GUIDELINES

for

LAND GRANT INSTITUTION

PLANS OF WORK

DRAFT - FOR DISCUSSION

OCTOBER 1, 1998

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GUIDELINES
for
Land Grant Institution Plans of Work

Introduction
Sections 202 and 225 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (AREERA) require all institutions eligible for Federal research and extension formula funds to prepare, submit, and have approved a Plan of Work (POW) for funds authorized under the Hatch Act of 1887, as amended, the Smith-Lever Act, as amended, and Sections 1444 (1890 Extension) and 1445 (1890 Research) of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended.

The legislation specifies virtually identical POW requirements for the 1862 Research, 1862 Extension, 1890 Research, and 1890 Extension funds[1]. 1862, 1890 and 1994 institutions are also required to report stakeholder input and merit and peer review procedures. All components of the legislation have been considered in formulating these guidelines.

Planning Options
This document provides guidance for preparing the POW, with preservation of institutional autonomy and programmatic flexibility within the Federal-State Partnership. The POW is a 5-year prospective plan that covers the period of fiscal year 1999 through 2003, with the option to submit annual updates to the plan. POWs may be prepared for an institution's individual functions (i.e., research or extension activities), for an individual institution (including the planning of research and extension), or for state-wide activities (a plan for all eligible institutions within a State). Regardless of the type of report chosen, the POW must reflect the content of the program(s) funded by federal formula funds and the required match. It must also describe how the program(s) relate to and is part of the broad national goals. Institutions may opt to use this POW as a program communication document and, as such, include all relevant program activity regardless of funding source.

Stakeholder Input (Dialogue)[2]
To obtain agricultural research, extension, or education formula funds from the Secretary, each

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[1] Section 202 requires plans of work for 1862 research and extension formula funds. Section 225 requires plans of work for 1890 research and extension funds.

[2] Section 102 (c) requires stakeholder input for all research, education, and extension formula funds at 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions.

1862 Institution, 1890 Institution, and 1994 Institution shall establish and implement a process for obtaining input from persons who either conduct or use agricultural research, extension, or education concerning the use of the formula funds. POWs should identify the processes used by the eligible institutions to develop the programs targeted to address the critical issues of the State.

Consistent with the requirements of the AREERA, each institution shall report the following information through the appropriate section in the plan of work according to the following:

1. Institutions will seek input in an open and fair process that encourages the participation of diverse individuals and groups.

2. Institutions will provide a brief statement of the process used to identify individuals who conduct or use agricultural research, extension or education and to collect input from such individuals.

3. Institutions will provide examples that demonstrate that stakeholder input was considered.

Failure to complete and document the above items will result in the withholding of Federal formula funds for non-compliant institutions.

Merit and Peer Review[3]

Each 1862 and 1890 Institution eligible to receive agricultural research and extension formula funds and each 1994 Institution eligible to receive agricultural extension funds shall provide the following documentation for each program in the plan of work[4].

1. A description of the merit and/or peer review process which shall include but not be limited to priorities as reflected in the plan of work, the selection of reviewers with expertise relevant to the effort, and appropriate scientific and technical standards.

2. Certification of the process by individual(s) with USDA signature authority at institutions.

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[3] Section 103(e), 104(a)(2), 105(i) require that peer and merit reviews be conducted for projects funded by research and extension formula funds.

[4] 1994 extension funds are awarded competitively on the basis of merit review by CSREES. This review will constitute the required review of these programs.

Goals

The POW should be based on the 5 national goals established in the Research, Education, and Economics (REE) Mission Area and Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) Agency Strategic Plans(http://www.reeusda.gov). The body of the plan of work narrative should focus on these goals and outcomes. The 5 goals are:

> Goal 1. Through research and education, empower the agricultural system with knowledge that will improve competitiveness in domestic production, processing, and marketing.
>
> **An agricultural system that is highly competitive in the global economy.**

> Goal 2. To ensure an adequate food and fiber supply and food safety through improved science based detection, surveillance, prevention, and education.
>
> **A safe and secure food and fiber system.**

> Goal 3. Through research and education on nutrition and development of more nutritious foods, enable people to make health promoting choices.
>
> **A healthy, well-nourished population.**

> Goal 4. Enhance the quality of the environment through better understanding of and building on agriculture's and forestry's complex links with soil, water, air, and biotic resources.
>
> **An agricultural system which protects natural resources and the environment.**

