Joint Food Safety Education and Food Enterprise Innovation Forums in 8 Regions of Minnesota

Budget Narrative

This project involves five major collaborators: Renewing the Countryside (RTC), Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA), Minnesota Farmers Market Association (MFMA), Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

Renewing the Countryside will take the lead on organizing, convening, and facilitating meetings of MDA, MDH, and Delegated Authority regulators, farmers, food entrepreneurs, and food system advocates at eight locations throughout Minnesota.

Organization of meetings will be accomplished through RTC’s proven event development process of recruiting and paying a stipend to regional coordinators, recruiting regional advisory teams, and tasking an RTC staff person with coordinating and serving as a resource person for the regional teams.

The RTC director responsibilities:

* Allocate staff time or new hiring to fill the central RTC coordinator position
* Allocate staff time or new hiring to provide technical support services for regional meeting organization (e.g. online registration forms, survey tools)
* Supervise the central RTC coordinator
* Communicate with project partners
* Accounting and budget management for RTC’s commitments under the grant
  + Arrange for payments to regional coordinators and case study subjects
* Attendance at required meetings convened by NIFA

The central RTC coordinator responsibilities:

* Recruitment of the eight regional coordinators, with assistance from MFMA and other organizations in Minnesota’s sustainable agriculture and local food network (see http://www.misa.umn.edu/organizations/sustainability-organizations-minnesota)
* Managing timelines and ensuring timely progress toward regional meeting organization
* Convening conference calls for regional meeting planning
* Collecting feedback and best practices information from regional coordinators regarding meeting organization, and facilitating sharing and discussion of that information among local coordinators
* Procuring informational resources requested by regional coordinators
* Providing additional support as requested by regional coordinators, which may include but is not limited to: assistance with making connections with organizations for the recruitment of regional advisory team members or case study subjects; assistance in communicating with MDA, MDH, or Delegated Authority staff
* File paperwork to obtain CEU credits for MDA, MDH, or Delegated Authority staff who attend regional meetings

The eight regional coordinator responsibilities:

* Recruit regional advisory teams, with assistance from MFMA and other organizations in Minnesota’s sustainable agriculture and local food network (see http://www.misa.umn.edu/organizations/sustainability-organizations-minnesota)
* Recruit case study subjects from their regional network of small- and mid-scale farmers, beginning farmers, specialty crop farmers, small- and mid-scale food entrepreneurs, and food system advocates. MISA, MFMA and other organizations in Minnesota’s sustainable agriculture and local food network (see <http://www.misa.umn.edu/organizations/sustainability-organizations-minnesota>) will assist with recruitment of case study subjects.
* Develop meeting agendas, in consultation with regional advisory teams and regional and state-level MDA, MDH, and Delegated Authority staff.
* Conduct publicity and outreach in the regions and individual recruitment of meeting participants to ensure balance among regulators, farmers, and advocates.
* Ensure that resource materials needed for meetings are present at meeting locations in sufficient quantities.
* Collect and compile information generated during meetings and transmitting that to MISA to inform publication development.
* Collect feedback and evaluation from participants at each meeting.

Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture will take the lead on information development and dissemination. A small percentage of farmers, food entrepreneurs, and food system advocates will be able to attend each regional meeting. Capture of the information presented, questions raised, and clarifications achieved at the meetings will be transmitted to MISA for conversion into fact sheets, websites, web pages, or other types of documents or online tools for communicating to Minnesota’s sustainable agriculture and local food system community. The informational products thus developed will be transmitted to the Regional Center.

