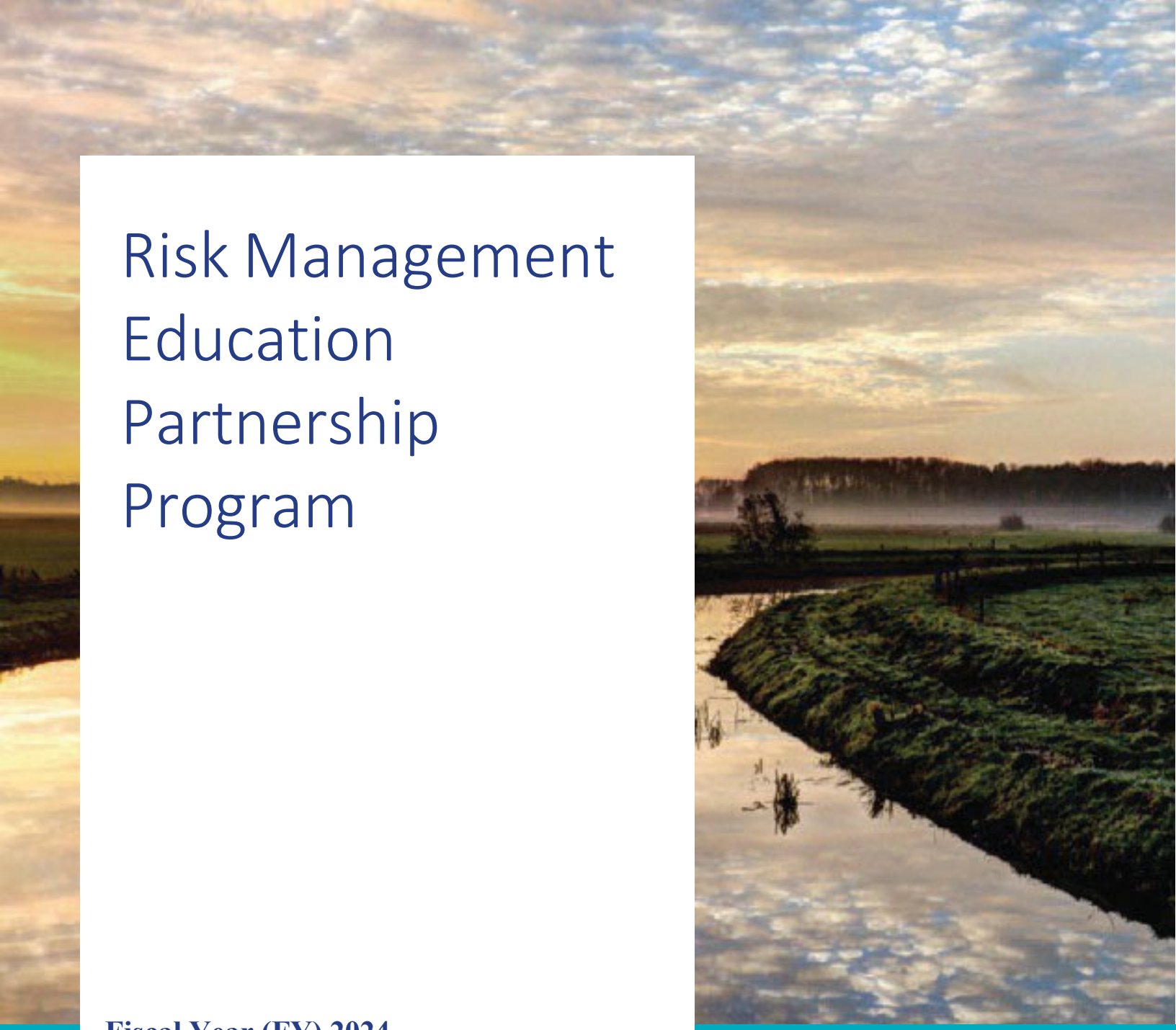

Risk Management Education Partnership Program

Fiscal Year (FY) 2024
Risk Management Education Partnership Program
National Funding Opportunity (NFO)

No. USDA-RMA-MULTI-RMEPP-24-NOFO0001319

USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NFO)

SUMMARY INFORMATION

Federal Awarding Agency Name: U.S. Department of Agriculture – Risk Management Agency

Notice of Funding Opportunity Title: Risk Management Education Partnership Program

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: USDA-RMA-MULTI-RMEPP-24-NOFO0001319

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA): This program is listed in the Assistance Listings under the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance number 10.460

System for Award Management (SAM) is a web-based, government-wide application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates business information about the federal government's trading partners in support of the contract awards, grants, and electronic payment processes.

Notice of Funding Opportunity Summary

The Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC), operating through the Risk Management Agency (RMA), announces its intent to award up to $3 million to fund the Risk Management Education Partnership Program. The cooperative agreements will be awarded on a competitive basis up to eighteen (18) months from the date of the award.

Key Dates

Applicants must submit their applications electronically via Results Verification System (RVS) Results Verification System (umn.edu), by 11:59:59 pm Eastern Time (ET) on March 4, 2024, 62 calendar days from date of publications in Grants.gov. Questions regarding this notice of funding opportunity (NFO) may be submitted until February 5, 2024. Responses to questions posed willbe posted on Grants.gov approximately two weeks before the application due date. A tutorial on how to apply is available at http://rvs.umn.edu/rmaresources.

For inquiries specific to the content of the NFO requirements, contact the federal awarding agency contact (section G of this NFO). Please limit questions to those regarding specific information contained in this NFO (such as dates, page numbers, clarification of discrepancies, etc.) Questions related to eligibility or the merits of a specific proposal will not be addressed.

Key Dates	Actions
January 2, 2024	NFO Announced in Grants.gov. NFO open for 62 days.
January 25, 2024	NFO/RVS Training Conducted for Potential Applicants at 11:00am ET. Training will be recorded and can be accessed either live or after the session. Register for a session at:

	https://z.umn.edu/RMA-2024
January 30, 2024	NFO/RVS Training Conducted for Potential Applicants at 3:00pm ET. Training will be recorded and can be accessed either live or after the session. Register for a session at: https://z.umn.edu/RMA-2024
March 4, 2024	NFO Closes at 11:59:59 pm ET
April 2024	Award notifications begin to be emailed; Unsuccessful applicants are notified.
September 30, 2024	Project Start Date

The agency anticipates making selections by April 2024 and expects to execute awards no later than September 30, 2024. These dates are estimates and subject to change.

Federal Funding Floor and Ceiling Amounts

The estimated funding floor for this opportunity is $5,000, and the estimated funding ceiling is $500,000. The funding floor means the minimum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. The ceiling is the maximum agreement funding amount for the Federal share per agreement awarded. These numbers refer to the total agreement amount, not any specific budget period.

Federal Financial Assistance Training

The funding available through this NFO is Federal financial assistance. Grants 101 Training is highly recommended for those seeking knowledge about Federal financial assistance. The training is free and available to the public via https://www.cfo.gov/resources/federal-financial-assistance-training/. It consists of five modules covering each of the following topics: 1) laws, regulations, and guidance; 2) financial assistance mechanisms; 3) uniform guidance administrative requirements; 4) cost principles; and 5) risk management and single audit. FPAC agencies also apply Federal financialassistance regulations to certain non-assistance awards (e.g., non-assistance cooperative agreements).

Pre-Award and Post Award support services can be available to assist with following cooperative agreement criteria in areas such as: 1) technical writing support; 2) facilitate the development of Statement of Work; 3) guidance to apply for and submit cooperative agreement awards; 4) project management support; and 5) project resolution and closeout procedures. The support service is free and available to Underserved Communities, Underserved Ag-related Non-profits, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Tribal Higher Education Programs, 1890 Land Grant Universities, Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs), and Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities (HSACU). For more information, email rma.risk-ed@usda.gov.

