

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**APPLICATION
INFORMATION
SYSTEMS SUPPORT
HANDBOOK**

MAY 1997

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

PREFACE

Application Information Systems (AISs) serve a wide variety of users and play an important role in support of housing and rural development programs. Many of the RD's day-to-day processes are automated and dependent on the availability of adequate information resources. Historically, the large number of program and management requests for new and enhanced AISs has resulted in a substantial backlog of software development work. This heavy reliance on automation and its supporting information technology requires that an effective process be implemented to prioritize RFAs to ensure that the RD's automation priorities are completed in the proper sequence.

To assist in the prioritization process, the Automation Review Council (ARC) approved the concept to establish a System Review Board (SRB) for each major AIS or groups of related AISs in May 1992. The primary function of a SRB is to review and prioritize RFAs for each assigned AIS. In January 1993, the ARC approved a SRB Charter and directed that SRBs be established for certain designated AISs. The ARC also determined the membership of each board.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
SECTION 1	
DEVELOPMENT AND PROCESSING OF THE REQUEST FOR AUTOMATION (RFA).....	1.1
Emergency RFAs.....	1.1
Non-emergency RFAs.....	1.1
RFA Receiving, Processing, Tracking, and Reporting.....	1.11
RFA Tracking System (RFATS).....	1.11
Emergency RFAs.....	1.11
Non-emergency RFAs.....	1.11
Closure of RFAs.....	1.12
Reporting of RFAs.....	1.12
SECTION 2	
SYSTEM REVIEW BOARD (SRB) OPERATING PROCEDURES.....	2.1
SRB Evaluation of RFAs.....	2.1
Accepted RFAs.....	2.1
SRB Annual Workplan.....	2.2
Implementation Coordination of RFAs for Application Information Systems (AISs) not Under the Authority of a SRB.....	2.4
SECTION 3	
RELEASE AND TURNOVER INTO THE ENVIRONMENT.....	3.1
Production Schedule.....	3.1
SECTION 4	
WARRANTY PERIODS.....	4.1
SECTION 5	
PRODUCTION PROBLEM REPORTS.....	5.1

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - GLOSSARY.....	A.1
APPENDIX B - INFORMATION RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (IRM)	
AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY.....	B.1
APPENDIX C - RFA PRIORITY DEFINITIONS.....	C.1
APPENDIX D - RFA CATEGORY DEFINITIONS.....	D.1
APPENDIX E - PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM FOR EMERGENCY RFA.....	E.1
APPENDIX F - PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM FOR NON-EMERGENCY RFA.....	F.1
APPENDIX G - PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM FOR PRODUCTION PROBLEM REPORT....	G.1
APPENDIX H - SYSTEM REVIEW BOARD MEMBERSHIP VOTING REPRESENTATIVESH.	H.1

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

SECTION 1 DEVELOPMENT AND PROCESSING OF THE REQUEST FOR AUTOMATION (RFA)

When a user requires a modification to a standard AIS or the development of a new standard AIS, the requirement must be documented and justified on Form RD 2006-15, "Request for Automation" (RFA). Insufficient documentation, such as a lack of clarity in desired results, could delay consideration of the RFA. Contact Points from a field office should obtain guidance through a Sponsor Function Specialist from the appropriate sponsor area prior to submitting a RFA. This guidance will assist the field Contact Point in determining the applicability of, and developing a RFA. Based on Emergency or Non-emergency status, RFAs will be submitted as follows:

Emergency RFAs

Contact Points will complete the RFA and forward the RFA to the appropriate Information Resources Management (IRM) branch. (See Appendix B of this Handbook.) IRM will review each Emergency RFA to verify the Emergency designation. If a RFA is not an Emergency as defined in Appendix C of this Handbook, the Contact Point will be notified to forward the RFA to the appropriate Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator and the RFA will be processed as a Non-emergency RFA. Emergency RFAs will be tracked and reported through the Request for Automation Tracking System (RFATS). Reports will be generated on the number of Emergency RFAs per system and the number of staff days expended to resolve the Emergency RFAs. RFATS activity reports will be run periodically and provided to the appropriate SRB Chairperson as requested.

Non-emergency RFAs

Contact Point(s) from field offices will submit a RFA to their State Director through their Information Resources Manager (IRM). State Directors may also prepare RFAs (and be considered Contact Points). The RFA will be sent to a Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator for review, and if accepted, priority determination (see Appendix C of this Handbook) and certification. All other Contact Points will submit RFAs to the appropriate Division Director for concurrence. The RFA will then be forwarded to a Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator for review, and if accepted, priority determination and certification. The Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator must provide the required implementation date for Critical RFAs and certify all RFA priorities with signature. Prior to signing Form RD 2006-15, "Request for Automation" (the RFA form), a Division or State Director, or an Associate or Assistant Administrator may request a staff day estimate from the appropriate IRM development organization. After certification, the Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator will forward the Non-emergency RFA(s) to the appropriate IRM organization (see Appendix B of this Handbook).

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

IRM will determine a staff day estimate, enter the RFA into the RFATS, and forward the RFA to the appropriate SRB for annual workplan placement or to the appropriate Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator for implementation coordination with IRM for any AIS not under a SRB's authority. The RFA will then be returned to IRM. The appropriate IRM organization will update the status of the RFA(s) in the RFATS and forward to the IRM development area for implementation.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

USDA - Rural Development
Form RD 2006-15
(Rev. 11/96)

(IRM USE ONLY)
STAFF DAY
ESTIMATE

RFA ID: _____
DATE: _____ **REQUEST FOR AUTOMATION**

SECTION 1 TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CONTACT PERSON	
1. EMERGENCY <input type="checkbox"/>	NON-EMERGENCY <input type="checkbox"/>
2.. DESCRIPTION OF NEED OR REQUIREMENT	
3. LOAN PROGRAM/MANAGEMENT AREA	
4. SYSTEM(S) AFFECTED	
5. RURAL DEVELOPMENT <input type="checkbox"/>	RHS <input type="checkbox"/>
RBS <input type="checkbox"/>	RUS <input type="checkbox"/>
6. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION	
7. BENEFITS/IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTATION	
8. CONTACT POINT (NAME/SIGNATURE)	9. DATE
10. CONTACT POINT'S ORGANIZATION	11. TELEPHONE

Form RD 2006-15 (11/96)

