



NCRCRD Small Grants Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1) What are the regional rural development centers?

The regional rural development centers are funded as part of a USDA line item. There are four Regional Rural Development Centers (**RRDC**): Northeast Regional Center for Rural Development ([NERCRD](#)), Southern Rural Development Center ([SRDC](#)), North Central Regional Center for Rural Development ([NCRCRD](#)), and the Western Rural Development Center ([WRDC](#)). The RRDCs are a trusted source of economic and community development data, decision tools, education, and guidance for our nation's rural communities. Collectively, the Centers form a one-stop-shop connection to the nationwide network of Land-Grant Universities and the Cooperative Extension Service. Each Center serves a U.S. region and taps its Land-Grant University network to form innovative research and Extension partnerships in the area of rural development. Together, the RRDCs help rural communities make science-based decisions about their community and economic development investments.

2) What is the mission of the NCRCRD?

The mission of the NCRCRD is to strengthen the ability of the Land-Grant system to execute its rural development mission. Among four Centers, NCRCRD alone regularly offers small grants to help achieve this mission.

3) What are the major themes of the NCRCRD?

The major themes of the center are:

- Building a 21st Century Economy
- Sustainable Communities
- Leadership Development & Civic Engagement
- Community Health & Wellness

A more detailed description of each theme area is available [here](#).

4) What are the main requirements of the small grant program?

- More than one NC state is **REQUIRED** on a grant proposal. At least one partner from another NC state is required. Partners from non-NC states is ok, but not required.
- Multi-disciplinary/integrated proposals are preferred.
- All proposals are reviewed by reviewers in single-blind process. Based on these reviews all final funding decisions and budget recommendations are made by the NCRCRD Board of Directors.
- Expected start date mid-fall.
- What are some examples of deliverables?
 - Subsequent grant proposal—highest priority
 - Conference/workshop
 - Curriculum
 - Training
 - Publishable manuscript

5) What are some lessons learned from prior years that may be helpful in grant proposal preparation?

- Use NCRCRD seed funds to get organized to write a larger grant? Draft narrative due with progress report.
- Multi-state yes, but whole region is not necessary.
- Avoid including long lists of people who “might” be interested.
- Present true partnerships. One-sided or last-minute partnerships don’t review as well.
- Document how your NCRCRD small grant will seed future activities, especially if the proposed final outputs do not include a major grant proposal.
- Explain how the activity will benefit other land grants in the region.
- Engage other [1862 Land Grants](#), but also consider [1890](#), [1994 Land Grants](#).
- Hispanic-serving institutions also eligible.

6) What are the approaches for disbursement of funds?

In the past, we suggested one invoice when project is completed. Now, PI’s institution can issue up to three invoices over the course of the project, as long as a progress report is submitted at the same time with the first two invoices. One final invoice at the end must include the final report. The option of one invoice at the end of the project is still an option, with the final report required.

7) What types of fiduciary arrangements are possible?

If you plan to hiring staff, you need to go through all the approvals and if your grant is funded, we will send funds to your institution. If you don’t need to hire staff, you can skip some of the approvals and request reimbursement from us.

8) What can you expect in terms of timeline from proposal submission to completion of your grant project?

- Ideas or questions may be sent to the Director at any time before the submission due date; they will be reviewed in order received.
- Proposals due 5 p.m. ET, Feb 10, 2020. Late proposals will be rejected without review. Proposals that don’t follow formatting guidelines will be rejected without review.
- Preliminary decisions at April board meeting subject to final USDA approval and congressional funding. We will try to start projects October 1st, 2020. We have limited control over actual start date due to vagaries of Federal and University approvals.
- All funded projects will have 12 months from their start date.

9) How can I obtain copies of past proposals that were successful?

- You may ask a PI for a copy of their proposal. A list of past successful proposals can be found [here](#).
- Join an upcoming webinar, which can be found [here](#). **All funded proposals present a webinar on their work.**
- Please contact Mark Skidmore if you should have any questions (mskidmor@msu.edu)

NOTE: All files must be emailed to MSUE.NCGrants@msu.edu