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A. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose

The purpose of this competitive program is to deliver risk management training to U.S. agricultural producers to assist them in managing production, marketing, legal, financial, and human risk. The program gives priority to: (1) educating producers of crops currently not insured under Federal crop insurance, specialty crops, and underserved commodities, including livestock and forage and (2) providing collaborative partnerships to develop and deliver crop insurance education and risk management training. Education activities developed under the Risk Management Education Partnership Program provide farmers and ranchers, including limited resource and other traditionally under-served farmers and ranchers with training opportunities to understand:

i. The kinds of risks addressed by existing and emerging risk management tools;

ii. The features and appropriate use of existing and emerging risk management tools; and

iii. How to make sound risk management decisions.

The authorizing statutes and regulations for this opportunity are Section 522(d)(3)(F) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (FCIA), (7 U.S.C. § 1522(d)(3)(F)).

2. Background

RMA promotes and regulates sound risk management solutions to improve the stability of American agriculture. On behalf of FCIC, RMA does this by offering Federal crop insurance products through private partners, creating new risk management products, enhancing existing products, ensuring the integrity of programs, ensuring equal access for underserved communities, and providing training and information.

3. Project Goal

The goal of this program is to ensure that ". . . producers will be better able to use financial management, farm financial benchmarking, crop insurance, marketing contracts, and other existing and emerging risk management tools." One of RMA's strategic goals is to ensure producers are well informed of the risk management solutions available. This educational goal is supported by Section 522(d)(3)(F) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (FCIA) (7 U.S.C. § 1522(d)(3)(F)), which authorizes FCIC funding for riskmanagement training and informational efforts for agricultural producers through the formation of partnerships with public and private organizations. Cooperative Agreementsare awarded with the goal that FCIC will fund crop insurance and risk management projects that are likely to become self-sustaining and not indefinitely dependent on FCIC funds. With respect to such partnerships, priority is to be given to reaching producers of Priority Commodities, as defined below. A project is considered as giving priority to

Priority Commodities if 75 percent of the educational and training activities of the project are directed to producers of any one of the three classes of commodities listed in the definition of Priority Commodities or any combination of the three classes.

4. Definition of Priority Commodities

For purposes of this program, Priority Commodities are defined as:

Agricultural commodities covered by (7 U.S.C. 7333). Commodities in this group are commercial crops that are not covered by catastrophic risk protection crop insurance, are used for food or fiber (except livestock), and specifically include, but are not limited to, floricultural, ornamental nursery, Christmas trees, turf grass sod, aquaculture (including ornamental fish), sea grass and sea oats, camelina, sweet sorghum, biomass sorghum, and industrial crops.

Specialty crops. Commodities in this group may or may not be covered under a Federal crop insurance plan and include, but are not limited to, fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, syrups, honey, roots, herbs, and highly specialized varieties of traditional crops.

Underserved commodities. This group includes: (a) commodities, including livestock and forage, that are covered by a Federal crop insurance plan but for which participation in an area is below the national average; and (b) commodities, including livestock and forage, with inadequate crop insurance coverage.

5. For Fiscal Year 2024:

FCIC through RMA is seeking projects that address one or more of the five (5) areas of risk described as Production, Legal, Financial, Marketing or Human Risk.

Top Priorities include:

Climate Smart Agriculture
Hurricane Insurance Protection -Wind Index Endorsement (HIP-WI)
Tropical Storm Endorsement

Equity and Opportunity for Historically Underserved Producers
Local Foods and Urban Agriculture

Organic and Specialty Crops

Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) and Micro Farm Training

Other Agency Priorities:
All Livestock Products
Crop Insurance 101
Double Cropping
Rainfall Index Insurance: Pasture, Rangeland, Forage (PRF)/AnnualForage/Apiculture

6. Audience Emphasis

Audience emphasis is on U.S. producers and ranchers and should specifically reach out to producer types not normally reached, such as limited resource and underserved producers, to ensure their opportunity to enroll in education activities. Audience groups may include: traditional farmers and ranchers; new and beginning farmers; farmers or ranchers that are preparing to retire and are using transition strategies to help new farmers or ranchers get started; legal immigrant farmers or ranchers, minority producers; African American; Asian American; Pacific Islander, Hispanic; Native American; Urban Farmers; military veterans; women; farmers and ranchers marketing their products as part of a local or regional food system;livestock producers, organic producers, new or established farmers or ranchers that are converting production and marketing systems to pursue new markets; producers that demonstrateand document climate smart ag practices; producers using sustainable and/or regenerative practices; small farms or ranches, and value-added producers.

B. FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

1. Available Funding

a. Estimated Funding

The total amount of Federal funding the agency expects to award through this opportunity is up to $3 million. However, the agency retains the discretion to award a larger or lesser amount.

b. Start Dates and Performance Periods

Projects will be 18 months in duration. Applicants should plan their projects based on an estimated project start date no later than September 30, 2024.

c. Number of Awards

The agency expects to make approximately 20 award(s).

2. Type of Award

a. Type of Federal Award

The agency plans to award a cooperative agreement(s) pursuant to this opportunity. The agency will be substantially involved through RMA's DC Office and RMA's ten (10) Regional Offices in the work performed under the agreement and will undertake activities such as the following:

a. Collaborate with the recipient in assembling, reviewing, and approving crop insurance and risk management materials for producers in the designated state(s) or RMA region(s).
b. Collaborate with the recipient in reviewing and approving a promotional program for raising awareness for crop insurance and risk management and for informing producers of training and informational opportunities in the designated state(s) or RMA region(s).
c. Collaborate with the recipient on the delivery of education to producers and agribusiness leaders in the designated state(s) or RMA region(s). This will include: (a) reviewing and approving in advance all producer and

agribusiness leader educational activities; (b) advising the project leader on technical issues related to crop insurance education and information; (c) assisting the project leader in informing crop insurance professionals about educational activity plans and scheduled meetings; and (d) promoting and creating awareness of scheduled partnership activities. Regional Office direct involvement in activities is dependent upon resources available. Applicants are encouraged to consider teleconferences or webinars as alternatives to in-person requests.

d. Conduct an evaluation of the performance of the recipient in meeting the tasks of the project.

Applications that do not address substantial involvement by RMA will be rejected.

b. Description of Agreement Award – Recipient Tasks

In conducting activities to achieve the purpose and goal of this program in a designated state(s) or RMA region(s), the recipient will be responsible for performing the following tasks:

a. Develop and conduct a promotional program in English or a non-English language to producers as appropriate to the audience. This program will include activities using media, newsletters, publications, or other appropriate informational dissemination techniques that are designed to: (a) raise awareness for risk management; (b) inform producers of the availability of crop insurance and risk management tools;and (c) inform producers and agribusiness leaders in the designated state(s) or RMA region(s) of training and informational opportunities.

b. Deliver risk management training in English or non-English language as appropriate to the audience as well as informationalopportunities to agricultural producers and agribusiness professionals inthe designated state or RMA region(s). This will include organizing anddelivering educational activities using materials assembled by the recipient to meet the local needs of producers. Activities should be directed primarily to agricultural producers, but may include those agribusiness professionals that have frequent opportunities to advise producers on risk management decisions.

c. Document all activities conducted under the cooperative partnership agreement and the results of such activities, including criteriaand indicators used to evaluate the success of the program. The recipient is required to provide information to RMA as requested for evaluation purposes.

c. Other Tasks

In addition to the specific, required tasks listed above, the applicant may propose additional tasks that contribute directly to the purpose of this program suchas but not limited to individual or group Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification, other food-safety related education activities, or activities targeting producers engaged in local or regional food systems, such as those selling at

farmers markets. For any proposed additional task, the applicant must clearly identify the objective of the task (e.g., for website tools or mobile phone Apps, applicants must clearly identify the risk management tool they are developing, the targeted user and relationship to crop insurance or managing farmrisk and can be self-sustaining for future utilization), specific timelines for performing tasks, how they will measure the success of these tasks, and the specific responsibilities of partners. The applicant must also identify specific ways in which RMA would have substantial involvement in the proposed project task.

d. Procurement Contracts

The agency does not expect to award procurement contracts associated with this NFO.

e. Eligibility of Renewal or Supplemental Project Applications

Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are not eligible to compete with applications for new Federal awards. An application for renewal means an application submitted to continue an existing agreement that meets the objectives and requirements of this NFO. An application for supplementation of an existing project means an application to add components to an existing agreement so that it would meet the objectives and requirements in this NFO.

C. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. Eligible Applicants

Applicants and applications must meet eligibility criteria by the application deadline to be considered for award. Eligible applicant type is determined by the implementing program statute. Applicant entities identified in the SAM.gov exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted, or excluded from receiving Federal contracts and certain Federal assistance and benefits will not be considered for Federal funding, as applicable to the funding being requested under this Federal program (2 CFR 200.206(d)).

Eligibility for this opportunity is limited to the following entity types:

a. City or township governments
b. County governments
c. For profit organizations other than small businesses
d. Independent school districts
e. Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)
f. Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)
g. Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education)
h. Nonprofits that do not have a 501 (c)(3) status with the IRS (other than institutions of higher education)
i. Nonprofits registered as 501(c)4 or 501(c)5

j. Private institutions of higher education
k. Public and State-controlled institutions of higher education
l. Public housing authorities/Indian housing authorities
m. Small businesses
n. Special district governments
o. State governments

2. Other

Any award made pursuant to this NFO will be made to a single entity. Applicants that apply as "partnerships" or other similar groupings must clearly describe the relationship between the applicant and the "partner" parties. In all but exceptional cases, it must be reflected in the award as an awardee/subawardee relationship.

An applicant organization may submit more than one application for different projects or proposing different approaches. In the case of applications submitted as revisions or corrections to a previously submitted application under this NFO, the agency will consider the last application submitted prior to the established deadline.

RMA may request documents from applicants to verify eligibility requirements, proof of existence, or authority.

a. Individuals are not eligible applicants.

b. Although an applicant may be eligible to compete for an award based on its status as an eligible entity, other factors may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal assistance under this program governed by Federal law and regulations (e.g., debarment and suspension; a determination of non-performance on a prior contract, cooperative partnership agreement; or a determination of a violation of applicable ethical standards). Reviewed applications in which the applicant or any of the partners are ineligible or excluded persons will be rejected in their entirety. Rejected applications will be retained during the NFO process but will not be made an award.

c. Private organizations that are involved in the sale of Federal crop insurance, or that have financial ties to such organizations, are eligible to apply for funding under this Announcement. However, such entities and their partners, affiliates, and collaborators for this Announcement will not receive funding to conduct activities that are already required under a Standard Reinsurance Agreement or any other agreement in effect between FCIC/RMA and the entity, or between FCIC/RMA and any of the partners, affiliates, or collaborators for awards under this Announcement. In addition, such entities 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 company over the services 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 for which applicants fail to identify and disclose possible or actual conflicts of interest may result in, among other possible outcomes, application rejection, funding reimbursement denial, and/or termination.

d. Applicants must note funding restrictions found in Section D 5.

3. Cost Sharing or Matching

There is no cost sharing or matching requirement for this opportunity. There is no competitive advantage to applicants who voluntarily provide a match.

D. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

1. Electronic Application Package

Only electronic applications will be accepted and they must be submitted to https://rvs.umn.edu/Home.aspx in response tothis Announcement. Applicants must register for an account on the Results Verification System (RVS) website, where users will be required to enter a username,password, e-mail address, first and last name, address and phone number. For websiteand technical issues, call 1-612-624-7585 from 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Central Time, Monday through Friday except for federal holidays. Prior to preparing an application,it is recommended that the Project Director (PD) first contact an Authorized Representative (AR) or the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through https://rvs.umn.edu/Home.aspx. Prior to submitting applications, each applicant must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and must be registered in System for Awards Management (www.SAM.gov) (see section **D. 2. o.**).

Address to Request Application Package
All information necessary to apply for this opportunity is included in the Grants.gov opportunity announcement.

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

The agency may choose not to consider applications that fail to comply with the required content, format, and page limits, or those that are incomplete.
To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an application must contain the documents below.

The applicant is strongly encouraged to use the tutorial located at http://rvs.umn.edu/rmaresources. After completing the tutorial, the final application must be submitted to: https://rvs.umn.edu/Home.aspx. All applicationsmust be received in RVS by the deadline, March 4, 2024 at 11:59:59 am. EDT. If a due date falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or Federal holiday, the deadline will be the next business day.

To be considered for funding under this opportunity, an applicant must contain information in each of the listed sections below and include all required documents. Once submitted, applications will be date and time stamped by the RVS as evidence of submission. Hard copy of the application will not be accepted. The system will prompt the applicant for the following items:

a. **Project Information.**
Information must include the Project Name, proposed State(s)/Area(s), Project Director's Name and Contact Information; the second, or alternative Project Director's Name and Contact Information, and a Financial Representative or Grants Office Official and Contact Information. A second Point of Contact Name and Contact Information may be added at the discretion of the applicant.

b. **Executive Summary of the Project (Maximum of 200 words).**
This is a summary of the project and includes the project's goal and objectives, locations of work, audience to be reached, and expected impact and results of the work completed.

c. **Proposed Results**.
Applicants must clearly identify the specific actions producers will take as a result of the education activities. In a table format, you must explain what producers will learn, achieve, or apply as a result of participating in the project. The applicant must select a Producer action which describes what program participants will do relative to the specific proposed result. There are five levels of producer actions to choose from within RVS. Projects which include the action "implement" have the most producer engagement and may be more likely to demonstrate a change of behavior. You may have several producer actions for a component of your program. Applicants must also include the method and/or tool that will be used to verify or measure results

d. **Audience Emphasis.**
Applicant must select at least one or more audiences that the project will intentionally reach.

e. **Statement of Work (SOW).**
The SOW is in a table format and must clearly identify each task associated with the work, the objective of each task specific timelines for performing each task, and the responsible party for completing the activities listed under each task including the specific responsibilities of applicant, the applicant's partner(s), and RMA's substantial involvement. Tasks that directly involve producer participants, such as workshops, must estimate the number of participants to be reached. The SOW should demonstrate the logical progression of tasks that will lead your target audience to achieve the project's proposed results. The SOW must be very clear on who does what, where, and when, as well as, the objective for each task.

f. **Proposal Narrative (Maximum of 1000 words)**.
The proposal narrative is a description of work to be done, why the work is important, who will benefit from the work and any additional explanation of the expected results entered under Proposed Results that you want to communicate. The narrative should (a) discuss specific crop insurance

education and risk management training to be developed for use with producers; (b) identify the location and number of meetings that will be held; (c) reasonably estimate the total number of producers for each session or meeting identified in the SOW that will be reached through (i) direct face-to face educational activities with an explanation of how the number was determined and (ii) through other means such as direct mailings, website, etc. with an explanation of how the number was determined; (d) provide an estimate of the number of training hours that will be conducted with an explanation of how the number was determined; (e) provide an estimated cost per producer with an explanation of how the cost was determined; (f) discuss the methodology and resulting measures used to evaluate the results of the education and training delivered to producers, (g) provide an explanation of who the target audience is and why they were chosen; and (h) identify clear and reasonable producer outcomes that demonstrate the highest level of behavior change that can be directly linked to the proposed educational activities.

If your proposal will include information collection from non-Federal sources, ensure the collection meets the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act. Surveys of individuals or entities are generally prohibited without prior approval from the Office of Management and Budget. For additional guidance about allowable and unallowable activities, please visit the following website: https://pra.digital.gov/do-i-need-clearance/.

g. Innovative Approach.
Applicants are encouraged to introduce new ideas or methods of reaching their targeted audience; propose alternative versus traditional strategies to manage agriculture risk; and/or provide innovative risk management education training, materials, or tools. Applicants should build upon, or collaborate with, previously funded projects, as applicable.

h. Team and Partners.
There are three subsections under Team and Partners. (1) Key Personnel: This section must list key personnel by title, role, and responsibilities including specific tasks and subtasks in the SOW designated to them. Key personnel have the primary responsibility for the leadership of the project and actively participate in the development, delivery, and management. Key personnel may include the Project Director, Co-Project Director, and essential partner(s) or consultant(s) whose contributions are essential to the success of the project. Resumes of key personnel are strongly encouraged and may be uploaded as additional documentation in RVS. (2) Organizational Capacity: The organizational capacity of the applicant must demonstrate RMA that designated key personnel, contracted employees, partners or consultants working on the project have the skills, knowledge, and experience to do the work described in the SOW and have the necessary resources to add other team members as necessary to complete the work. (3) Letters of Commitment: All partners of the applicant working on the project

must submit a Letter of Commitment which clearly states that the named partner will work with the applicant on the project, if awarded, as well as the role and responsibilities assigned.

i. Budget Narrative.