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

SECTION 2

SPONSOR REVIEW

12.. SPONSOR DIVISION OR STATE DIRECTOR CONCURRENCE

SIGNATURE/TITLE

DATE

SIGNATURE/TITLE

DATE

SIGNATURE/TITLE

DATE

SIGNATURE/TITLE

DATE

SIGNATURE/TITLE

DATE

13. CATEGORY/BASIS OF REQUEST

LEGISLATIVE/JUDICIAL _____

REGULATORY/POLICY _____

AUDIT _____

INTERNAL SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE _____

SYSTEMS ENHANCEMENT INITIATIVES _____

14. PRIORITY

CRITICAL _____

IMPORTANT _____

DESIRABLE _____

PRIORITY CERTIFIED BY: _____

SIGNATURE/TITLE

DATE

15. REQUIRED IMPLEMENTATION DATE (CRITICAL ONLY)

SECTION 3

RFA APPROVAL INFORMATION (SRB USE ONLY)

16. APPROVED

DISAPPROVED

17. SPONSOR PROJECT MANAGER

18. FUNCTIONAL SPECIFICATIONS REQUIRED

YES

NO

19. SRB CHAIRPERSON SIGNATURE/DATE

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

SECTION 4

IRM INFORMATION

20. BRANCH/SECTION ASSIGNED

21. IRM ACCEPTANCE

SIGNATURE

DATE

22. USER-ACCEPTANCE
SPONSOR PROJECT MANAGER
SIGNATURE

23. USER-ACCEPTANCE DATE

24. LENGTH OF WARRANTY

25. PRODUCTION IMPLEMENTATION DATE

26. WARRANTY EXPIRATION DATE(S)

27. RELEASE NUMBER

28. RELEASED BY IRM

SIGNATURE

DATE

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR AUTOMATION (RFA) FORM RD 2006-15

The shaded portions on the form heading are for IRM use only.

RFA ID: - The assigned RFA ID.

Date: - The date the RFA was received by IRM.

Staff Day Estimate - This block does not apply for Emergency RFAs.

SECTION 1 is to be completed by the Contact Point

BLOCK 1 Emergency/Non-emergency - Check "Emergency".

BLOCK 2 Description of Need or Requirement - State the requirement clearly. Be specific. Include information such as how often the problem occurs, pertinent circumstances, and what the RFA should correct.

BLOCK 3 Loan Program/Management Area - The program or management area impacted by the RFA.

BLOCK 4 System(s) Affected - System the RFA is issued against.

BLOCK 5 USRD, RBS, RHS, or RUS - Check the appropriate box.

BLOCK 6 Supporting Documentation - A brief description of the included documentation such as; screen prints,abend codes or report pages with miscalculations.

BLOCK 7 Benefits/Impact of Implementation - A brief description of the desired benefits of implementing the RFA, including the impact of not implementing the RFA, or other alternatives considered, such as status quo, manual intervention, or programmatic change.

BLOCK 8 Contact Point (Name/Signature) - Print and sign your name.

BLOCK 9 Date - Date the RFA was written.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

BLOCK 10 Contact Point's Organization - self-explanatory.

BLOCK 11 Telephone - Contact Point's phone number (include area code).

SECTION 2 For an Emergency RFA, Block 12 is the only requirement in Section 2.

BLOCK 12 Sponsor Division or State Director Concurrence - Signature, title, and date are required. For RFAs from the field, the State Director's signature is required. If multiple program/management areas are affected, the RFA must be routed through the appropriate Directors for concurrence.

SECTION 3 Does not apply for an Emergency RFA.

SECTION 4 To be completed by IRM

BLOCK 20 Branch/Section Assigned - IRM branch and section receiving the Emergency RFA and responsible for verifying the Emergency status of the RFA.

BLOCK 21 IRM Acceptance (Signature/Date) - Branch Chief signature and date indicating the development has been completed and has passed unit-level testing.

BLOCK 22 - 26 are not applicable for an Emergency RFA.

BLOCK 27 Release Number - The release number as assigned by the CIO.

BLOCK 28 Released by IRM (Signature/Date) - IRM employee who actually released the software or documentation into production.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING NON-EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR AUTOMATION (RFA) FORM RD 2006-15

The shaded portions on the form heading are for IRM use only.

RDA ID: - The assigned RFA ID.

Date: - The date the RFA was received by IRM.

Staff Day Estimate - The estimated number of staff days required to achieve the requirements of the RFA. This estimate includes total time for design, development, unit-level and system-level testing, and documentation.

SECTION 1 is to be completed by the Contact Point

BLOCK 1 Emergency/Non-emergency - Check "Non-emergency".

BLOCK 2 Description of Need or Requirement - State the requirement clearly. Be specific. Include information such as how often the problem occurs, pertinent circumstances, and what the RFA should correct.

BLOCK 3 Loan Program/Management Area - The program or management area impacted by the RFA.

BLOCK 4 System(s) Affected - System the RFA is issued against.

BLOCK 5 USRD, RBS, RHS, or RUS - Check the appropriate box.

BLOCK 6 Supporting Documentation - A brief description of the included documentation such as; screen prints,abend codes or report pages with miscalculations.

BLOCK 7 Benefits/Impact of Implementation - A brief description of the desired benefits of implementing the RFA, including the impact of not implementing the RFA, or other alternatives considered, such as status quo or manual intervention or programmatic change.

BLOCK 8 Contact Point (Name/Signature) - Print and sign your name.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

BLOCK 9 Date - Date the RFA was written.

BLOCK 10 Contact Point's Organization - self-explanatory.

BLOCK 11 Telephone - Contact Point's phone number (include area code).

SECTION 2 Sponsor Review. Completion of this section is required prior to SRB annual workplan consideration.

BLOCK 12 Sponsor Division or State Director Concurrence - Signature, title, and date are required. For RFAs from the field, the State Director's signature is required. If multiple program/management areas are affected, the RFA must be routed through the appropriate Directors for concurrence.

BLOCK 13 Category/Basis of Request - The basis of the RFA, the action that caused the requirement.

BLOCK 14 Priority - This will be determined by the sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator (based on the information provided in blocks 1-13). The sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator must certify with signature, the priority of the RFA (see Exhibit F). Note: If an RFA is prioritized as "Critical," the sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator must designate a required implementation date in block 15.

BLOCK 15 Required Implementation Date (Critical Only) - The date the RFA must be implemented in production. This date must be determined by the sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator.

