected to proceed to the next stage of the application process.

Pre-Proposal Content – We are looking for Pre-Proposals that express clarity and conviction. Excessive rhetoric or extraneous details should be avoided. The Pre-Proposal should provide a clear but brief description of how your project will work to produce specific risk management results for your participants. There must be a clear connection between what you propose to do and the results the participants will learn, achieve or apply. The Pre-Proposal is not graded on writing skill or complexity; however it does need to stay within the prescribed word limits. **IMPORTANT:** If you exceed the word count limitations as specified in the application instructions, those in excess may not be considered by the reviewers.

Selection Process – Conceptually, it is important to keep in mind that the selection process centers first on whether the applicant has clearly identified the risk management results the

participants will learn, achieve and apply. At the Pre-Proposal stage, the application should provide a sense to the panel that project participants can achieve the proposed results by participating in the project. At the Full Proposal stage the application, with its additional detail, you must provide sufficient information so that the panel can make an informed decision as to whether the agricultural producers will achieve the proposed risk management results through participation in the project.

Project Director Designation – The Project Director must be actively involved at all stages of the proposal process, from the Pre-Proposal through to the Full Proposal (if invited to submit a Full Proposal). Carefully review the information on Project Director Designation on page 8 of the RFA.

Change in Project Director Designation – Change in project director designation requires approval from the Center Director, Doug Jose, North Center Risk Management Education Center. Carefully review the information on Change in Project Director Designation on page 8 of the RFA.

*Please note that Co Project Director/Collaborator/Team letters, the SF424 Research & Related Cover Sheet, and the online Budget form are **not** required for Pre-Proposals.*

Information Required for the Online Pre-Proposal:

- **Proposed Results** – Identify the specific measurable and verifiable risk management results that you want your participants in the project to learn, achieve, and apply. Make sure there is a logical connection between the information you provide in the project summary and these Proposed Results. In this section you will also be asked to identify, for each result, the risk area, risk management topic, producer action, and the number of producers you anticipate will achieve that action. Next, you will be asked to identify the method and/or tool that you will use to verify (measure) how many participants were able to accomplish the proposed risk management results.
- **Producer Demand** – Describe why your target audience will choose to participate in your project. You must be able to provide evidence that there is clearly a need, expressed by producers, for the project being proposed. Provide a brief description of your target audience, and then describe a typical participant and why they would be motivated to participate in your project.
- **Audience Emphasis** – Identify the producer audiences your project will intentionally target. If your project will place special emphasis on risk management strategies, education, and outreach specifically targeted toward one of the audience groups listed, then check the primary audience to whom you will be delivering. You may check up to three primary audience groups.

- **Review of Past Projects** – This section will require you to identify and review two past projects that your proposed project may build upon or collaborate with. You can review all previously funded Extension Risk Management Education projects in the Ag Risk Education Library (<http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/>). Go to *Funded Projects*, *Search Projects* and then select *Completed Projects Only*.
- **Project Summary** – In 150 words, your project summary should describe: 1) the risk management education subject you will cover; 2) the methods you will use to deliver your project; 3) your target audience, including the geographical location; 4) the number of workshops or educational activities; 5) the risk management results you expect participants to achieve from participating in the project; and 6) how many participants you expect to achieve these measurable results.
- **Amount Requested** – List the total amount requested (a detailed budget is not required for the Pre-Proposal application).
- **Project Team** – List the Project Director (Team Leader), Team Members, and Project Collaborators by name and organization, including phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and each person’s responsibility within the project.

Submitting Your Pre-Proposal:

1. **Registration Information** – To register, go to the North Central Center’s website <http://www.ncrme.org> and click on “Competitive Grants” and then click on “Application Process”.
2. **Project Number and Password** – After you submit the online registration information, you will be e-mailed a *Project Number* and the *Password* you previously selected.
3. **Pre-Proposal Log In** – Go back to the Verification System (via the North Central Center’s website) and log in using your new *Project Number* and *Password*. Then follow the instructions for completing the Pre-Proposal application.

Instructions:

The online application contains an instruction button, labeled “*Instructions*”, that appears in the upper right-hand section of each page. When you click on *Instructions*, a separate smaller window will open that contains the instructions for the page you are working on, along with a table of contents for every section of the application. *Proposal Resources* (<http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/verification/media.htm>) also contains expanded information and provides definitions for terms that can assist you in completing the application.