The budget narrative must be included and provide a detailed explanation for each budget line item where the activity purpose or means of calculation may not be clear or require further justification. It should include at minimum: (1) Formula used to calculate totals for multiple or replicated costs (e.g., travel and per diem costs for multiple people; training materials and expenses based on participant number, etc.); (2) Supportive explanation and justification for activities and expenses determined essential, but that may not be understood from the narrative or may otherwise be unclear to reviewers; (3) Breakdown of costs associated with relatively high amount line items. The total cost for the project must show how they relate to the tasks listed in the SOW and line items listed on the SF-424A. There must be a relationship between work planned and performed to the costs incurred. Applicants are encouraged to refer to 2 CFR 200 to ensure unallowable costs, including those associated with advertising, public relations, and conferences; as well as the items listed in the funding restrictions section of this NFO, are not included as part of the budget or project design. Budgets that contain unallowable costs under 2 CFR 200 or restricted items listed in Section D 6, will not be approved.

Any non-Federal entity (except State and local governments that receive more than $35 million per year in Federal funding) that does not have a current negotiated (including provisional) rate may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC) which may be used indefinitely. No documentation is required to justify the 10 percent de minimis indirect cost rate. As described in 2 CFR 200.403, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both. If chosen, this methodology once elected must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time as a non-Federal entity chooses to negotiate for a rate, which the non-Federal entity may apply to do at any time.

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

As required in 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F Audit Requirements, all U.S. states, local governments, Federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending $750,000 or more in Federal award funds in a fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through

the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System.

j. Priority Commodities.
This section must list the Priorities Commodities addressed as defined in Section A 4.

k. RMA Substantial Involvement.
This section must describe RMA assistance as defined under RMA Substantial Involvement in Section B 2 a.

l. Required Documents.
To be downloaded from the RVS resource page (https://rvs.umn.edu/Resources/RMA/), completed and uploaded prior to submission of the application.

- A completed OMB Standard Form 424, "Application for Federal Assistance."
- A completed OMB Standard Form 424-A, "Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs." Federal funding requested (the total of direct and indirect costs) that includes the funding amount requested. Fill in all spaces as appropriate. Section B, Item 6, Column 1 should reflect the agency funds, and Column 2 should reflect the applicant's matching funds. This form is the summary budget for the project and should include the full project totals on pages one and two. Refer to Section D of this opportunity for information regarding indirect costs.
- Certification Regarding Lobbying Form: Under Title 31 of the United States Code, Section 1352, an applicant or recipient must not use any federally appropriated funds (both annually appropriated and continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a grant or cooperative agreement award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is defined as influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress connection with the award. Submission of an application also represents the applicant's certification of the statements in 2 CFR Part 418, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying. If you/your organization have/has made or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying, you must also complete and submit the SF LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities located at 2 CFR 418, Appendix B. See 2 CFR 418.110 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.
- A completed OMB Standard Form LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities. Note: Only required if the applicant reports the use of **non-federal** funding in lobbying activities
- Current and Pending Report. This form contains a document called

the Current and Pending Report. On the Current and Pending Report you must state for this fiscal year if this application is a duplicate application or overlaps substantially with another application already submitted to or funded by another USDA Agency, including RMA, or other private organization. The percentage of each person's time associated with the work to be done under this project must be identified in the application. The total percentage of time for both "Current" and "Pending" projects must not exceed 100 percent of each person's time. Applicants must list all current public or private employment arrangements or financial support associated with the project or any of the personnel that are part of the project, regardless of whether such arrangements or funding constitute part of the project under this Announcement (supporting agency, amount of award, effective date, expiration date, expiration date of award, etc.). If the applicant has no projects to list, "N/A" should be shown on the form. An application submitted under this NFO that duplicates or overlaps substantially with any application already reviewed and funded (or to be funded) by any other organization or agency, including but not limited to other RMA, USDA, and Federal government programs, will not be funded under this program. RMAreserves the right to reject your application based on the review of this information.

- Letters of Commitment. A Letter of Commitment is required from each partner or consultant partner of the applicant who will do the specific task as identified in the SOW. The Letters must (1) be dated within 45 days of the submission and (2) list the specific tasks to be done.
- Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) if applicable: If charging indirect costs (including for cost share), upload the NICRA as a PDF document to the Application Package. See Section D 6 for information regarding indirect costs.

RVS does not check for RMA required attachments or whether the documents are completed and signed. It is the responsibility of the Applicant. Applications that do not include the items listed above will be considered incomplete, will not receive further consideration, and will be rejected.

m. Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest

Applicants must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the performance of its employees in the selection, award, and administration of Federal awards. No employee, officer, or agent may participate in the selection, award, or administration of a Federal award if he or she has a real or apparent conflict of interest. Such a conflict of interest would arise when the employee, officer or agent, any member of his or her immediate family, his or her partner, or an organization which employs or is about to employ any of the parties referenced, has a financial or other interest in or a tangible personal benefit from an applicant considered for a Federal award. The standards of conduct must provide for disciplinary actions to be applied for violations of such standards by officers, employees, or agents of

the applicant.

If the applicant has a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization that is not a state, local government, or Indian tribe, the applicant must also maintain written standards of conduct covering organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflict of interest means that because of the relationships with a parent company, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, the applicant is unable or appears to be unable to be impartial in conducting a Federal award action involving a related organization.

Applicants must disclose in writing any potential conflicts of interest to the USDA awarding agency or pass-through entity. Include the name of the individual, the name of the entity with which the individual has a conflict, the nature of the financial or other interest, the value of the interest, a description of how the interest relates to your application. Upload disclosures under Other Attachments (listed separately under Optional Forms) in Grants.gov. If no conflict exists, no submission is required.

n. Post Award Documentation N/A

o. Unique entity identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management(SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to: (i) Be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the agency is ready to make an award, it may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

System for Award Management (SAM) Registration: To register, go to: https://www.sam.gov. The Federal Service Desk is available for registration assistance and can be contacted via the Help tab at the website listed above. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding UEI or SAM issues.

3. Submission Dates and Times and Correspondence

Applicants must submit applications via RVS at the following website: http://rvs.umn.edu/Home.aspx. Applications must be received by 11:59:59 pm Eastern Time (ET) on March 4th. An application submitted or resubmitted after the deadline is late. Late submissions will not be reviewed or considered. **RMA strongly encourages applicants to submit applications well in advance of the deadline**.

Application packages submitted after the deadline will be rejected with no exceptions granted. Rejected applications will be retained during the NFO process, but will not be made an award.

4. Intergovernmental Review

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

5. Funding Restrictions

Funds may not be used to pay any of the following costs unless otherwise permitted by law and approved in writing by the agency in advance of incurring such costs:

- **a.** Costs above the amount of funds authorized for the project:
- **b.** Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the award, including time spent applying for this opportunity;
- **c.** Costs which lie outside the scope of the approved project and amendments there to;
- **d.** Entertainment costs, regardless of their apparent relationship to project objectives;
- **e.** Compensation for injuries to persons, or damage to property arising out of project activities;
- **f.** Consulting services performed by a Federal employee during official duty hours when such consulting services result in the payment of additional compensation to the employee; and
- **g.** Renovation or refurbishment of research or related spaces, the purchase or installation of fixed equipment in such spaces, and the planning, repair, rehabilitation, acquisition, or construction of buildings or facilities.
- **h.** Management fees and profit. Any funds awarded to for-profit entities must be used for reimbursement of award related direct and indirect costs only;
- **i.** Meals: Meals may be charged to an award only if they are necessary for the performance of the project. For instance, meals (normally only lunch) that are a necessary part of the costs of meetings and conferences (i.e., required attendance and continuity of a meeting), the primary purpose of which is the dissemination of information, are allowable, as are costs of transportation, rental of facilities, speakers' fees, and other items incidental to such meetings or conferences. 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 or in accordance with Federal travel policies.
- **j.** Costs normally charged as indirect costs may not be charged as direct costs without proper justification and agency approval. Proper justification includes documentation that the costs meet the criteria for allowability (see 2 CFR 200.403). Examples of such costs include rent, utilities, depreciation on buildings and equipment, the costs of operating and maintaining facilities, and general administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.

k. Salaries that are not commensurate with level of work: All costs must be reasonable to be allowable (CFR 200.403), and 2 CFR 200.404 defines a reasonable cost as one if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed that which would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. Salaries determined not to be reasonable compared to the level of work will be unallowable.