SECTION 3 RFA Approval Information (SRB USE ONLY)

BLOCK 16 Approved/Disapproved - This will be filled out by the appropriate SRB.

BLOCK 17 Sponsor Project Manager - As assigned by the SRB.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

Block 18 Functional Specifications Required - Check the appropriate box. The SRB and the IRM Technical Advisor will determine the need for Functional Specifications (typically, RFAs estimated at 20 staff days or more require Functional Specifications).

Block 19 SRB Chairperson Signature/Date - Signature indicates concurrence of the information in blocks 1-18.

SECTION 4 IRM Information

Block 20 Branch/Section Assigned - IRM branch and section receiving the Non-emergency RFA.

Block 21 IRM Acceptance (Signature/Date) - Branch Chief signature and date indicating the development has been completed and has passed unit-level testing.

Block 22 User-Acceptance. Sponsor Project Manager Signature - Sign-off of acceptance by the user.

Block 23 User-Acceptance Date - self-explanatory.

Block 24 Length of Warranty - The number of calendar days of warranty as determined by the IRM Technical Advisor.

Block 25 Production Implementation Date - self-explanatory.

Block 26 Warranty Expiration Date(s) - self-explanatory.

Block 27 Release Number - The release number as assigned by the CIO.

Block 28 Released by IRM (Signature/Date) - IRM employee who actually released the software or documentation into production.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

RFA Receiving, Processing, Tracking, and Reporting

RFAs can be submitted by Contact Points from field offices, RD State Directors, National Office Contact Points, and Finance Office Contact Points. IRM will track the status of each RFA. The IRM organization areas responsible for processing, tracking, and reporting RFAs are listed in Appendix B of this Handbook.

RFA Tracking System (RFATS)

The appropriate IRM organization will use RFATS to track RFA status and progress, and generate reports. Status and inventory reports will be provided to the CIO, sponsor Associate and Assistant Administrators and the chairpersons of the SRBs. IRM will maintain copies of all RFAs under their authority.

Emergency RFAs

1. Contact Points will forward the RFA to the appropriate IRM organization (see Appendix B of this Handbook);
2. IRM will assign a RFA ID number and enter the RFA into RFATS;
3. IRM will forward the RFA to the appropriate IRM development organization for Emergency verification and implementation;
4. The IRM development organization will review the Emergency RFA to verify the Emergency status. If a RFA is not an Emergency as defined in Appendix C of this Handbook, the Contact Point will be notified to forward the RFA to the appropriate Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator or RUS Staff Assistant and process as a Non-emergency RFA. [Note: An Emergency RFA may be verbally transmitted (in-person or by telephone) directly to the IRM development organization so as not to delay resolution; to be followed promptly with completion of the RFA form RD 2006-15 (by the Contact Point) and the above four steps).

Non-emergency RFAs

Upon receipt of a non-emergency RFA, the appropriate IRM organization will:

1. Assign a RFA ID number and enter the RFA into the RFATS.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

2. Forward the Non-emergency RFA to the appropriate IRM development organization for staff day estimate. After the staff day estimate is completed, the IRM development organization will return the Non-emergency RFA to the IRM branch, as appropriate; the staff estimate will be entered in RFATS.
3. Forward the RFA to the appropriate SRB for annual workplan placement. (A RFA for an AIS without a SRB will be forwarded to the appropriate Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator for implementation coordination with CIO). The SRB will then return the RFA to the IRM branch as appropriate.
4. Update the RFATS and forward to the appropriate IRM development organization for implementation.

Closure of RFAs

After completion and user-acceptance (or if the RFA has been rejected by a SRB), RFAs will be received by the appropriate IRM branch, as appropriate from the IRM development area for closure. This information will be updated on RFATS. Copies of all RFAs will be maintained in numerical order by IRM for their respective areas of responsibility.

Reporting of RFAs

Reports of RFA activities will be generated through the RFATS on a monthly basis. IRM will forward the reports to the CIO, Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrators the appropriate SRB Chairperson, and the IRM Technical Advisor(s). Copies of the RFA activity reports will be maintained by IRM for a period of 3 years.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

SECTION 2 SYSTEM REVIEW BOARD (SRB) OPERATING PROCEDURES

Each SRB will review and evaluate RFAs, determine priority sequences, and develop an annual workplan reflective of proposed RFA implementation dates and IRM resources allotted to the appropriate system. The SRB Annual Workplan outlines RFA priority sequences as determined by the SRB for the AIS(s) under the SRB's authority. Only RFAs with the priority ranking of Critical, Important, Desirable (see Appendix C of this Handbook for RFA priority definitions) and the SRB-created Discretionary RFA (see paragraph (b) of this section) will be placed in the annual workplan.

SRB Evaluation of RFAs

The SRBs will review RFAs, determine applicability and accept or reject each RFA. A RFA may be rejected due to any of the following reasons:

- Duplicates a standard AIS;
- Is not cost effective;
- Does not use IRM resources efficiently;
- Conflicts with a program or management policy;
- Is not consistent with RD mission or activities;
- Current manual procedures are adequate.

The SRB will provide a written explanation for rejecting a RFA. Rejected RFAs and the rejection explanation will be sent back to the appropriate IRM branch to be closed in RFATS, and returned to the Contact Point.

Accepted RFAs

SRBs are responsible for the following for accepted RFAs:

- Ensure that each RFA contains the information necessary on which to base SRB decisions.
- Develop an annual workplan that sets RFA priority sequences, to be accomplished with IRM resources allocated to each AIS.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

- Work with the IRM Technical Advisor to review the availability/sharing of IRM resources for the development, testing, and implementation of planned RFAs when requested to do so by other SRBs. Any issues regarding the need for additional IRM resources or the availability of IRM resources to be shared will be sent to the CIO for consideration.

SRB Annual Workplan

Each SRB will develop an annual workplan and update it quarterly to provide a continuous roster of RFA priority sequences for 1 year for the AIS(s) under the SRB's authority. Each quarter of the annual workplan will begin on a fiscal quarter. Each SRB will develop one annual workplan. Each annual workplan will support the RD's Strategic Business Plans and the IRM Strategic Plan. Each annual workplan will also outline the RFAs' priority sequences. The following applies to the annual workplan:

1. At the end of a quarter, a new quarter's workplan will be developed and added to the end of the workplan; changes to other portions of the workplan may also be made at that time. The SRB Annual Workplan will be developed by the voting members of the SRB. The voting members will review and assess RFA priorities, and proposed and required implementation dates. The IRM Technical Advisor will inform the SRB of IRM scheduling constraints, resource limitations, and technical alternatives that impact the workplan.
2. If necessary, each SRB may issue one Discretionary RFA for each quarter's workplan, to accomplish small or "ad hoc" changes without the need to have the SRB determine the priority ranking of those changes. The aggregate staff resources that may be expended on a Discretionary RFA may not exceed 20 staff days.