MISA Information Exchange Program Associate responsibilities:

* Communicate with project partners
* Facilitate communication between central RTC coordinator and organizations in Minnesota’s sustainable agriculture/local food system network
* Assist with recruitment of regional coordinators, regional advisory teams, and case study subjects
* Hire and supervise a case study writer; ensure timeliness of case study preparation
* Serve as resource person to the case study writer
* Ensure timely preparation of case studies that will be presented at regional meeting
* Transmit case studies to MDA in advance of meetings so that MDA can prepare appropriate FSMA training materials related to the case studies
* Allocate staff time or new hiring of a U of MN student for website work
* Supervise the website worker
* Work with MDA, MDH and Delegated Authority staff, RTC and MFMA to review and interpret information coming out of meetings
* Arrange for writing, editing, design and layout, printing, review by state agency staff, or other tasks needed to convert information from regional meetings into documents and tools for communicating widely to Minnesota’s sustainable agriculture and local food system community
* Transmit FMSA training materials from MDA, case studies, fact sheets, and other documents to Regional Center.
* Disseminate informational materials through MISA’s existing communications & outreach infrastructure (see: <http://misadocuments.info/sust_ag_local_food_communications_capability.pdf>)

MISA Case Study Writer responsibilities:

* Work with MFMA, regional coordinators and advisory teams to get in touch with case study subjects
* Conduct case study interviews
* Prepare case studies, which shall include submitting drafts to the case study subjects for their review, revision, and issuing of a final version
* Time management to ensure that case studies are ready for presentation at regional meetings
* Transmit case study files to website worker

MISA website worker responsibilities:

* Add finished case studies to the online forum for this project
* Add finished fact sheets, documents, etc. to the online forum for this project

Minnesota Farmers Market Association (MFMA) will take the lead on networking with other sustainable agriculture and local food system organizations for recruitment of regional coordinators, regional advisory teams, meeting participants, and outreach to the sustainable agriculture and local food systems community throughout Minnesota. MFMA will also participate in publication development through writing, review and recruitment of reviewers.

MFMA Operations Manager responsibilities:

* Communicate with other partners in this project
* Communicate with farmers’ market managers and vendors throughout Minnesota about each scheduled regional meeting
* Recruit regional coordinators and regional advisory teams
* Pay stipends to regional coordinators associated with MFMA
* Recruit case study subjects
* Assist MISA with writing of fact sheets and other informational tools for the sustainable farming and local food system audience
* Recruit reviewers of fact sheets and informational tools
* Incorporate informational products generated by regional meetings and developed by MISA into outreach newsletters, MFMA meetings, workshops, and contacts with other organizations
* Accounting and budget management for MFMA obligations under this grant

In-Kind Contributions from Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)

\*\* Note: Matching contributions are not required for this application because a partner in the application, the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture, is part of the University of Minnesota, which is an 1862 Land-Grant institution. However, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Department of Health are key partners in this project and will provide venues and resources from their existing programs to support this project.

Minnesota Department of Agriculture:

* Assign regional food inspectors to attend each regional meeting
* Develop FSMA presentations appropriate to regional meeting audiences and relating to case study topics; primarily Produce Rule and Preventive Control rule
* Deliver FSMA presentations at each regional meeting
* Allocate state-level staff time to review of fact sheets and other documents developed by MISA
* Transmit fact sheets, etc. developed by MISA out to MDA inspectors throughout the state
* Include knowledge gained in the regional meetings in future trainings of MDA inspectors

Minnesota Department of Health:

* Provide meeting space at eight MDH regional offices around Minnesota: Metro area, Bemidji, Duluth, Fergus Falls, Mankato, Marshall, Rochester, St. Cloud
* Allow use of existing Food Safety Partnership meeting schedule that currently primarily involves MDH staff and Delegated Authority staff
* Turn over meeting coordination and agenda to RTC for two meetings per year in each region
* Assign regional inspectors from the Food, Pools and Lodging division to attend each regional meeting
* Assign staff to participate from the Minnesota Department of Health Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP), Office of Statewide Health Improvement Initiatives
* Encourage Delegated Authorities to send staff to meetings
* Transmit fact sheets, etc. developed by MISA out to MDH inspectors and Delegated Authorities throughout the state
* Include knowledge gained in the regional meetings in future trainings of MDH inspectors and Delegated Authority inspectors.