This list is not exhaustive. For additional information please refer to 2 CFR Part 200, subpart E, Cost Principles. Questions regarding the allowances of particularitems of cost should be directed to the administrative contact listed in this NFO.

6. Indirect Cost Limitations

a. A non-profit organization or institution of higher education awarded a cooperative agreement will be limited to a 10 percent indirect cost rate in accordance with the agency's annual appropriations act. Other types of entities are not subject to this statutory limitation.

b. To be eligible to recover any indirect cost under a Federal award, recipients must either 1) have a current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) with a Federal agency that has not expired; or 2) qualify for use of the de minimis rate authorized by 2 CFR 200.414(f). A State, local, or tribal governmental department or agency unit that receives more than $35 million in direct Federal funding is not eligible for the de minimis rate.

Applicants not subject to a statutory limitation, which have a current NICRA must calculate indirect costs using the rate and base specified in their NICRA. A recipient may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at its sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the agency. A copy of the applicant's current NICRA must be provided with the application. Indirect costs may not be recovered under an expired NICRA. However, if an applicant with a current NICRA is subject to the statutory limitation, indirect costs must be calculated as follows. First, multiply the NICRA rate by the base stated in the NICRA to arrive at Amount A. Next, multiply the statutory limit of 10 percent by the total of all direct costs to arrive at Amount B. The lower of Amount A and B is the amount of indirect cost to include on the budget.

Recipients are prohibited from shifting unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

c. Applicants who are individuals applying for funds separate from a businessor non-profit organization they may operate are not eligible to charge indirect costs to their award. If you are an individual applying for funding, do not include any indirect costs in your proposed budget.

d. RMA reserves the right to negotiate final budgets with successful applicants.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

1. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be screened for completeness and compliance with the provisions of this notice. Incomplete, noncompliant, and/or applications not meeting the formatting criteria may be eliminated from competition. In that event, the agency will send notification of elimination to the applicant. The agency intends to make a selection and award without conducting any discussions or allowing applicants to correct deficiencies or omissions in their applications. Consequently, applicants must ensure their applications are complete and accurate. However, while the agency intends to make a selection without contacting applicants, it reserves the right to request applicants to revise their applications to correct deficiencies or omissions it identifies. If this occurs, the agency will conduct discussions with all applicants, identify deficiencies and omissions for all, and give applicants an opportunity to submit a revised application by a common cut-off date. The agency may also contact individual applicants to clarify certain components of their applications.

Merit/technical reviews will be conducted by a technical review board nominated by the approving official. Risk reviews will be conducted by the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division. The approving official will make the final award decisions. The approving official for this opportunity is the Deputy Administrator for Insurance Services.

RMA does not permit applicants to nominate reviewers or propose exclusion of reviewers in the program review and selection process. Applications will be evaluated using a two-part process. First, each application will be screened (initial review) to ensure that it meets the requirements in this Announcement, including that applicants have a UEI number and are registered in SAM. Applications that do not meet the requirements of this announcement or are incomplete will not receive further consideration during the next process. Applications that meet announcement requirements will be presented to a review panel for consideration. Applicants' past performance will also be considered during the review process.

Second, the review panel will review and meet to consider and discuss the merits of each application. Reviewers will be drawn from the USDA. After considering the merits of all applications within the funding categories, panel members will come to a consensus on which applications best meet the criteria listed above. The review panel will report the results of the evaluation to the Administrator of RMA, Manager of FCIC. The panel'sreport will include the recommended applicants to receive cooperative partnership agreements for each funding category. **Funding will not be provided for an application that is "highly similar" to a higher-scoring application**. "Highly similar" is defined as one that proposes to reach producers, farmers and ranchers whoare likely to be reached by another applicant that scored higher by the panel and provides the same general educational material. An organization, or group of organizations in partnership, may apply for funding under

other FCIC or RMA programs, in addition to the program described in this Announcement. However, if the Administrator of RMA, Manager of FCIC, determines that an application recommended for funding is sufficiently similar to a project that has been funded or has been recommended to be funded under this or another RMA or FCIC program, then the Administrator may elect not to fund that application in whole or in part, depending upon the extent of the similarity or duplicity of applications. The Administrator of RMA will consider panel recommendations and may consider additional factors, such as geographic distribution or USDA priorities and needs of the agency, diversity of projects, as well as the Administrator's confidence in a prospective recipient's ability to perform award requirements satisfactorily including,but not limited to, past performance. USDA may not fund an application based upon,among other requirements, one or more of the above-mentioned factors. The Administrator of RMA will make the final determination on those applications that will be awarded funding.

2. Merit/Technical Criteria

Applications submitted under the Risk Management Education Partnership Program will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

Project Results – Maximum 60 points available

Each application must demonstrate the project benefits and results to producers, warrant the funding requested. Applications will be considered according to the extent they can: (a) identify the specific actions producers will likely take as a result of the educational activities described in the Proposed Results; (b) identify the specific measures for evaluating results including, but not limited to, a change in producer behavior, resulting in (i) understanding crop insurance program and other risk management tools, (ii) evaluating what risk management options works best for his/her operation, and (iii) developing and implementing a specific course of action (e.g., participation in crop insurance programs, creating a risk management plan or other risk management activities) listed in the Proposal Narrative; and (c) compare work described in the Proposal Narrative and the SOW (e.g., work to be done; detailed project tasks and how RMA substantial involvement is directly included) against the Budget Narrative (e.g. cost of work to be done) to the Proposed Results (e.g., benefits to the producers). Higher consideration will be given to applications demonstrating: (a) a clear description of the crop insurance education and risk management training to be delivered; (b) alignment with one or more priorities listed in Section A, 3, 4 and 5; (c) an explanation of the intended audiences and why these groups were chosen; (d) identifies clear and reasonable producer outcomes demonstrating that the project design includes results at the highest level of behavior change and are directly linked to the proposed educational activities; and (e) the best use of funds for the number of producers reached at the cost per producer.

Statement of Work (SOW) – Maximum 5 points available

Each application must include a clear and specific SOW for the project as part of theProposal Narrative. For each of the tasks contained in the Description of AgreementAward, the application must identify and describe specific tasks,

responsible entitiesincluding partners, expected completion dates and deliverables that will further the purpose of this program. RMA substantial involvement must be included. Higher consideration will be given to Applications with SOWs that are well-designed and demonstrate project effectiveness.

Partnering – Maximum 10 points available

Each application must list all partners working on the project, their titles, and how they will contribute to the deliverables and activities listed in the application. The application must describe how each partner will aid in carrying out the project goal and purpose stated in this announcement and must include Letters of Commitment dated no more than 45 days prior to submission of the relevant application stating that the partner has agreed to do this work. Each application must demonstrate that the Project Director has the capability to accomplish the project goal and purpose stated in this announcement by (a) having a previous or existing working relationship with the agricultural community in the designated State of the application, including being able to recruit approximately the number of producers to be reached in the application and/or (b) having established the capacity to partner with and gain the support of producer organizations, agribusiness professionals, and agribusiness leaders locally to aid in carrying out a program of education and information, including being able to recruit approximately the number of producers to be reached in this application. Applications will receive higher consideration to the extent that the application demonstrates: (a) that partnership commitments are in place for the express purpose of delivering the program in this announcement; (b) that partners are contributing to the project and involved in recruiting producers to attend the training; (c) that a substantial effort has been made to partner with organizations that can meet the needs of producers in the designated State; and (d) statements from each partner regarding the number of producers that partner is committed to recruit for the project that would support the estimates specified under the Project Impacts criterion. No points will be given if a partner is listed but there is no corresponding Letter of Commitment from the partner who is listed in the application.