Discretionary RFAs will be developed and used according to the following:

- Discretionary RFAs will be developed by the SRB and must be placed on the SRB Annual Workplan.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

- A majority of the SRB members must approve (by vote) the development, use, and annual workplan placement of the Discretionary RFA.
 - A sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator will determine the appropriate changes to be accomplished under a specific Discretionary RFA and authorize its implementation. The RFA will be processed by the appropriate IRM branch as a Non-emergency RFA. Discretionary RFAs will be tracked on the RFATS.
 - Changes to be accomplished under a Discretionary RFA should be those estimated as requiring five staff days or fewer of IRM resources; however, the aggregate of the changes may not exceed 20 staff days. Staff days of items accomplished under a Discretionary RFA will be deducted from the estimated staff days of the Discretionary RFA.
 - When no staff days remain available on the Discretionary RFA, it must be closed. Discretionary RFAs with remaining unexpended staff days will be closed at the end of a quarter, unless work on a change under that RFA is in progress on the last work day of the quarter in which it is scheduled. Unexpended staff days from one quarter's Discretionary RFA may not be used in a following quarter.
3. All issues relating to the SRB Annual Workplan will be approved or rejected by majority vote of the SRB quorum.
 4. Each SRB Annual Workplan will be submitted to the Sponsor Associate and Assistant Administrator(s) for approval. For AISs which have more than one sponsor, a tie or majority approval of the Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator(s) must be received. Any disapproved annual workplans will be sent back to the SRB for adjustment.
 5. Each SRB will return RFAs containing annual workplan information to the IRM branch, as appropriate. IRM will update the status of each RFA and forward each RFA to the appropriate IRM development organization.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

Implementation Coordination of RFAs for Application Information Systems (AISs) not Under the Authority of a SRB

The Associate or Assistant Administrator sponsoring an AIS which is not under the authority of a SRB will certify the priority of subject RFAs and determine the sequence for implementation. The Sponsor will coordinate implementation strategy with the Chief Information Officer (CIO). The CIO will identify systems to the ARC which require the establishment of a SRB.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

SECTION 3 RELEASE AND TURNOVER INTO THE PRODUCTION ENVIRONMENT

Production Schedule

Completed RFAs will be scheduled for production release according to their priority ranking. For purposes of production release, Production Problem Reports will be handled in the same manner as Emergency RFAs. See Appendix B of this Handbook for IRM's areas of responsibility.

Production release schedules will be assigned and published by the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and the Deputy Chief Information Officer (DCIO). Application software and documentation to be considered for production release must be forwarded to the appropriate IRM organization in accordance with the published production release schedules.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

SECTION 4 WARRANTY PERIODS

Application software and documentation are developed according to user requirements and functional design specifications. The warranty period is designed to assure rapid problem resolution when implemented software or documentation does not adhere to specifications or when other software problems have resulted.

The warranty period will be determined by the IRM Technical Advisor for each RFA. The length of the warranty will depend upon the relative size of the change to the impacted AIS. Although the warranty period will be set by the IRM Technical Advisor, it cannot be less than 30 calendar days or exceed 60 calendar days without SRB approval. Unless otherwise specified by the IRM Technical Advisor, the default RFA warranty period will be as follows:

30 calendar days for an AIS currently in the production environment;

60 calendar days for a new AIS implemented into the production environment.

For application software which is run at intervals, such as quarterly reports, annual pooling of funds, etc., or distributed microcomputer systems which require training in the field, the beginning date and the length of the warranty period for each such component will be adjusted to conform to the first production run of the software, and will be specified in the information provided in the turnover package.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

SECTION 5 PRODUCTION PROBLEM REPORTS

No matter how thorough the testing, software problems can go undetected until after a RFA is turned over to the production environment. To be considered a production problem, the software or documentation must fail to adhere to the functional design (or other detail) specifications, or another software problem must have resulted from implementation of a RFA or a Production Problem Report. During the warranty period, these errors will be resolved through the use of Production Problem Reports. (A new RFA, not a Production Problem Report, must be used to add, change, or delete functionality.)

Production Problem Reports will have the same warranty duration as the original RFA.

- Development of the Production Problem Report. The Contact Point will document the problem as a Production Problem Report using Form RD 2006-25, Production Problem Report.
- IRM processing and implementation. IRM will receive Production Problem Reports from Contact Points according to Appendix B.

IRM will verify Production Problem Reports to ensure the warranty period is still in effect and that additional functionality is not being requested. If the warranty is expired, the Production Problem Report will be returned to the Contact Point. The Contact Point must then prepare a RFA in order to have the requirement implemented by IRM. Valid Production Problem Reports will be implemented in the same manner as Emergency RFAs; they will not be scheduled in the SRB Annual Workplan(s) and will be turned over into the production environment as soon as possible.

- Production Problem Reports will be entered into the RFATS. Staff days expended in resolving a Production Problem Report will be charged against the RFA it is associated with.
- Production Problem Reports will be forwarded to the appropriate IRM development organization for implementation.

