AREERA State Plans of Work

About Inputs

T his Plan of Work newsletter deals more in-depth with issues related to inputs for the on the Planned Programs section of the new 2007-2011 State Plans of Work.

What is an input?

The Plan of Work guidelines defines inputs as "Resources, contributions, and investments that are provided for the program. This includes Federal, state, and local spending, private donations, volunteer time, etc." Inputs are the resources and contributions that you plan for the effort. These include time, people (staff and volunteers), money, materials, equipment, partnerships, research base, and technology among other things. These inputs allow us to produce outputs.

For the 2007-2011 5-Year Plan of Work, CSREES requires that only professional FTEs be budgeted for each state-defined Planned Program, and the overall FTE total in the Overview section.

What is an FTE?

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE). One professional FTE is approximately 2,080 hours of staff time annually allocated to support program activities. However, states determine their own FTE criteria. Professional FTEs include the professional program staff, administration, communications, and other professional staff for extension and scientists (SYs) and professional staff (PYs) for research.

Include all FTEs expected to be expended on these Planned Programs regardless of source of funding. We do not expect you to disaggregate FTEs along funding lines. FTEs will only be used to determine level of effort from the whole (the amount of FTEs you indicate in the Overview section). It is important that the FTEs indicated in the Planned Programs are a direct subset of the FTEs indicated in the Overview section. If you include total FTEs for all funding lines in the Overview, you should include FTEs for all funding lines in the Planned Programs section.

What about dollars expended?

For dollars to be expended in the Plan of Work on each Planned Program you define, we ask two "Yes/No" questions.

1. "Will you be expending formula funds or state matching funds on this program? "

2. "Will you be expending funds other than formula funds or state matching funds on this program?"

If you answer "No" to the first question, the software will notify you that this Planned Program should not be included in your Plan of Work. The software will then ask you if you

want to change your answer to "Yes." If the answer is still "No," the software will inform you that it will delete the Planned Program from the plan because it is extraneous data.

However, note that in the subsequent Annual Report of Accomplishments, we will require actual dollars spent from formula funds and matching funds on each Planned Programs.

About the Situation & Priorities

T he Situation and Priorities Statement is an integral part of each Planned Program.

The **situation** is the foundation for Planned Program development. The problem or issue that the program is to address sits within a setting or situation--a complex of sociopolitical, environmental, and economic conditions. If you incorrectly understand the situation and misdiagnose the problem, everything that follows is likely to be wrong.

Take time to understand the situation and carefully define the problem. This may be the **most** important step. As you do so, consider the following questions:

1. What is the problem/issue?
2. Why is this a problem? (What causes the problem?)
3. For whom (individual, household, group, community, society in general) does this problem exist?
4. Who has a stake in the problem? (Who cares whether it is resolved or not?)
5. What do we know about the problem/issue/people that are involved?
6. What research/experience do we have?
7. What do existing research and experience say?

Create a succinct but thorough statement that answers the above questions. This statement is the foundation of your Planned Program logic.

From the situation comes **priority setting.** Once the situation and problem are fully analyzed, priorities can be set. We can seldom undertake everything so we have to prioritize. Several factors influence your determination of focus including your mission, values, resources, expertise, experience, history, what you know about the situation, and what others are doing in relation to the problem. Priorities lead to the identification of desired outcomes.

As you think about setting priorities, consider:

1. What criteria will you use to set priorities?
2. Who will help set the priorities? How?

AREERA Plan of Work Dates

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

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