Key Personnel and Organizational Capacity – Maximum 10 points available

Each application must demonstrate an ability to implement sound and effective project management practices. Higher consideration in this category will be awarded to applications that demonstrate organizational skills, leadership, and experience in delivering services or programs that assist agricultural producers in the designated State. Applications must designate an alternate individual to assume responsibility as Project Director in the event the original Project Director is unable to finish the project. Applications that will employ, or have access to, personnel who have experience in directing local educational programs that benefit agricultural producers in the respective State will receive higher consideration in this category. Applications with Key Personnel from a Minority Serving Institution (Historically Black College or University, Hispanic Serving Institution, Tribal College and University, and Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institution) will receive higher consideration.

Budget Appropriateness and Efficiency – Maximum 5 points available

Applications must provide a (1) total cost of the project; and (2) a detailed budget

narrative that clearly explains and justifies costs associated with the project's tasks listed in the SOW. Applications must provide detailed costs by tasks listed in the SOW. Applications will receive higher consideration in this category to the extent that they can demonstrate a fair and reasonable use of funds appropriate for the project.

Innovative Approach – Maximum 10 points available

Applications should state how the project employs innovative approaches to reach producers and/or provide them with innovative training, materials, or tools; and propose alternative versus traditional strategies to manage agriculture risks; that are clearly tied into RMA's project results and priorities. Duplicative activities and materials from previous awards may not be considered. Previously funded applicants must provide details on how the proposed project builds upon or collaborates with any Risk Management Education project you were a part of, or alternatively, how this is a totally unique and innovative project from those previously funded.

3. Administrative and Risk Criteria

Notice of selection after merit/technical evaluation does not guarantee that an applicant will receive an award. Following notification of selection for funding (see Section F), the FPAC Business Center, Grants and Agreements Division's staff conducts a final administrative and risk review of those applications. The administrative review includes, but is not limited to, a check to ensure that NFO requirements were met (e.g., applicant meets eligibility criteria, application was submitted via RVS by the established deadline), and proposed costs are allowable, allocable and necessary. During this process, it may be necessary to request further documentation from the applicant (e.g., organizational information as part of the risk assessment, more detail regarding proposed costs).

In addition, to comply with the requirements at 2 CFR 200.205, the agency will follow, at a minimum, the risk review process described below (additional steps may be taken).

The awarding agency will check SAM to ensure the applicant is not suspended or debarred, which would preclude receiving an award. In addition, prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold ($250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.206(a)).

An applicant must meet the following standards to be considered for award:

a. Financial Stability. The applicant maintains an adequate financial resources or cash flow to meet its financial obligations on a routine basis in order to successfully complete any agreement it may be awarded.
b. Quality of Management Systems and Ability to meet Management Standards prescribed in 2 CFR Part 200. The applicant has a financial management

system adequate to segregate and track federal funds. It has adequate systems in place for proper agreement administration; compliance with the standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 Section D for procurement, property, and records management; and required financial and performance reporting.

c. History of Performance. If the applicant has previously obtained Federal financial assistance award, it has never failed to materially comply with the Federal award terms and conditions and further that it has never had an award terminated on that basis.

Submission of an application constitutes certification that an applicant meets these standards (items a through c. above). The agency may request documentation to substantiate the certification. Based on risk assessment, the agency may impose specific award conditions in accordance with 2 CFR 200.208.

4. Awards Over the Simplified Acquisition Threshold (if applicable)

Prior to making a Federal award with a total Federal share greater than the simplified acquisition threshold ($250,000), the agency must review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrityand performance system accessible through SAM, the Federal Awardee Performance Integrity Information System, FAPIIS. FAPIIS is a federal database intended to serve as a government-wide source of information about the prior performance and compliance of federal procurement contractors, grantees, and cooperative agreement holders (see 41 U.S.C. 2313 and 2 CFR 200.206(a)).

An applicant may review information in FAPIIS accessible through SAM and comment on any information about it that a Federal awarding agency previously entered;

The agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 CFR 200.206, Federal awarding agency review of riskposed by applicants.

5. Anticipated Selection Announcement and Federal Award Dates

The agency anticipates announcing or notifying successful and unsuccessful applicants by April 2024 and expects to have Federal awards in place no later September 2023.

F. FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

1. Federal Award Notices

The agency will provide notice that an application has been selected before it actually makes the Federal award. As such, the selection notification is not an authorization to begin performance. Any pre-award costs incurred by the awardee

will not be reimbursed. The Notice of Grant and Agreement Award (ADS-093) signed by the authorized agency official is the only authorizing document and will be provided electronically to the entity's authorized official for signature.

Both successful and unsuccessful applicants with be notified of the award decision via letter.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

All project funds will be used in accordance with 2 CFR 200 and the General Terms and Conditions, which are available at the following website: https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html.

a. Requirement to acknowledge USDA support. Recipients will be required to acknowledge USDA support according to 2 CFR Part 415. Recipients shall use the following acknowledgment on all publications and audiovisuals supported by the RMA cooperative agreement: This material/event is funded in partnership by USDA, Risk Management Agency, under award number XXX-XXXX. Whenever practical, recipients shall use a USDA logo providedby RMA.

b. Requirement to Provide Project Materials and Information to an RMA- selected Representative. Recipients are required to provide RMA educationalmaterials, tools, webpages or similar items no later than 10 business days before use in the public domain for the purpose of RMA review and approval. Educational materials cannot be used without RMA approval. Recipients will also be required to assist RMA in evaluating the effectiveness of its educational programs by notifying RMA of upcoming trainings, meetings, andby providing documentation of educational activities, materials, and related information to any representative(s) selected by RMA for program evaluation purposes.

c. Access to Panel Review Information Applicants can review their application's panel comments made available in the RVS. Information will not include the identity of the reviewers.

d. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards. The names of applicants,the names of individuals identified in the applications, the content of applications, and the panel evaluations of applications will all be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of review panel members will remain confidential throughout the entire review process and will not be released to applicants. When an application results in a cooperative partnership agreement, that agreement becomes a part of the official record of RMA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be of a confidential, privileged,or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law.Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to be considered confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked

within an application, including the basis for such designation. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by RMA for a period of eighteen (18) months. Other copies will be destroyed. Copies of applications not receiving awards will be released only with the express written consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to award.

e. Risk Assessment Awards will receive a risk assessment and are subject to enhanced monitoring based on program risk factors to ensure that federal funds are being used in accordance with the specified requirements in the agreement and managed appropriately as required. This risk assessment will be an indicator of programmatic or financial vulnerability in the managementof federal funds. All awards will be subject to, among other requirements, applicable requirements of 2 C.F.R. §200.205.

f. Audit Requirements. All cooperative agreements will be subject to, among other requirements, applicable audit requirements of 2 C.F.R. subtitle A, and 2 C.F.R. subtitle B, chapter IV. Agreement holders must send a copy of the management decision letter, if applicable, to RME Program Analysts by e-mail: RMA.Risk-ED@usda.gov.

g. Departmental regulations published at 2 C.F.R part 418 imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative partnership, agreements and loans. It provides exemptions for Indian Tribes and tribal organizations. Current and prospective recipients, and any subcontractors, are prohibited from using Federal funds, other than profits from a Federal contract, for lobbying Congress or any Federal agency in connection with the award of a contract, grant, cooperative partnership agreement or loan. In addition, for each award action in excess of $100,000 ($150,000 for loans) the law requiresrecipients and any subcontractors to complete a certification in accordance with Appendix A to Part 418 and a disclosure of lobbying activities in accordance with Appendix B to Part 418. The law establishes civil penalties for non-compliance.

h. Representation Regarding the Prohibition on Using Funds under Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Entities that Require Certain Internal Confidentiality Agreements By submission of its proposal or application, the applicant represents that is does not require any of its employees, contractors,or subrecipients seeking to report fraud, waste, or abuse to sign or comply with internal confidentially agreements or statements prohibiting or otherwise restricting those employees, contractors, or subrecipients from lawfully reporting that waste, fraud, or abuse to a designated investigative or law enforcement representative of a Federal department or agency authorized to receive such information. Note that: (1) the basis for this representation is a prohibition in Sections 743, 744 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, Pub. L. 114-113, (Division E, Title VII, General Provisions Government-wide) and any successor provisions of law on making funds available through grants

and cooperative agreements to entities with certain internal confidentiality agreements or statements; and (2) Section 744 states that it does not contravene requirements applicable to Standard Form 312, form 4414, or any other form issued by a Federal department or agency governing the nondisclosure of classified information.

