



AREERA State Plans of Work

About Planned Programs

This first Plan of Work newsletter will deal with some introductory issues on the Planned Programs Section of the new 2007 - 2011 State Plans of Work. In future newsletters we may look at some of these features more in-depth.

What is a program?

The Government Accountability Office defines a program as “any activity, project, function, or policy that has an identifiable set of objectives.” For the purposes of the Plan of Work, CSREES is allowing States to decide and define their own programs or unit of work because of the richness and diversity of programs and projects within programs in the State partnership. We do not want to “box” you into choosing a program which we define for you. The purpose is to allow maximum flexibility.

However, CSREES is requiring that States classify these State-defined Planned Programs by choosing which **Knowledge Areas** best describe the activities within the program.

Although it is up to individual States to decide what level of program unit is appropriate for their own State’s Plan of Work, we have proposed that an appropriate number of Planned Programs in the Plan can range from five (5) to twenty (20) depending on the complexity needed.

Examples of programs can be found on the CSREES Website at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/nea/programs.html>. These 62 programs (**Attachment 1**) are organized in eleven (11) National Emphasis Areas.

National Emphasis Areas

- Agricultural and Food Biosecurity
- Agricultural Systems
- Animals and Animal Products
- Biotechnology and Genomics
- Economics and Commerce
- Families, Youth, and Communities
- Food, Nutrition, and Health
- Natural Resources and Environment
- Pest Management
- Plants and Plant Products
- Technology and Engineering

What is a Knowledge Area?

A knowledge area (KA) is a broad based classification of work done in education, research, and extension.

Use of the KAs is best approached from a broad perspective, as the KA codes serve multiple uses including budget integration, program planning and accountability, post award management, and progress and termination reports for the three functional activities of higher education, research, and extension. Because the Topics and KAs are broad and inclusive, users are urged to become familiar with the entire coding scheme before assigning

codes for specific work. The best fit may not always be intuitive to the casual reader.

Our research colleagues in the State partnership have a wealth of knowledge on these KA codes. They have been using them (as Research Problem Areas) to classify research projects for many years.

When inputting your KA codes in the Plan of Work, use only whole numbers. And the numbers must add up to 100 percent before the software will accept them. The KA Code Manual can be found on the CSREES Website at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/reporting/planrept/plansofwork.html>

Why the Logic Model?

Although CSREES is not requiring that States develop graphic logic models for each planned program, the data collected for each Planned Program in the Plan of Work is structured around a very basic program logic model. The logic model has been used for decades as a systematic and visual way to present the perceived relationships among the resources to operate a program, the activities planned, and the changes or results that is hoped to achieve. It is a tool for depicting the "chain of events" that links inputs (dollars and FTEs) and activities (extension and research) to outcomes. The model can be very useful to organize planning and analysis when designing the organization and its programs and projects or when designing outcomes-based evaluations of programs and projects. It can also be very useful for describing organizations, projects and programs for grant proposals.

Many Cooperative Extension Services already use this model to describe their programs and it is used widely by many research organizations, including research agencies in the Federal Government.

Logic Model References

- www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse
- www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande
- <http://www.cdc.gov/eval/index.htm>
- <http://ctb.ku.edu/>
- <http://www.innonet.org/>
- <http://www.eval.org/>

Sample Planned Program

CSREES has developed a simple Planned Program example drawn from several States' original Plans of Work and Annual Reports. It is included in this newsletter as **Attachment 2**. It is not the model for Planned Programs, but only an example of what a planned program may look like in the Plan of Work. We would greatly appreciate any State that wishes to share some examples of Planned Programs in future newsletters.

Please send any samples you wish for consideration to pow@csrees.usda.gov. This is an educational opportunity.

AREERA Plan of Work Dates

4/1/2006 - FY 2005 Annual Report
6/1/2006 - FY 2007 - 2011 Plan of Work

Call for Future Topics

If there is any topic you wish us to cover in future newsletters please send them to pow@csrees.usda.gov.

For more information on the Plan of Work, contact Bart Hewitt, 202-720-0747, or pow@csrees.usda.gov.