> Goal 5. Empower people and communities, through research-based information and education, to address the economic and social challenges facing our youth, families, and communities.
>
> **Enhanced economic opportunity and quality of life for Americans.**

Format

As mentioned under the Planning Options section, an institution or state may opt to submit independent plans for the various units (e.g. 1862 research) or an integrated plan which includes all units in the institution or state. Regardless of the option chosen, the plans of work should be reported in a matrix format, each cell of which aggregates and summarizes all programs that fall under one of the national program goals. If an integrated plan is submitted, the various units within the entity for which the POW has been developed (i.e., 1862 research, 1890 research, 1862 extension, 1890 extension, or 1994 program) would appear on the vertical axis. Individual cells within the matrix would be used to summarize the state programs, along with their respective indicators and outcome measures.

If a single unit within an institution chooses to submit an independent plan, the matrix would have only one component in the vertical axis. Each cell in this matrix should include the items

listed under Planned Program outlined in the following section. This information could be in narrative form and should include quantifiable data, where possible.

The following example illustrates the desired matrix.

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5
Research					
Extension					

Planned Programs[5]
Program descriptions presented in narrative form or in each cell of the matrix will be related to each of the 5 strategic plan goals and should reflect the following planning components:

Each Program Description in the matrix cell or narrative should contain:
- Statement of Issue(s)
- Performance Goal(s)
- Key Program Components(s)
- Internal and External Linkages
- Target Audiences
- Evaluation Framework
- Output Indicators
- Outcome Indicators
- Program Duration
- Allocated Resources

- The **statement of the issue** should include an environmental scan and reflect the input of stakeholders.

- The **performance goal(s)** is a target level of performance expressed as a tangible, measurable objective against which actual achievement can be compared, including a goal expressed as a quantitative standard, value, or rate.

- The **key program component(s)** should identify the major efforts included in the curriculum, research protocol or activities to be conducted.

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[5] AREERA contains language titled "Treatment of Plans of Work for Other Purposes" which states, "To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary shall consider a plan of work .... to satisfy other federal reporting requirements [Section 202 (a)(e); Section 202 (b)(g); Section 225 (a)(d)(5), and Section 225 (b)(c)(5)]." The program components included in this POW will assist CSREES in developing its Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) performance plan and meet the institutions Civil Rights reporting requirements regarding program delivery and meeting the needs of underserved audiences.

- The **internal and external linkages** might include identification of research/extension joint efforts, multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional, and/or multi-state activities in the program.

- The **target audiences** identifies the set of stakeholders, customers, and/or consumers for which the program is intended to influence. The plans of work should address the institutions' commitment to facilitating equality of service and ease of access to all research and extension programs and services. Plans should address outreach efforts focused on providing technical assistance to underrepresented communities and underserved customers and the strategy to correct known disparities in either the research and/or extension programs. Attention must be given to programs that focus on the needs and interests of diverse audiences as defined from the perspective of those audiences.

- The **evaluation framework** should identify the context in which the program will be evaluated when completed.

- The **output indicators** should reflect the tabulation, calculation or recording of activity or effort expressed in quantitative or qualitative manner which measures the products or services produced by the program planned.

- The **outcome indicators** should assess the results of a program activity compared to its intended goal.

- The **program duration** should be expressed as short term, intermediate term or long term.

- The **allocated resources**, including fiscal, human, and information, must be described for each planned program.

Multi-Institutional, Multi-disciplinary, and Multi-State Programs
Descriptions of programs included in each cell of the matrix should reflect appropriate multi-state, multi-institutional, multi-disciplinary or multi-functional activities, if appropriate.

Beginning October 1, 1998, the Hatch regional research program will become the Hatch multi-state, multi-disciplinary research program[6]. Amendments to the Hatch Act require that not less than 25% of the funds be used for multi-disciplinary approaches to solve research problems that concern more than one state. State agricultural experiment stations may partner with another experiment station, ARS, or another college or university.

Beginning October 1, 1999, Cooperative Extension programs at 1862 institutions have a new requirement that up to 25% of their program supported by Federal funds include activities in

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[6] Section 104 of AREERA.

which two or more states cooperate to solve problems that concern more than one state[7]. As required by the law, CSREES will work with each 1862 institution to establish the institution's baseline for multi-state extension activities for fiscal year 1997. For fiscal year 2000, cooperative extension programs for 1862 institutions must commit two times their 1997 baseline or 25% (whichever is less) for multi-state activities. Institutions will be asked to describe the contributions of Extension staff and programs toward impacts rather than to describe the programs.