Closure of Production Problem Reports

Production Problem Reports will be closed by the appropriate IRM organization as listed in Appendix B of this Handbook. It is the Contact Point's responsibility to inform IRM of user-acceptance in order to close the Production Problem Report. IRM will update the RFATS of the closure of the Production Problem Report. Copies of Production Problem Reports will be maintained in numerical order by the appropriate IRM areas.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

Reporting of Production Problem Reports

Production Problem Reports will be tracked and reported through the RFATS. Reports will be generated on the number of Production Problem Reports. The number of staff days expended to resolve a Production Problem Report will be charged against the RFA the Production Problem Report is associated with. The reports will be forwarded to the CIO, the Sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrators (when requested), the appropriate SRB Chairperson (when requested), and the IRM Technical Advisor. RFATS activity reports will be maintained by IRM for a period of 3 years.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

USDA - Rural Development
 Form RD 2006-25
 (11/96)

PRODUCTION PROBLEM REPORT	1. PROBLEM REPORT# (ASSIGNED BY IRM)	
	2. SYSTEM/SUBSYSTEM	
	3. APPLICATION	
4. CONTACT POINT (NAME AND SIGNATURE)	8. RFA NO.	9. DATE WARRANTY EXPIRES
5. PHONE	10. ISSUED TO: NAME	
6. MAIL CODE	11. ISSUE DATE:	
7. DIVISION/BRANCH	12. IRM DIVISION/BRANCH	
13. DESCRIPTION OF PROBLEM		
14. IMPACT ON PRODUCTION	15. SPONSOR PROJECT MANAGER SIGNATURE	
SECTION 2: TO BE COMPLETED AFTER RESOLUTION		
16. ACTION TAKEN BY DEVELOPER		
17. MODULES CHANGED		
18. DEVELOPER	19. DATE COMPLETED	20. DATE CLOSED BY IRM
21. ACCEPTED <input type="checkbox"/> REJECTED <input type="checkbox"/>	22. CONTACT POINT (NAME/SIGNATURE)	23. DATE

RD 2006-25 (11/96)

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FORM RD 2006-25 PRODUCTION PROBLEM REPORT

Blocks 1 and 3 are to be completed by IRM only.

BLOCK 1 PR# - The Production Problem Report ID number.

BLOCK 2 System/Subsystem - System or subsystem the Production Problem Report is issued against.

BLOCK 3 Application - The specific transaction, report or process the Production Problem Report is issued against.

Blocks 4 - 15 are the responsibility of the Contact Point.

BLOCK 4 Contact Point (Name and Signature) - Print and sign your name.

BLOCK 5 Phone - self-explanatory.

BLOCK 6 Mail Code - self-explanatory.

BLOCK 7 Division/Branch - Contact point's division and branch.

BLOCK 8 RFA NO. - The RFA the Production Problem Report is associated with.

BLOCK 9 Date Warranty Expires - The date the production problem report's warranty expires.

BLOCK 10 Issued to: Name - Developer (if known) to be responsible for the Production Problem Report.

BLOCK 11 Issue Date - Date the Production Problem Report was written.

BLOCK 12 Responsible IRM Division/Branch - Enter IRM division and branch (if known) that the Production Problem Report should be forwarded to.

BLOCK 13 Description of Problem - State the problem clearly. Be specific. Include information such as how the problem occurs and what should be corrected.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

BLOCK 14 Impact on Production - State briefly; e.g., "M2A is disabled".

BLOCK 15 Sponsor Project Manager Signature - self-explanatory.

Blocks 16 - 20 are the responsibility of the IRM developer.

BLOCK 16 Action Taken by Developer - Describe what was done to resolve the problem.

BLOCK 17 Modules Changed - List all appropriate modules.

BLOCK 18 Developer - Name of the developer resolving the problem.

BLOCK 19 Date Completed - self-explanatory.

BLOCK 20 Date Closed by IRM - Date the Contact Point (Production Problem Report initiator) has accepted and approved the action taken by IRM to resolve the problem. The Contact Point is responsible for forwarding acceptance/approval information to SIM to close the Production Problem Report.

Blocks 21 - 23 are the responsibility of the Contact Point.

BLOCK 21 Accepted/Rejected* - Check appropriate box after user-testing is completed.

BLOCK 22 Contact Point Name and Signature - print and sign your name.

BLOCK 23 Date - Date accepted or rejected.

* If the Contact Point believes the solution is not acceptable, the Production Problem Report would normally be returned to IRM for resolution.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

APPENDIX A GLOSSARY

Acceptance Test Criteria. Documentation developed by the sponsor area which details the test objectives, test conditions, and anticipated results of each test for an AIS requirement that a Request for Automation (RFA) is to resolve.

AIS Life Cycle. The time span between establishing a need for a system and the end of its operational use. The life cycle is divided into discrete, of separate, phases with formal milestones used as points for management control.

Application Information System (AIS). A collection of software, procedures, and equipment that is designed, built, operated, and maintained to collect, record, process, store, retrieve, and display information which serves and is serviced by functional users and technical personnel. The Guaranteed Loan Accounting System (GLAS), and the Executive Information System (EIS) are examples of AISs.

Contact Point. The individual user that initiated a particular RFA or Production Problem Report.

Discretionary RFA. A RFA prepared and placed in an annual workplan by a System Review Board (SRB) to accomplish small or "ad hoc" changes without the need to have the SRB determine the priority ranking of that change.

Functional Design Specifications. The input, output, and processing requirements developed by the sponsor area in functional terms to ensure that software developed efforts result in automation capabilities that software development efforts result in automation capabilities that meet the sponsor area's requirements.

Information Resource. All resources related to the management of information, including personnel, facilities, equipment, funds, and information technology.

Information Resources Management (IRM). The planning, budgeting, organizing, directing, training, promoting, controlling, and managing of activities associated with the burden, collection, creation, use and dissemination of information by RD including the management of information and related such as personnel, funds, and information technology.

Information Resources Management (IRM) Project Plan A project plan (including milestones) developed by IRM which schedules RFAs to be completed based on the SRBs' Annual Workplan (which sets the priority ranking of RFAs for given AIS(s)).

Information Resources Management (IRM) Technical Advisor. An employee within IRM appointed by the Chief Information Officer (CIO) to assist a SRB or a sponsor Function Specialist.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

Information Technology. The hardware, software, and telecommunication used in connection with information processing, such as computers, micrographics, office automation, or others.

Production. The automated environment where user-accepted application software and valid data reside.

Production Problem Report. An official form used to document problems that arise after the production implementation of a RFA, either with the software or the supplied documentation, during the warranty period. Valid Production Problem Reports will be worked on as they are received and do not require SRB consideration.

Project. An enhancement to a current system, the development of a new system, or a system requirement which has a beginning, an end, and a clearly defined scope. A project requires an expenditure of resources from multiple areas within RD for planning, design, development, user-acceptance design, testing, documentation, and implementation.

Release. An organized and cohesive production implementation of a RFA or a group of RFAs.

Request for Automation (RFA). A formal request to modify, enhance, or develop a standard RD AIS.

RFA Certification. The signed assurance given by the sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator that a RFA priority is consistent with the definition outlined within this Handbook. (See Appendix C of this Handbook for RFA priority definitions and examples.)

