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|  | **Special Projects Grant Program (SPGP)**  Request for Proposals  2017 |
| RFP Published: 6/1/2017  Due Date: 9/1/2017  Review: 9/1/2017-10/1/2017  Awards: 11/1/2017  Submit Proposal as a Single PDF to: [necafs@uvm.edu](mailto:necafs@uvm.edu) | CONTACT:  Elizabeth Newbold  NECAFS Center Administrator  UVM Extension  PO Box 559  Bennington, VT 05201-0599  802-447-7582 x254  [elizabeth.newbold@uvm.edu](mailto:elizabeth.newbold@uvm.edu) |

**BACKGROUND**

The Special Projects Grant Program (SPGP) is an initiative of the Northeast Center to Advance Food Safety (NECAFS), one of four FDA/USDA funded regional centers aimed at improving coordinated training, education and outreach efforts related to food safety and FSMA compliance. This grant program will fund focused projects with very clear, near-term outcomes related to regionally important food safety issues among small to medium-sized producers and processors. The projects can be focused on research, education or both (i.e. integrated). The project term should not exceed 24 months.

**GOALS**

The goals of the SPGP are:

1. Reduce food safety risk in the region.
2. Address gaps in food safety knowledge with relevance to Northeast regional implementation of the Produce Safety Rule and the Preventive Controls Rule among small to medium-sized producers and processors and historically under-served audiences.
3. Contribute technical assistance to the region’s producers and processors through development and distribution of relevant food safety research and educational products.
4. Provide seed funding for early-stage work that leads to larger, collaborative projects and associated external awards.
5. Improve efficiency and efficacy of regional food safety research and educational programming via intentional, multi-state collaborations that combine disciplinary expertise to serve common goals.

**PROPOSAL CONTENT AND FORMAT**

Page limits must be followed; using 1 inch margins, single spaced, single sided, 11-pt font.

Cover page (1 page):

Project Title (capped at 15 words)

Project Category and Knowledge Area (See below)

Duration of project: Start & End date (not to exceed 24 months)

Contact Info for Principal Investigator (Name, Title, Organization, Address, Email, Phone number)

Executive Summary (1 page)

Provide a concise overview of the project in non-technical language. Within the provided overview, address how the project is going to reach small to medium-sized producers and/or processors and for projects with an education component, explain the project’s educational goals (i.e. number & location of workshops, number of participants reached, etc.).

Project Team (1 page)

List essential project personnel, their position/title, organizational affiliation, and their specific roles and responsibilities in the project.

Project Narrative (4 pages max)

Problem Statement – Summarize the problem your project will solve. What is the problem? Who is impacted by it? Provide data that describes the extent and importance of the problem.

Project Goals – List the quantifiable goals of the project; describe data that will be collected to measure progress toward the goals.

Proposed Solution - Describe the proposed work scope, methods and approach and how you will measure the results. Include approach, methods, results and data interpretation /analysis.

Regional Relevance – Summarize why the proposed work is specifically relevant to the region. Projects with national and international relevance are also welcome, but the regional relevance needs to be demonstrated.

Measurement of Results – Describe what the key measures of project progress (outputs and results) are. Explain how and when you will measure progress and ultimate results of the project.

Plan for Evaluation – Describe the ultimate project impact. Summarize how and when you will plan to evaluate the progress and ultimate impact of your project on small to medium-sized producers and/or processors. A logic model plan is recommended and can be attached as an appendix (not in page count).

Summary of Relevant Prior Work (Literature and Situational Review) (2 pages max)

A summary of the existing knowledge that supports the proposed work. Include a summary of prior and current work in this area by members of the project team. A list of references can be attached and does not count toward page limit.

Budget Request Justification (2 pages max)

Provide justification and background calculation as appropriate for each budget item and project year. See format information below for the budget sheet.

Letter of Commitment from the Organizational Official authorized to commit your organization to sponsored contracts.