i. All cooperative partnership agreements funded as a result of this notice will be subject to the requirements contained at 2 CFR 200 and all applicable OMB circulars at Government Publishing Office website: https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?tpl=/ecfrbrowse/Title02/2cfr200_main_02.tpl

j. Requirement to Assure Compliance with Federal Civil Rights Laws Recipients and all partners/collaborators of all cooperative agreements fundedas a result of this notice are required to know and abide by Federal civil rightslaws, which include, but are not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et. seq.); 7 C.F.R. part 15 and Executive Order 13166, Limited English Proficiency (LEP). RMA requires that recipients submit an Assurance Agreement (Civil Rights), assuring RMA of this compliance prior to the beginning of the project period. Although recipients are required to report on their civil rights compliance using demographic dataamong other methodologies, recipients are not required to collect demographic data directly from producers until such time as RMA has an approved form and process in place for that purpose.

k. Requirement to Participate in a Post Award Teleconference RMA requires that project leaders participate in a post award teleconference to become fullyaware of agreement requirements and for delineating the roles of RMA personnel and the procedures that will be followed in administering the agreement and will afford an opportunity for the orderly transition of agreement duties and obligations if different personnel are to assume post- award responsibility.

3. Reporting

Reporting will follow the guidelines included in the agency's General Terms and Conditions, which are available at the following website: https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/grants-and-agreements/award-terms-and-conditions/index.html

Recipients will be required to submit semi-annual financial and program reports (OMB Standard Form 425) throughout the project period, as well as a final program and financial report not later than 120 days after the end of the project period. The semi-annual progress reports and final program reports MUST be submitted through RVS. The website address is https://rvs.umn.edu/Home.aspx.

If the Federal share of any agreement awarded under this opportunity notice may include more than $500,000 over the period of performance, recipients must also comply with the post award reporting requirements reflected in Appendix XII of 2 CFR Part 200 —Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters.

Applicants that receive awards pursuant to this opportunity and any subawardees must comply with the reporting requirements described at 2 CFR Part 170, unless an exception applies. Applicants must ensure they have the necessary processes and systems in place to comply with those requirements. A list of exceptions can be found at 2 CFR 170.110(b).

G. FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT

For questions regarding this opportunity, please contact the following individual with the NFO number in the subject line:

Name: *Sundii Johnson*
Grants Management Specialist
FPAC Business Center
Phone Number: *202-720-5265*
Email: *Sundii.Johnson@usda.gov* with a copy to *NFO.FPAC@USDA.GOV*

H. OTHER INFORMATION

1. Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted to the Federal Awarding Agency Contact identified above via email with the NFO number in the subject line. Questions must be submitted by February 5, 2024. A summary of questions and answers will be posted to the Related Documents tab of this NFO in Grants.gov approximately two weeks before the application due date.

2. For technical issues with Grants.gov, please contact Grants.gov Applicant Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov. Awarding agency staff cannot support applicants regarding Grants.gov accounts.

3. **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**
   Applications are considered confidential information. Applications are not shared with individuals or entities seeking public disclosure through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) without the consent of the applicant. More specifically, Executive Order 12600 and USDA FOIA regulation 7 CFR Part 1, Subpart A requires the awarding agency to provide notice to applicants that a third party has requested copies of their business information, and requires the awarding agency to consult with applicants regarding the releasing their records.

4. **Government Obligation**
   The Federal Government is not obligated to make any Federal award as a result of this opportunity. Only authorized federal officials can bind the Federal Government to the expenditure of funds.

5. Any award made pursuant to this NFO may be executed in any number of counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

6. To view past completed RMA awards, please visit http://rmaresults.agrisk.umn.edu

U.S. Department of Agriculture Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at https://www.ascr.usda.gov/filing-program-discrimination-complaint-usda-customer and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form.

To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410;
(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

APPENDIX - Budget Narrative Guidance

All costs must comply with the cost principles of 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles. All costs (both Federal and any required non-Federal cost-sharing/match) that are part of an award must be:

- allowable (2 CFR 200.403),
- allocable to the agreement (2 CFR 200.405), and
- reasonable in amount (2 CFR 200.404).

A thorough budget narrative will aid the administrative review and processing of a recommended award. Amounts included in a budget and budget narrative are estimates; in the event of an award, payments will be based on actual expenditures. The following is guidance for your use in preparing a thorough budget narrative. The guidance follows the order of the budget items.

COST-SHARING/MATCHING: If required, you must provide the information below for the Federal portion of costs and *separately* provide the information below with the same level of detail for the cost-sharing/matching portion, as applicable, as part of the budget narrative.

PERSONNEL – Only include employees of applicant organization

This category includes salaries and wages of personnel of the applicant organization (i.e., employees) that will be working directly on the project. For each individual, identify their role and describe their contributions to the project. Also include their annual salary, percent of effort, and the period of time they will contribute to the project along with the associated funds requested for support. The following format is an appropriate way to provide the information.

Mr. Jones – Project Director. Accountable for assuring that all project activities are carried out in a timely, cost-efficient and responsible manner. He will provide oversight of daily activities and lead and direct the project toward accomplishment of the objectives of the project. He is responsible for the submission of the required reports.

Salary	% effort	Project Duration	Funds Requested
$50,000	25%	12 months	$12,500

FRINGE BENEFITS – Only related to salaries identified under Personnel

Fringe benefits include, but are not limited to, the costs of leave (e.g., vacation, family-related, sick or military), employee insurance, pensions, and unemployment benefit plans. Also, see 2 CFR 200.431, Compensation-Fringe Benefits. Provide information about how fringe benefits are determined along with the amount requested.

For instance:	Amt. Requested
Fringe benefits - 25% of salaries and wages ($12,500 @ 25%).	$3,125

TRAVEL

Refer to your organization's travel policy for guidance on how to arrange travel. If your organization lacks a policy, it is expected that you follow the U.S. federal government policy, see http://www.gsa.gov/federaltravelregulation.

For the budget narrative, identify the total funds requested for travel. Provide as much detail as possible including purpose, destination, dates of travel, and number of individuals for each trip. If the dates of travel are not known, specify estimated length of trip. Identify what will be followed (e.g., organizational travel policies or government per diem rates). The following are a few examples of how to provide the information.

- 2 people - travel to Washington D.C. once per year for a two-day meeting [identify purpose of meeting].

  Airfare $800 x 2 for airfare = $1,600
  Airport parking = $64
  Hotel for 3 nights x 2 @ $200 = $1,200
  Meals for 2 days x 2 = $24;
  Rental car for 3 days @ $110/day = $330
  Total for trip: $3,439

- Local travel for project manager is calculated at .50 per mile throughout primary service area x 326 miles/month x 12 months = $1,956.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment is defined as an item of property that has an acquisition cost of $5,000 or more (unless the organization has established lower levels) and an expected service life of more than one year. List each item of equipment along with the applicable cost. Include justification of its need in accomplishing the goals of the project.

> Example: To complete objectives #1 and #2, Refrigerated Trailer is required. XYZ Refrigerated Trailer, Model #123, at $5,555

These costs should only include the costs to purchase new equipment. The cost of renting or leasing equipment is not to be included in this category but instead, include under the Contractual category. If equipment is costly, include a lease vs purchase comparison in the budget narrative in support of route chosen.

SUPPLIES

Supplies is defined in 2 CFR 200.94 as all tangible personal property other than those described in 2 CFR 200.33 Equipment. A computing device is a supply if the acquisition cost is less than the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes or $5,000, regardless of the length of its useful life. Suggest also viewing 2 CFR 200.453, Materials and Supplies Costs, Including Costs of Computing Devices, regarding the allowability of costs.

Indicate general categories of expendable supplies including an amount for each category. Caution: If a category is viewed as too general or the associated amount is too high, further

itemization may be requested. Therefore, use good judgement in determining the level of detail to provide.