RFA Priority. The importance of a RFA at a specific time.

Request for Automation Tracking System (RFATS). An AIS designed to log, track, inventory, and report RFAs and Production Problem Reports.

Sponsor. An area within the user community which has primary responsibility for a program or management function that is supported by an AIS. An AIS that overlaps program and/or management boundaries may be sponsored by multiple representatives.

Sponsor Associate and Assistant Administrators. The Associate or Assistant Administrator that sponsors an AIS whether or not that AIS is under the authority of and SRB. The AIS being sponsored is one that performs a program or management function in the sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator's area of responsibility.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

Sponsor Function Specialist. An individual appointed by the sponsor Associate or Assistant Administrator with expertise specific to a program or management function.

Sponsor Project Manager. The individual from the user community responsible for the completion of the project or a RFA relating to aspects of design and user-acceptance of design, development, testing, and documentation. The sponsor Project Manager is responsible for the coordination of RFAs that impact multiple areas (such as program and financial).

Standard AIS. An AIS which is developed, maintained, and implemented by the IRM organization. The servicing of standard RD AISs is the responsibility of the CIO.

System Review Board (SRB). Boards established to review and prioritize RFAs for a major information system or a related group of smaller systems. SRBs will act in accordance with RD Instructions 2006-FF, 2006-T, and this Handbook.

SRB Annual Workplan. A 1-year workplan identifying the priority sequence and proposed implementation of the project or a RFA relating to aspects of design and user-acceptance of design, development, testing and documentation. The sponsor Project Manager is responsible for the coordination of RFAs that impact multiple areas (such as program and financial).

Warranty Period. The specified period immediately after production implementation and closure of the RFA during which problems will be corrected by IRM without the need for a RFA or SRB consideration. The warranty period for a RFA will be determined by the IRM Technical Advisor for the system(s) the RFA impacts.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

APPENDIX B INFORMATION RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (IRM) AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

<u>SYSTEM</u>	<u>RFA</u>	<u>PRODUCTION PROBLEM REPORT</u>	<u>PRODUCTION RELEASE</u>
PLAS	RHS	SIM	SIM
GLAS	RBS	SIM	SIM
RMS	AS	SIM	SIM
MTFS	AS	SIM	SIM
MRS	AS	SIM	SIM
RCFTS	RBS	SIM	SIM
AMAS	RHS	SIM	SIM
EIS	ET	SIM	SIM
All other standard AISs	SSD	SIM	SIM

LEGEND:

SSD: Systems Services Division

AS: Administrative Systems Branch

ET: Emerging Technology Branch

RHS: Rural Housing and Community Development Systems Branch

RBS: Rural Business & Cooperative Development Systems Branch

SIM: Systems Integrity Management

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

APPENDIX C RFA PRIORITY DEFINITIONS

The priority of a RFA signifies the importance of a Rural Development (RD) requirement at a particular point in time.

Emergency

1. A situation involving an automated system demanding immediate attention. Emergency RFAs are the highest priority and are the direct and immediate responsibility of the Chief Information Officer (CIO). These situations are strictly limited to the following:
 - The system aborts and cannot be restarted without operator intervention or a change to the production environment.
 - The system is producing or will produce invalid data (i.e. reports or file content), compromises data integrity to a significant degree, and is not an isolated incident. These are incidents which cannot be resolved manually, cannot wait for normal RFA processing, and require immediate software support to resolve the problem.

2. Critical

A requirement that is vital to the mission of RD with no time flexibility for implementation. RFAs ranked Critical are mandated to be completed in a timeframe which would not be possible if the request were ranked Important.

3. Important

A requirement that is vital to the mission of RD with flexibility in timing for implementation. Examples of an Important RFA may be found among, but are not limited to, the following:

 - An otherwise Critical RFA with flexibility in timing for implementation;

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

- A partially automated process that is taking extensive and unreasonable effort for research and analysis to resolve.

Critical and Important priority RFAs are generally dictated by legislation, judicial decree, regulation, or policy. Over time, Important requirements may become priority Critical.

4. Desirable

An enhancement to an automated process that will improve program or management operations or provide clearer information, but does not have a direct legislative, judicial, regulatory, or policy mandate. Examples of a RFA in the Desirable priority may be found among, but are not limited to, the following:

- Merging report data.
- New reports or enhancements to existing reports.
- Screen improvements.
- Improvements to transactions or balancing procedures.
- Any other cosmetic changes.

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

APPENDIX D RFA CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

RFAs are assigned categories based on the activity or reason for the automation requirement. Within a priority (Critical, Important, or Desirable), RFAs are typically prioritized in the category order presented.

1. Legislative/Judicial

A requirement to meet provisions of law including congressional requests (e.g. a Housing Bill), or a judicial decree.

2. Regulatory/Policy

A requirement mandated by a regulation or a policy change made by a RD Deputy Administrator or higher.

3. Audit

A change identified as a resolution to an audit recommendation or a RD internal self-audit; e.g. General Accounting Office (GAO), Office of The Inspector General (OIG), Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA), internal risk analysis, or vulnerability assessment.