**PROJECT CATEGORIES**

1. **Research** – Project activities and outputs will increase food safety knowledge in the region in support of educational programming through research. These projects will work to answer research questions, integrate knowledge in new and meaningful ways and leverage regional collaborations for collective impact having a near-term and direct link to educational programs.
2. **Education** – Project activities and outputs will improve the working knowledge among regional stakeholders, technical assistance providers and food system practitioners through educational programs. These projects will deliver educational programming not otherwise supported and will aim to provide learning opportunities in novel ways with demonstrated positive impact.
3. **Combined Research and Education** – Projects activities and outputs will be a combination of Research and Educational Categories described above.

**KNOWLEDGE AREAS**

The following knowledge areas have been identified by NECAFS project partners and regional stakeholders. They are provided as a guide to the areas of challenge faced currently. Projects are not limited to these areas.

1. Produce Safety
   1. Facilities and Infrastructure
   2. Water Management (Irrigation, Wash, & Discharge)
   3. Wash Line Equipment Improvements (e.g. Barrel Washers and Brush Washers)
   4. Cleaning and Sanitizing on farms or in packing areas
   5. Wash/Pack-house Enterprise Budgeting
   6. Educational Programming that Integrates FSMA Training with the Development of Farm Food Safety Plans
   7. Development of Innovative Educational Delivery Modalities (e.g. Hands-on Exercises, Improved Engagement, Adult Learning Practices)
   8. Other
2. Preventive Controls
   1. Sanitary Design of Processing Facilities for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
   2. Support and Development of Validation Services and Methods
   3. Equipment and Methods for Implementation of Preventive Controls for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
   4. Tools and/or Training Materials Relevant to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
   5. Food Safety Practice for Emerging or Novel Regional Foods (e.g. fermented foods)
   6. Other
3. Integrated
   1. Measurement/Logging/Tracking and Traceability/Record Keeping
   2. Improving Regulatory Clarity among Producers and Processors
   3. Cross Cutting Topics
   4. One-on-one Consultations and Technical Assistance
   5. Development of Add-on and/or Supplemental Materials to the National Curricula
   6. Other

**BUDGET FORMAT and ELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

1. The proposed budget should follow the SF424 Research and Related (R&R) Budget Format (<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/RR_Budget_1_3-V1.3.pdf>). Organizations may request indirect costs up their institution’s federally negotiated indirect rate for the proposed work. If your organization does not have a negotiated indirect rate you may request indirect costs up to 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs. Proposals must conform with funding restrictions in 45 CFR Part 74 or 45 CFR Part 92 as applicable and PHS Grants Policy Statements.
2. Additional budget questions:
   1. Will this project use external / leveraged / matching funds to help accomplish the work described? How do they impact the project’s success?
   2. What other financial considerations impact the project that aren’t covered in the proposal?

**AWARDS**

Funding for NECAFS was made possible, in part, by the Food and Drug Administration through grant 1R01FD005686, views expressed in written materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does any mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organization imply endorsement by the United States Government. As a project of NECAFS, awards made as a result of this RFP will be via sub-award agreements with institutions/organizations selected for funding. These sub-awards will include reporting requirements and the federal terms and conditions consistent with the primary award and the primary award sponsor. The total budget for all awards in this RFP round is $46,800 and 3 to 5 projects are expected to be funded.

**DELIVERABLES**

Annual reports are required 12 months from the project start date and interim reports (e.g. quarterly) are highly recommended. A final project report is also required at the end of the project. Project specific outputs (e.g. factsheets, training materials, publications) and project evaluation outputs that include specific details about how small to medium-sized producers and/or processors were reached shall also be provided. Photos and participant feedback are also encouraged.

**PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Projects will be evaluated according to how well they address the program goals noted above. Specifically, the evaluation criteria will include the assessment of how a proposal:

1. Project clearly addresses one of the program goals.
2. Problem is clearly described and relevant to regional stakeholders
3. Solution and approach are logical and achievable.
4. Project goals and their measures are specific and achievable
5. Project team and budget are appropriate for the proposed work.
6. Previous work supports the proposed work.