Beginning October 1, 1999, up to 25% of Smith-Lever and Hatch funds must be used by the institution for integrated/multi-functional activities[8]. As required by the law, CSREES will work with each 1862 institution to establish the institution's baseline for integrated research and extension activities for fiscal year 1997. For fiscal year 2000, 1862 institutions must commit two times their 1997 baseline or 25% (whichever is less) for integrated activities.

Multi-state, multi-disciplinary, and multi-functional programming must be reported in the POW and be consistent across the units of the institutions as well as the POW submitted by the cooperating state(s). Federal formula funds used by a state for integrated activities may also be used to satisfy the multi-state activity requirements[9].

Protocols for Evaluating Success of these Efforts

CSREES will use the annual accomplishments and results reports to evaluate "the success of multistate, multiinstitutional and multidisciplinary activities and joint research and extension activities in addressing critical agricultural issues identified in the plans of work[10]." The following evaluation criteria will be used in evaluating success.

Did the planned program:

1. Address the critical issues of strategic importance identified by stakeholders in the state(s)?
2. Address the needs and input of underserved populations of the state(s)?
3. Meet the expected outcomes and impacts?
4. Result in improved program delivery?

Projected Resources

The resources that are allocated for various activities in the POW, in terms of human and fiscal measures, should be included and projected for the next five years. The baseline for formula funding should be the prior year appropriation levels and the required match. If the baseline for

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[7] Section 105 of AREERA.

[8] Section 204 of AREERA.

[9] Section 204 (a)(I)(4) of AREERA.

[10] Section 202(a)(d); 202(b)(f); 225(a)(d)(4); and 225(b)(c)(4)

formula funds changes more than 10%, a revised plan should be submitted as an annual update. The matrix, described above, might be a useful means of assembling this information.

Equal Employment Opportunity Reporting
As recipients of Federal financial assistance, all land grant institutions (1862, 1890, and 1994) are required to develop a civil rights plan to ensure equal access and nondiscrimination in all terms and conditions of research and extension programs, including employment, work assignments, educational and training opportunities, research opportunities, use of facilities, and opportunities to serve on committees or decision-making bodies. Program development and delivery components of this requirement are addressed in the planned program section of the POW. Institutions have the option of including the remaining components of the required civil rights report as part of the plan of work. If institutions choose to not include this in the POW, the agency will request this information as a separate report.

If included in the POW, the equal employment plans should include adequate information to determine that the institution is complying with the requirements in civil rights/equal employment opportunity regulations. The plans should also include narrative and statistical information addressing goals and procedures to increase and sustain the diversity of the workforce. The plans of work should include background information on past performance/accomplishments, and describe how the institution plans to move into the future, including a delineation of methods for measuring results.

All institutions currently report this information to the Department of Education. The components of that report related to research and extension could, if submitted, fulfill this reporting requirement.

CSREES' Review
All POWs will be evaluated by CSREES. The submitting institution(s) will be notified by CSREES of its determination within 120 days (review to be completed in 90 days with a 30 day negotiation period) of receipt of the document. POWs will be either:

1. Accepted by the agency without change, or
2. Returned to the institution, with clear and detailed recommendations for its modification.

POWs accepted by the agency will remain in effect for 5 years, and will be publicly available in a CSREES data base. The Agency will notify all institutions of a need for a revision on or before January 31st prior to the plan's expiration on September 30.

CSREES Review Guidelines
CSREES will evaluate the Plans of Work asking the question, "Does the Plan of Work meet the following criteria:

1. Address issues of strategic importance to the state?

2. Identify the alignment and realignment of programs to address priority issues?
3. Identify the involvement of stakeholders in the planning process?
4. Give appropriate attention to underserved populations?
5. Indicate the level of Federal formula funds to all other funds at the state director level?
6. Provide evidence of multi-state, multi-institutional and multi-functional collaborations?
7. Identify the expected outcomes and impacts from the proposed POW?"

Planning Period Covered

The 5-year Plan of Work should reflect programs planned for each of the fiscal years (October 1 through September 30) included in the 5 years of the plan. The optional annual updates should be used to amend the 5-year plan when program direction changes. The annual modifications in the 5-year POW must also be approved by the Agency, consistent with the Review Guidelines.