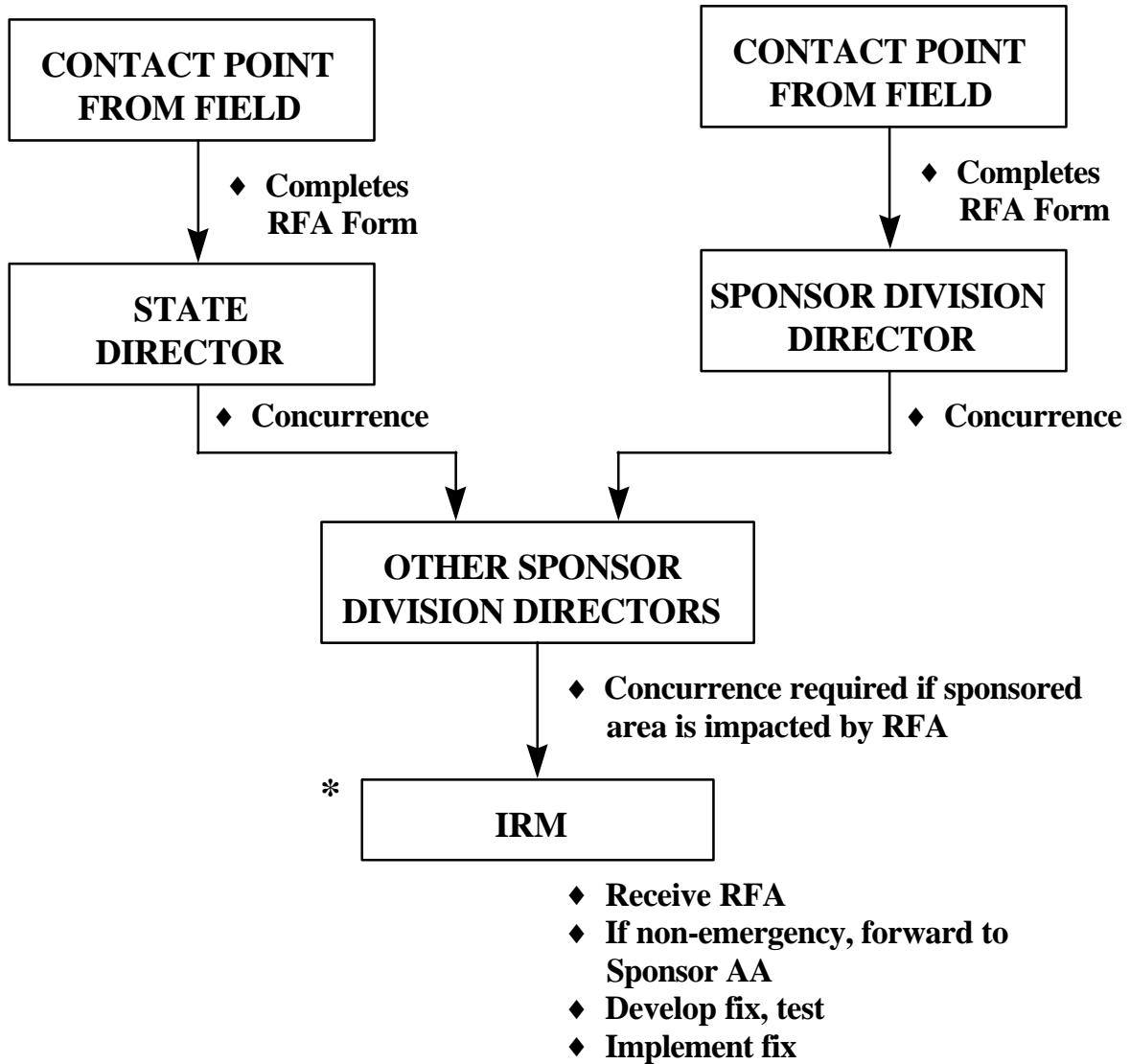
4. Internal Systems Infrastructure

An improvement that results in automation efficiencies. Examples include downsizing applications, restructuring or reengineering software.

5. Systems Enhancements Initiatives

Any other modification or enhancement. This category also covers requests for additional or new capabilities for systems.

**PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM FOR
EMERGENCY RFA
(Form RD 2006-15)**



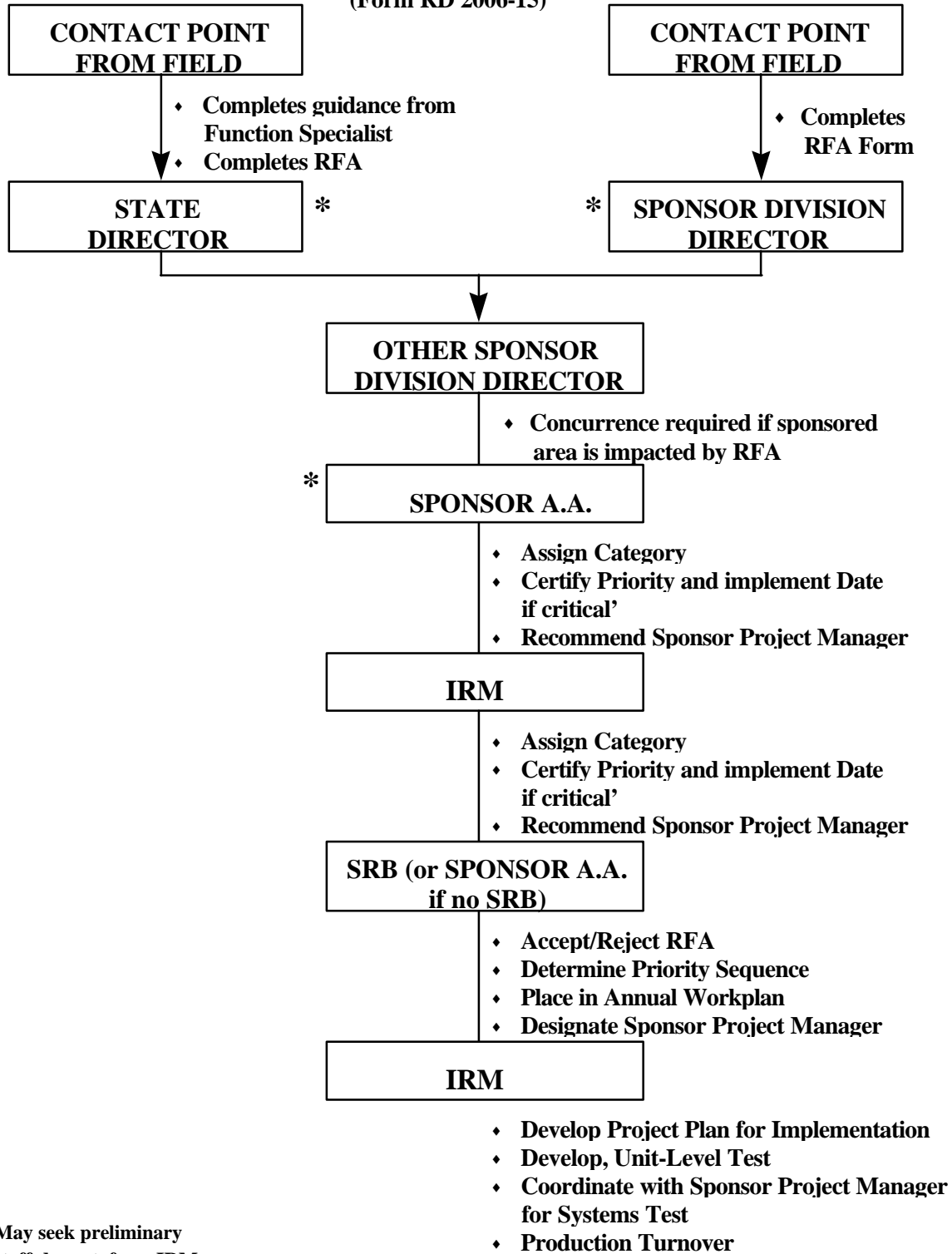
* Emergency can be verbally sent to IRM with RFA follow-up