Example: General office supplies $50/mo. x 12 mo. =	$600
Postage $37/mo. x 8 mo. =	$296
Laptop Computer 1 x $900 =	$900
Printer 1 x $300 =	$300
Projector 1 x $900 =	$900
Copies 8000 copies x .10/copy =	$800

CONTRACTUAL

This category includes consultants, subcontracts, etc.

Consultants -- List the total costs for all consultant services. Identify each consultant, the services he/she will perform, total number of days, rate of pay, travel costs, per diem, and total estimated costs.

Contract -- A contract is defined in 2 CFR 200.22 as a legal instrument by which a non-Federal entity purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a Federal award. The term as used in this part does not include a legal instrument, even if the non-Federal entity considers it a contract, when the substance of the transaction meets the definition of a Federal award or subaward (see §200.92 Subaward).

Explain the need for each agreement and how their use will support the purpose and goals of the project. For each contract, describe the associated activities, scope of work or services to be provided and how the costs were estimated. If budgeting for a procurement action, document if a solicitation process has occurred or if the contract will be a sole source.

Example:

- ABC Company: Training $250/individual x 3 staff 5 days = $ 750
- Amy White to provide Technical Assistant Services

1FTE @ $25,000 + 20% Fringe Benefits of $5,000 =	$30,000
Travel at 2,000 miles @ .50 per mile =	$ 1,000
Training course	$ 175
Supplies @ $42.50 x 12 months =	$ 510
Telephone @ $40 x 12 months =	$ 480
	$32,165

- John Doe, Consultant $40 per hour x 220 hours for 12-month period = $ 8,800
- To Be Announced Outreach Coordinator Annual salary $30,000 x 10% level of effort/12 months = $ 3,000

CONSTRUCTION

Construction efforts are to be included under this category with the same level of detail as described under the "Other" category below.

OTHER

Costs not fitting under one of the other categories are to be included under this category. The level of detail is to be commensurate with other categories. Subawards should be included in this category. Per 2 CFR 200.92, a subaward is an award provided by a pass-through entity to a subrecipient for the subrecipient to carry out part of a Federal award received by the pass-through entity. It does not include payments to a contractor or payments to an individual that is a beneficiary of a Federal program. A subaward may be provided through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the pass-through entity considers a contract.

Example: Outreach Workshop

Rental of facilities ($750/2 days)	$1,500
Information technology services	$ 400
Training packets (approx. 125/$40 each)	$5,000
Total	$6,900

Note: Percentage for contingencies is not an allowable cost.

INDIRECT

2 CFR 200.56 defines *Indirect (F&A) costs* as those costs incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved. To facilitate equitable distribution of indirect expenses to the cost objectives served, it may be necessary to establish a number of pools of indirect (F&A) costs. Indirect (F&A) cost pools must be distributed to benefitted cost objectives on bases that will produce an equitable result in consideration of relative benefits derived.

This cost category guidance includes several components:

- Calculation (This is to be included as part of the budget narrative)
- Indirect Cost Rates
- Negotiated Rate
- 10% De Minimis Rate
- Limitation (i.e., indirect cost cap)
- Unrecovered Indirect Costs for Cost-sharing/Match
- Voluntarily Reduce/Waive

Calculation.

If indirect costs are requested as part of the proposed budget, you must provide details used in determining the indirect costs requested. For instance, provide the calculation specifying the amounts used in applying the base (the base specified in the applicable rate agreement) by the applicable rate (see indirect cost rate info below as well as Limitation section). The calculation can be displayed in different formats but must capture the components (i.e., amounts used in applying the base and the applicable rate).

EXAMPLE 1: For purposes of this example, the recipient uses the 10% de minimis indirect cost rate (10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)). MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward. MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures,

charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000.

	Budget	Indirect Eligible Amounts
Salaries and wages	$50,000	$50,000
Materials and supplies	3,000	3,000
Equipment	5,500	-0-
Subaward	30,000	25,000
		$78,000 x 10% = $7,800 Indirect Costs

EXAMPLE 2: For purposes of this example, the recipient has a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) of 20% with a base of salaries and fringe benefits.

	Budget	Indirect Eligible Amounts
Salaries and wages	$50,000	$50,000
Fringe Benefits	10,000	10,000
Materials and supplies	3,000	-0-
Equipment	5,500	-0-
Subaward	30,000	-0-
		$60,000 x 20% = $12,000 Indirect Costs

Indirect costs may only be recovered if the non-Federal entity has one of the following indirect cost rates.

1. **Negotiated Rate:** If the organization has a *current* NICRA established with the cognizant Federal agency (the agency that provides the most funds to the organization), then provide a copy of the NICRA; expired rates are not acceptable. If unable to obtain a current negotiated rate from the cognizant agency, you are permitted to opt to use the 10% de minimis cost rate (you may only be reimbursed for allowable direct cost). Violation of cost accounting principles is not permitted when re-budgeting or charging costs to awards. Rather, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs. Along with a copy of the NICRA, include the rate and base as part of the budget narrative.

   Example: Rate 24.87% of MTDC - 24.87% applied to the following items: $97,300 of Personnel, $23,352 of Fringe, $110,000 of other, and the first $25,000 of three (3) subawards = $76,015.65 indirect costs

2. **10% De Minimis Cost Rate:** In accordance with 2 CFR 200.414(f), any non-Federal entities, unless excepted, may elect to forgo calculation of an indirect cost rate and request a 10% de minimis indirect cost rate. The 10% de minimis rate is applied to modified total direct costs (MTDC). For this purpose, MTDC means total direct costs related to the award, such as direct labor, fringe benefits, materials and supplies, publications, consultant services and travel costs. MTDC excludes the following costs: equipment, capital expenditures, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward and subcontract in excess of $25,000. Violation of cost accounting principles is

not permitted when charging costs to awards. Rather, costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs.

If the 10% de minimis option is chosen, it must be used consistently for all Federal awards until such time you choose to negotiate for a rate, which you may apply to do at any time. If the organization previously opted for the de minimis rate, a copy of the rate agreement must be provided. If the organization is currently electing the de minimis rate, use an indirect cost rate of no more than 10% of MTDC when preparing the budget. If selected for award, a de minimis rate agreement will be executed along with the award, as appropriate.

Example: Rate 10% of MTDC – 10% applied to the following items: $45,000 of Personnel, $10,800 of Fringe, and $59,000 of Other = $11,480 indirect costs

Limitation: Some programs may not allow the recovery of indirect costs. In such instances, the limitation flows down to subcontractors. Refer to the applicable notice of funding opportunity to determine if indirect costs are unallowable.
USDA appropriation acts limit indirect costs to 10 percent for cooperative and contribution agreements with nonprofit entities; for purposes of this limitation "nonprofit entities" includes institutions of higher education. For agreements subject to this limitation first apply the 10 percent indirect cost rate to the agreement's total direct costs; this is shown on line 6.i of the SF424A. Then calculate indirect costs using the rate and the direct cost application base specified in the recipient's NICRA. Use whichever rate results in the lower amount.
If the organization has a NICRA, both the NICRA calculation and the 10% TDC must be completed in order to determine the lesser (i.e., maximum allowed indirect costs) for the applicable project.
Calculation instructions: First, multiply the NICRA rate by the base stated in the NICRA to arrive at Amount A. Next, multiply the statutory limit of 10% by TDC to arrive at Amount B. The lower of Amount A and B is the maximum amount of allowable indirect cost, therefore include this amount on the budget.

Unrecovered Indirect Costs for Cost-sharing/Match: 2 CFR 200.306(c) provides, "Unrecovered indirect costs, including indirect costs on cost sharing or matching may be included as part of cost sharing or matching only with the prior approval of the Federal awarding agency. Unrecovered indirect cost means the difference between the amount charged to the Federal award and the amount which could have been charged to the Federal award under the non-Federal entity's approved negotiated indirect cost rate."

Voluntarily Reduce/Waive: A recipient may voluntarily reduce or waive recovery of indirect costs at its sole discretion and must not be encouraged or coerced in any way to do so by the agency. If organizations waive indirect cost recovery and request only direct costs, the organization is required to include in the award budget only those types of costs consistently treated as direct costs by the organization.