The annual update should be submitted to CSREES, along with the annual report of accomplishments, for the preceding annual cycle. The updated POW would be a refinement of the 5-year plan based on accomplishments during the preceding cycle and current stakeholder input. It is anticipated that the institution would use this opportunity to report back to its stakeholders on progress made and goals met on the 5-year plan to date.

Certification

An institution's POW certifies that the plan constitutes official submission of all reporting requirements and must be signed by one or more officials with signature authority for USDA programs.

Due Date

All 5-year plans of work or the annual updates must be submitted no later than June 1. (The first plan is due June 1, 1999, in order to receive FY2000 funding on October 1, 1999). CSREES will have four months to complete the review of the POW and to advise the planning units included in the POW the status prior to the beginning of the fiscal year, October 1. Failure on the part of the institution reporting unit to submit by June 1 may delay completion of the review prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. Formula funds for any fiscal year cannot be released without an approved POW.

Reporting Accomplishments and Results

The POW for a reporting unit (i.e. 1862 research), an institution, or a state should form the basis for annually reporting its accomplishments which will be due on January 1 of each year (Due January 1, 2001 for reporting on FY2000). Accomplishments reporting should involve two parts. First, institutions should submit an annual set of impact statements linked to sources of funding. Strict attention to just the preceding year is not expected in all situations. Some impact statements may need to cover ten or more years of activity. Focus should be given to the benefits received by the targeted end-users.

Second, institutions should submit annual results statements based on the indicators of the outputs and outcomes for the activities undertaken during the preceding year. These should be identified as short, intermediate and long term critical issues in the POW. Attention should be given to highlighting multi-state, multi-institutional, and multi-functional activities, as appropriate to the POW.

Glossary of Terms

Fair and Open Process - Stakeholder input opportunities which afford all individuals, groups, and organizations a voice in a process that treats all with dignity and respect.

Formula Funds - For purposes of the Plan of Work Guidelines, formula funds refers to funding provided by formula to 1862 institutions under the Hatch and Smith-Lever Acts, as amended and 1890 institutions under Sections 1444 and 1445 of the National Agriculture Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended.

Integration - Jointly planned, funded and interwoven activities between research and extension to solve problems. This includes the generation of knowledge and the transfer of information and technology. It represents more than co-funding of a program.

Multi-institutional - Two or more institutions that have a different CEO who can make decisions for his/her institution. This would also link public or private organizations with the expertise or capability to collaborate in a research, extension, or education program to bring the best knowledge and technology to bear on a need or problem.

Multi-state - Collaborative efforts that reflect the programs of institutions located in at least two or more states or territories. Such programs must solve problems that concern more than one state or territory; and demonstrate that each participating state or territory will be a collaborator towards objectives and is involved in setting outcomes. Evidence of the proposed collaboration must be provided in the plan of work submitted by each state or territory of the effect of the work. This planning can be documented through formal agreements, letters or memorandums of understanding, contacts or other instruments that provide primary evidence that a multi-state relationship exists.

Multi-disciplinary - Efforts that represent research, education and/or extension programs in which principal investigators or other collaborators from two or more disciplines or fields of specialization work together to accomplish specified objectives.

Outcome indicator - A tabulation, calculation or recording of activity of effort expressed in quantitative or qualitative manner which measures the products or services produced by the program planned.

Output indicator - An assessment of the results of a program activity compared to is intended goal.

Program Duration:

Long Term - A program that runs in excess of 5 years.

Intermediate Term - A program that runs for a duration 1 to 5 years.

Short Term - A program that runs for less than 1 year.

Program Reviews:[11]

Merit Review - To ensure that the proposed program/project addresses established priorities, meets established criteria, and has a reasonable likelihood of success. Methods of merit review are a review panel, ad hoc reviews, and/or in-house technical reviews.

Peer Review - A type of merit review that includes evaluation of a proposal(s) by outside panel and/or ad hoc reviewers, whose expertise is relevant to the work proposed by the applicant.

Underserved - The needs of individuals, groups and/or organizations especially those who may not have participated fully (including, but not limited to, women, racial and ethnic minorities, persons with disabilities and limited resource clients) must be considered when developing program including the research agenda, education and technical assistance services and communications materials in appropriate languages.

[11] Definition of merit and peer review are still under review.