Stage Two: Submit Full Proposal Application (if selected). Full Proposals from finalists are due by 5 PM CST on Thursday, March 4, 2010.

Invitation to Submit a Full Proposal – The North Central Center will notify applicants by February 1, 2010 if they have been selected as finalist, and will request that they submit a Full Proposal.

Additional sections must be filled out in the Full Proposal. Pre-Proposal information will automatically be included in the Full Proposal and will not have to be re-entered; however, you will be able to edit and make changes to your Pre-Proposal information in your Full Proposal. Please refer to the online application *Instructions* for how to fill out the additional sections required for the Full Proposal.

Additional Information Required for the Online Full Proposal:

- Risk Management Improvements
- Project Steps
- Project Description
- Tools and Curriculum (Project Team section)
- Budget
- Budget Narrative
- Requested Documents (All other requested materials)
 - Cover Sheet – SF424 Research & Related Cover Sheet (Download from Final Checklist Section of the online application)
 - Letters of Commitment

Online Application Process – The Full Proposal document must be submitted online by Thursday, March 4, 2010 at 5 PM CST. All other requested materials (including Co-Project Director, Team Member and Collaborator commitment letters), must be submitted as uploaded documents within the Requested Documents section of the online application or, with special permission, as hard copies mailed to the North Central Center, Lincoln, Nebraska by the same closing time Thursday, March 4, 2010 at 5:00 PM CST. You may either upload a copy of the SF424 R&R Cover Sheet as a PDF document or mail a copy of the Cover Sheet to your Regional Center. The SF424 form is contained within the online application system.

Requested Documents:

SF424 Research & Related Cover Sheet – Refer to the online application *Instructions* and/or the *Proposal Resources* (<http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/verification/media.htm>) for specific instructions on how to fill out this form.

Letters of Commitment – Letters of commitment from a Co-Project Director, Team Members and Collaborators or their organizations are required for projects selected to submit a Full Proposal.

- Letters of commitment must identify the specific responsibilities and/or contributions of a Co-project director and each of the team members and collaborators. Form letters and letters which only state general support for the project will not be considered.

- Co-project director, team and collaborator letters of commitment must be sent to the applicant; who will then submit them as uploaded documents through the Requested Documents section of the online application as PDF File Attachments. All letters must be received by the North Central Center **on or before the date** on which Full Proposals are due.
- Special permission may be obtained from the North Central Center for the applicant to submit letters as hard copies.
- All letters must be submitted through the applicant. Individual letters submitted either electronically or via hard copy, directly to the North Central Center will not be accepted.
- Signed and dated letters must be written on the letterhead of the Co-project director's/ team member's/collaborator's organization, addressed to Doug Jose, North Central Risk Management Education Center, 304 Filley Hall, Lincoln, NE 68583-0922.

Additional Information:

Indirect/F&A Costs – The authorizing legislation for this grant program does not allow indirect costs to be restricted. Therefore indirect costs will be allowed up to your organization's federally negotiated rate. If your organization does not have a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, you are allowed to include in your budget only those administrative costs that are directly related to the administration of your grant.

Salary Guidelines – Charges by academic institutions for work performed by faculty members during the summer months or other periods outside the base salary period are to be at a monthly rate not in excess of that which would be applicable under the base salary and other provisions of the applicable cost principles. All salaries requested must be consistent with the regular practices of the institution.

Subcontractors and Consultants – If a portion of your proposed project will be performed by a subcontractor organization, or will utilize the services of a consultant, additional budget detail must be submitted. It is the applicant's responsibility to know and follow their own organization/institution's regulations for subcontracts and consultants, and other fee for contract services such as honorariums for speaker fees. Refer to the online application *Instructions* and/or the *Proposal Resources* (<http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/verification/media.htm>) for more information.

Purchasing of Curriculum – Note: Projects that propose to use a purchased curriculum must identify the title, cost, and source of the curriculum, and identify specifically how the project proposes to pay for the curriculum. The budget narrative must identify if any North Central Center funds will be used to pay for trainer certification fees. The applicant will need to identify how or whether participants will be asked to pay a fee to help offset the cost of that curriculum. If the applicant has used the curriculum previously, the applicant should be prepared to provide evidence, if asked, of the past success of the curriculum, including participant response.

