



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Socially-Disadvantaged Groups Grant Program 2015

APPLICATION TEMPLATE

NOTICE TO ALL SOCIALLY-DISADVANTAGED GROUPS GRANT APPLICANTS

- Use of this application template is not required (optional). However, applicants must provide the required information.
- Use of the template does not imply or ensure a favorable eligibility determination.
- In addition to the information requested in the template, applicants must complete and submit **all required** Federal forms and registrations, and append specified documentation to support claims for applicant eligibility, experience, and local support; as specified by the program.
- Applications received that do not include **ALL** required materials will be considered incomplete and ineligible.
- The **bold** text in the template provides guidance on the requirement and should be deleted prior to submitting your application.

"[CLICK AND INSERT APPLICATION TITLE HERE]"

A 2015 SOCIALLY-DISADVANTAGED GROUPS GRANT APPLICATION

Submitted by:

"[CLICK AND INSERT APPLICANT NAME HERE]"

"[CLICK AND INSERT APPLICANT STREET ADDRESS]"

"[CLICK AND INSERT CITY, STATE, ZIPCODE HERE]"

"[CLICK AND INSERT DATE HERE]"

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Provide a summary of the proposal, not to exceed one page, describing the Project, tasks to be completed, and other relevant information that provides a general overview of the Project.

"[CLICK AND TYPE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY HERE.]"

ELIGIBILITY DISCUSSION (4 PAGE MAX)

Applicant Eligibility

Describe how you meet the definition of a Cooperative, Group of Cooperatives, or Cooperative Development Center. Your application must show that a majority of the board of directors or governing board is comprised of individuals who are members of socially-disadvantaged groups. Your application must include a list of your board of directors/governing board and the percentage of board of directors/governing board that are members of Socially-Disadvantaged Groups.

"[CLICK AND INSERT APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY DISCUSSION]"

Use of Funds

Discuss how the proposed Project activities meet the definition of Technical Assistance and identify the socially-disadvantaged groups that will be assisted.

"[CLICK AND INSERT USE OF FUNDS DISCUSSION]"

Project Area

Provide specific information that details the location of the Project area and explain how the area meets the definition of "Rural Area."

"[CLICK AND INSERT PROJECT AREA DISCUSSION]"

Grant Period

Provide a time frame for the proposed Project and discuss how the Project will be completed within that time frame. Applications must have a time frame of one year or less. Your proposed time frame should begin no earlier than the grant award date and end no later than December 31, 2016.

"[CLICK AND INSERT GRANT PERIOD DISCUSSION]"

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

SCORING CRITERIA

Technical Assistance (2 page limit)

(a) Technical Assistance (maximum score of 15 points). A panel of USDA employees will evaluate your application to determine your ability to assess the needs of Socially-Disadvantaged Groups. You must explain why the proposed Technical Assistance is needed and provide a detailed plan that describes your method of providing assistance. You must also identify the expected outcomes of the proposed Technical Assistance.

Higher points are awarded if you identify specific needs of the Socially-Disadvantaged Groups to be assisted; clearly explain a logical and detailed plan of assistance for addressing those needs; and discuss realistic outcomes of planned assistance.

"[CLICK AND INSERT CRITERION DISCUSSION HERE]"

Experience (2 page limit)

(b) Experience (maximum score of 15 points). A panel of USDA employees will evaluate your length of experience for identified staff or consultants in providing Technical Assistance, as defined in this Notice. You must describe the specific type of Technical Assistance experience for each identified staff member or consultant, as well as years of experience in providing that assistance. In addition, resumes for each individual staff member or consultant must be included as an attachment, listing their experience for the type of Technical Assistance proposed. The attachments will not count toward the maximum page total. We will compare the described experience to the work plan to determine relevance of the experience. Applications that do not include the attached resumes will not be considered for funding.

Higher points will be awarded if a majority of identified staff or consultants demonstrate 5 or more years of experience in providing relevant Technical Assistance in accordance with the work plan. Maximum points will be awarded if all of the identified staff or consultants demonstrate 5 or more years of experience in providing relevant Technical Assistance.