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

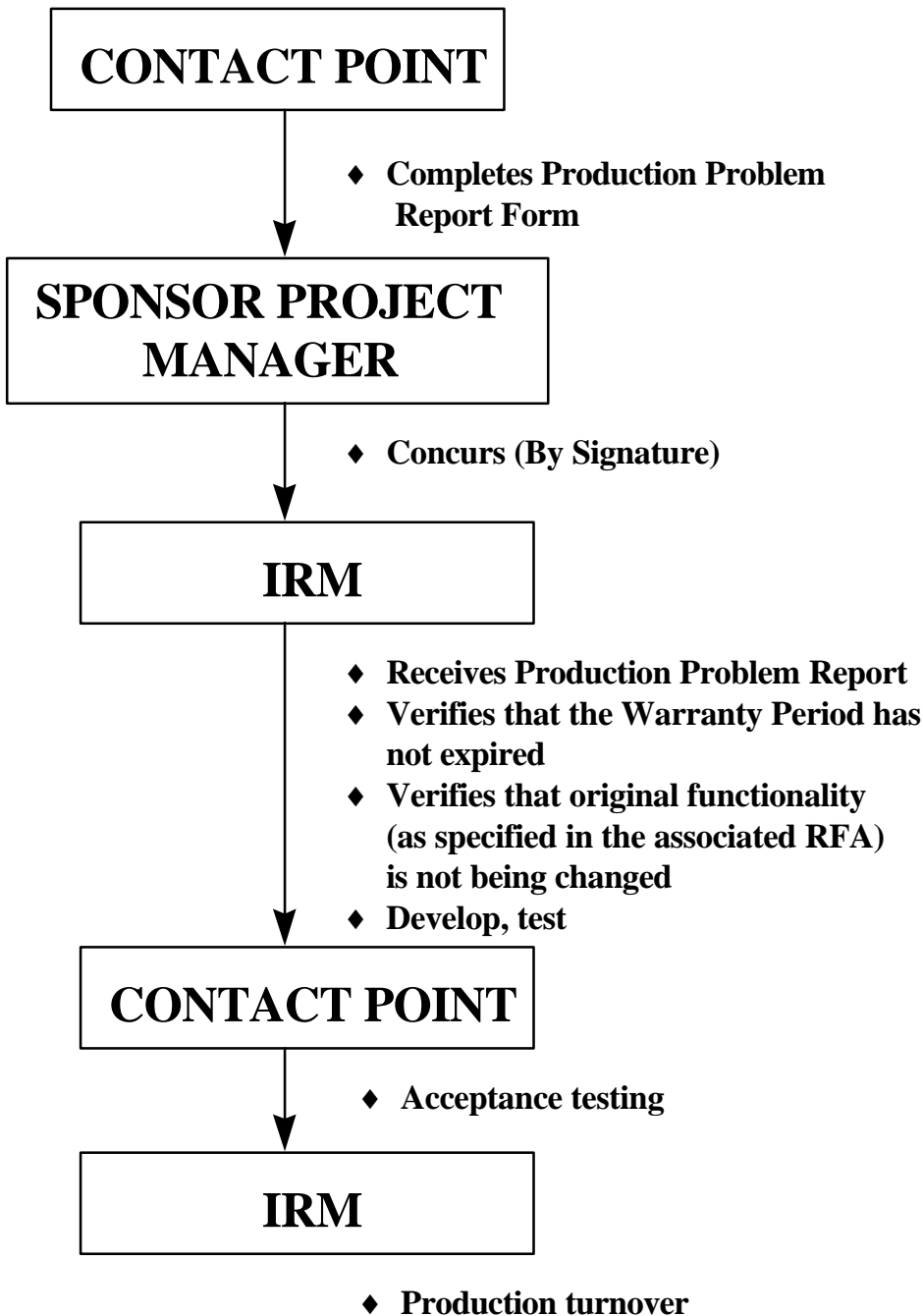
RD Instruction 2006-T
Appendix F

PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM FOR NON-EMERGENCY RFA

(Form RD 2006-15)



**PROCESS FLOW DIAGRAM FOR
PRODUCTION PROBLEM REPORT
(Form RD 2006-25)**



RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

APPENDIX H

SYSTEM REVIEW BOARD MEMBERSHIP VOTING REPRESENTATIVES

PLAS

Budget, Finance and Management.....	1
Finance Office.....	2
RBS.....	1
Single Family Housing.....	2
Field Office.....	<u>3</u>
TOTAL	9

PLAS SPONSOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATORS

RD Chief Financial Officer
RD Assistant Administrator Housing, RHS

GLAS

Budget, Finance and Management.....	1
Finance Office.....	2
RBS.....	1
Single Family Housing.....	2
Field Office.....	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	8

GLAS SPONSOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATORS

Associate Administrator, RBS
Chief Financial Officer, RD
Assistant Administrator Housing, RHS

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

MTFS

Multi-Family Housing.....	2
Field Office..... <u>1</u>	
TOTAL	3

MTFS SPONSOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

Assistant Administrator Housing, RHS

MRS

Single Family Housing.....	3
Field Office..... <u>3</u>	
TOTAL	6

MRS SPONSOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATORS

Assistant Administrator Housing, RHS

RCFTS

RBS.....	4
Field Office..... <u>1</u>	
TOTAL	5

RCFTS SPONSOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

Associate Administrator, RBS

RD APPLICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM SUPPORT HANDBOOK

AMAS

Multi-Family Housing.....	2
Budget, Finance and Management.....	1
Finance Office.....	2
Field Office.....	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	7

AMAS SPONSOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATORS

Chief Financial Officer, RD
Assistant Administrator Housing, RHS

EIS

State Directors.....	4
RHS National Office Representative.....	3
RBS National Office Representative.....	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	8

EIS SPONSOR ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATORS

RHS Associate Administrator
RBS Associate Administrator