FINAL REVIEW OF FULL PROPOSALS

Follow-up Telephone Call – A Possibility

After the full proposals are reviewed by the respective regional RME Center Review Panel, a Center Director may contact finalists to clarify any issues raised during the review process. In addition, a Center Director, at the request of the Review Panel, may contact individuals who know about you and your past leadership experience to see if they think you are likely to be successful with your proposed project. It is possible that North Central Center staff may also contact your collaborators or team members. A collaborator you have identified who is not familiar with your project may jeopardize your success in receiving funds. Remember that Co-Project Director, Project Team and Collaborator letters of commitment are due by the same deadline as the Full Proposal, Thursday, March 4, 2010.

Notification of Awards

Awardees will be notified by Monday, May 3, 2010. All grants will be finalized by Thursday, July 1, 2010. However, situations may arise over which the RME Center has no control, which could possibly delay this date.

Reporting Requirements and Other Information for Grant Awardees

Reporting System – All reporting is online and is submitted through the Risk Management Education Results Verification System, the same system where Pre-Proposal and Full Proposal applications are entered. It is a simple and straight-forward process, with sections of the Full Proposal already available online for project managers to report against. The final report on each project is a public document, and will be made available for viewing through the Ag Risk Education Library.

Progress Reports – Grantees will be contractually required to submit three progress reports – by October 1, February 1 and May 1. A fourth progress report will be required the following October 1 if a project receives approval for one, six-month No Cost Extension. If desired, additional progress reports may be submitted.

Final Report – Upon project completion, awardees must also make a final report on the achievement of participants reaching the Risk Management Results identified in the application. The final report is due within the time frame directed by each Regional Center.

Provision of Materials Developed as a Result of the Project – Electronic copies of all project materials (promotional materials, educational materials, and evaluations/reports) must be uploaded to the Risk Management Education Results Verification System for posting in the Ag Risk Education Library.

Final Payment – Final payment (or up to 15 percent of project costs) will be withheld until all reporting requirements are met.

APPLICANT ASSISTANCE

Contact Us for Help

It is strongly recommended that applicants download and carefully read all [Proposal Resources](http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/verification/media.htm) (<http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/verification/media.htm>). We also encourage you to contact us if you have questions. If you would like more information about any of our concepts, principles, or directions for the grant application process, or if you have questions regarding your specific Pre-Proposal or Full Proposal, please contact:

Cheryl Griffith
North Central Risk Management Education Center
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
305 Filley Hall
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Voice: 402-472-5740
Fax: 402-472-0776
cgriffith2@unl.edu
www.ncrme.org

A training workshop for writing a successful grant application will be conducted via the web on Tuesday, November 24, 2009 from 10 to 11 AM, CST. For more information and for instruction on how to log-on, please visit our website www.ncrme.org.

Key Deadline and Announcement Dates

Closing date for Pre-Proposal submission:	5:00 PM CST, Tuesday, December 15, 2009
Finalists are selected and invited to submit a Full Proposal application:	Monday, February 1, 2010
Finalists' Full Proposals with required materials are due:	5:00 PM CST, Thursday, March 4, 2010
Award decisions are announced:	Monday, May 3, 2010
Awards are finalized (subcontracts begin):	Thursday, July 1, 2010

IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Do Not Miss the Deadline

Online applications received after the posted submission deadlines will not be accepted for review. However, in the event of an extraordinary circumstance not under the control of the applicant (such as a blizzard, hurricane, tornado, or other natural or man-made disaster) that results in the shutdown of the submitting organization, or results in courier or mail service delays, a determination will be made on a case-by-case basis by each respective RME Center as to whether to accept a late submission for review. The provision of supporting evidence is the responsibility of the applicant organization and/or the Project Director.

Definitions

Definitions for terms used in this RFA, and in the supporting documents required for Full Proposal applications, are available on the Extension Risk Management Education Results Verification System website, <http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/verification/media.htm>.

Risk Management Education Reference Materials

Applicants seeking additional information on risk management for agricultural producers can find a wide range of materials at the Ag Risk Education Library website (<http://www.agrisk.umn.edu>).

Another useful resource in the General Risk section of the library is the USDA-RMA/CSREES publication, *Introduction to Risk Management*, by Alan Baquet, Ruth Hambleton and Doug Jose (<http://act.fcic.usda.gov/pubs/1997/riskmgmt.pdf>).