"[CLICK AND INSERT CRITERIA DISCUSSION HERE]"

Commitment (2 page limit)

(c) Commitment (maximum of 10 points). A panel of USDA employees will evaluate your commitment to providing Technical Assistance to Socially-Disadvantaged Groups in Rural Areas. You must list the number and location of Socially-Disadvantaged Groups that will directly benefit from the assistance provided. If you define and describe the underserved and economically distressed areas within your service area and provide current and relevant statistics that support your description of the service area, you will score higher on this factor.

"[CLICK AND INSERT CRITERION DISCUSSION HERE]"

Work Plan / Budget (4 page limit)

(d) Work Plan /Budget (maximum of 15 points). Your work plan must provide specific and detailed descriptions of the tasks and the key project personnel that will accomplish the project's goals. Budget will be reviewed for completeness. You must list what tasks are to be done, when it will be done, who will do it, and how much it will cost. Reviewers must be able to understand what is being proposed and how the grant funds will be spent. The budget must be a detailed breakdown of estimated costs. These costs should be allocated to each of the tasks to be undertaken. The amount of grant funds requested will be reduced if the applicant does not have justification for all costs.

A panel of USDA employees will evaluate your work plan for detailed actions and an accompanying timetable for implementing the proposal. Clear, logical, realistic, and efficient plans will result in a higher score. You must discuss at a minimum:

- (i) Specific tasks to be completed using grant funds;
- (ii) How customers will be identified;
- (iii) Key personnel; and
- (iv) The evaluation methods to be used to determine the success of specific tasks and overall project objectives. Please provide qualitative methods of evaluation. For example, evaluation methods should go beyond quantitative measurements of completing surveys or number of evaluations.

"[CLICK AND INSERT CRITERION DISCUSSION HERE]"

Local Support (2 page limit)

(e) Local support (maximum of 5 points). A panel of USDA employees will evaluate your application for local support of the Technical Assistance activities. Applicants that demonstrate strong support from potential beneficiaries and other developmental organizations will receive more points than those not showing such support.

(i) 0 points are awarded if you do not address this criterion.

(ii) 1 point is awarded if you provide 2-3 support letters that show support from potential beneficiaries and/or support from local organizations.

(iii) 2 points are awarded if you provide 4 -5 support letters that show support from potential beneficiaries and/or support from local organizations.

(iv) 3 points are awarded if you provide 6-7 support letters that show support from potential beneficiaries and/or support from local organizations.

(v) 4 points are awarded if you provide 8-9 support letters that show support from potential beneficiaries and/or support from local organizations.

(vi) 5 points are awarded if you provide 10 support letters that show support from potential beneficiaries and/or support from local organizations.

You may submit a maximum of 10 letters of support. Support letters should come from potential beneficiaries and other local organizations. Letters received from Technical Assistance providers and Congressional members will not be included in the count of support letters received. Support letters should be included as an attachment to the application and will not count against the maximum page total. Additional letters from industry groups, commodity groups, Congressional members, and similar organizations should be referenced, but not included in the application package. When referencing these

letters, provide the name of the organization, date of the letter, the nature of the support, and the name and title of the person signing the letter.

"[CLICK AND INSERT CRITERION DISCUSSION HERE]"

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION MEASURES

You must provide estimates on the following performance evaluation measures as part of your narrative:

- **Number of businesses assisted;**
- **Number of cooperatives assisted; and**
- **Number of socially disadvantaged groups assisted.**

APPENDIX A

If applying as a Cooperative or a Group of Cooperatives, you must verify your incorporation and status in the State that you have applied by providing the State's Certificate of Good Standing and your Articles of Incorporation. If applying as a nonprofit corporation, you must provide evidence of your status as a nonprofit corporation in good standing and your Articles of Incorporation. If applying as an institution of higher education, you must qualify as an Institution of Higher Education as defined at 20 U.S.C. 1001. You must apply as only one type of applicant. If the requested verification documents are not included, your application will not be considered for funding.

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APPENDIX B

Resumes for each individual staff member or consultant must be included as an attachment, listing their experience for the type of Technical Assistance proposed. The attachments will not count toward the maximum page total. We will compare the described experience to the work plan to determine relevance of the experience. Applications that do not include the attached resumes will not be considered for funding.

APPENDIX C

You may submit a maximum of 10 letters of support. Support letters should come from potential beneficiaries and other local organizations. Letters received from Technical Assistance providers and Congressional members will not be included in the count of support letters received.

Support letters should be included as an attachment to the application and will not count against the maximum page total.