

**Renewable Resources
Extension Act
(RREA)**

Capacity Funds

**Planning and Reporting Guide
for
FY 2017-2021
5-Year Projects**

September 2, 2016

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Section 1: Overview and Background

Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978

Congress passed the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA) on June 30, 1978 and it was signed into law as Public Law 95-306, 92 Stat.349, 16 U.S.C. 1671 et.seq.

RREA is an Act *“To provide for an expanded and comprehensive extension program for forest and rangeland renewable resources.”* It is intended to provide educational programs dealing with renewable resources on forest and rangeland, and to develop and implement extension educational programs that give special attention to the educational needs of small, private, non-industrial forest landowners and rangeland owners/managers. The Act is also intended to assist in providing continuing education programs for natural resource professionals working in fish and wildlife, forest, range, and watershed management, and related fields.

The original Act was effective for the period October 1, 1978 and ending September 30, 2000. Since then, RREA has been re-authorized as a Farm Bill program for five-year increments. The original Act authorized funding was \$15,000,000 per fiscal year. Later reauthorizations of the program increased the authorized funding level to \$30,000,000 per fiscal year. In FY 2016 the RREA appropriation was \$4,060,000, or approximately 13.5% of the authorized funding level.

In May 2004 the ECOP Forestry Task Force released the first RREA strategic plan for the period, FY 2005-2009 which was jointly prepared by the Federal and State partners. Beginning with FY 2005, CSREES (predecessor to NIFA) adopted the plan and used it to invest in the specific issues identified in the plan. The FY 2005-2009 plan was extended for two years while the next five-year plan was developed for the period, FY 2012-2016. A new plan is currently under development and the 2012-2016 plan has been extended through FY 2018 (September 30, 2018).

The purpose of the Strategic Plans have been to focus the limited RREA funds on the most critical and high priority issues facing forest and rangeland owners/managers.

In order to ensure that the RREA funds are spent in a manner that directly results in extension education programs, RREA Program Leaders worked with extension forest and rangeland program leaders to identify processes that would provide more substantive and robust impact reports that meet the needs of CSREES to demonstrate program effectiveness. The agency allocated administrative funds to support a workshop with State and Federal partners to determine the reporting process and performance indicators. The indicators in the Guide were a result of that workshop and have been reviewed periodically as new five-year strategic plans were developed jointly with State partners. Beginning in FY 2006 5-year RREA projects were incorporated into the Current Research Information System (CRIS) which has been replaced with REEport, the Research, Education, and Extension Online Reporting Tool.

This Planning and Reporting Guide is intended to assist both State and Federal partners in ensuring that the RREA funds allocated to the eligible recipients are used as required by the Public Law and to provide for RREA program planning, evaluation, and reporting by the State and Federal partners.

Section 2: Stakeholder Input to Your RREA Program

Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978 states:

Section 4(b): In meeting the provisions of this section, each State director and administrative heads of extension for eligible colleges and universities shall appoint and use more of more advisory committees comprised of forest and range landowners, professionally trained individuals in fish and wildlife, forest, range and watershed management, and related fields, as appropriate, and other suitable persons.

Many programs, across agencies, organizations, and other Extension programs at your institutions have advisory committees through which you may already seek their input regarding the priorities and programs that are most needed and relevant to your state. The intent of Section 4(b) is to ensure that stakeholders are included and consulted as you develop and deliver an RREA Program in your state. If you have existing advisory committees through which you can solicit and receive input for your program that would meet the intent of Section 4(b). If you do not, you need to find another mechanism through which those who participate – and those who don't but would benefit – can provide advice, input, and recommendations for your RREA program.

When you engage your stakeholders, consider the following items as providing the necessary background and context for their input:

- Overview of the purpose of the RREA program;
- RREA funding that is provided by USDA-NIFA;
- Your RREA accomplishments and impacts over the last 5 years;
- Current RREA strategic issues and their relevance to your state.

Consider including non-traditional as well as traditional stakeholders. It is easy to identify and engage stakeholders who will affirm what you have been doing and tell you to continue it. It is often more challenging to identify those who haven't been participating in your program and those who will give you their considered opinions and not tell you what you want to hear.

Section 3: Preparing Your Five-Year Project: FY 2017-2021

RREA institutions are encouraged to use the logic model approach to plan their RREA Program to ensure that the inputs, activities, and outcomes will result in the impacts that are needed/desired by program stakeholders. Without logical program development, the collection of inputs and activities may or may not “sum” to real impacts. An institution’s RREA program should not be a collection of “one-off” activities and events that don’t lead to anything. Rather, a logical and cohesive program approach has a higher likelihood of achieving desired impacts.

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 the program expects to achieve. It is a tool for depicting the "chain of events" that links inputs (e.g., dollars and FTEs) and activities (e.g., workshops, meetings, consultations) to outcomes and impacts.

The model can be very useful for developing your RREA Program by starting with the end in mind (impacts, at the right-hand side of the model) and moving from right to left in the model to ensure that the inputs, activities and outcomes lead to the desired impacts. By planning from right to left in the logic model, and implementing the program from left to right, there is a greater likelihood for program impacts.

You can find a logic model template here: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/lmcourse/PDFs/LM_full.pdf

RREA institutions are encouraged to focus their RREA Program and funding on 1-3 crosscutting issues described in the strategic plan. No institution receives sufficient funding to make impacts on all of the issues in the strategic plan. Apply the concept of “Focus – scale – impact” to determine where your RREA funds will have the most impact.

Once the logic model has been developed, you can then make decisions on what evaluation data you wish to collect at the input, activities, and outcomes levels. A logic model is essential when designing outcomes-based evaluations of programs and projects.

The national quantitative data indicators in Section 6 are based on a logic model for each of the strategic plan crosscutting issues. Once you have completed a logic model for your institution’s RREA Program, then use the logic models for each issue to determine how you will proceed to collect program evaluation data. They should be useful in:

Organizing and planning your institution’s RREA program for the next five years; and
Determining what data needs to be collected to be able to talk about program success and impacts.

NIFA strongly recommends that RREA Project Directors work with their Extension Evaluators to:

- Develop the RREA Program logic model;
- Determine what evaluation data to collect; and
- Determine what processes and instruments can be used to collect the data

Lastly, program evaluation requires financial resources to do it well. NIFA recommends allocating 8-10% of your RREA funding to program evaluation efforts.

Section 4: Submitting Your RREA 5-Year Project to REEport

The Research, Education, and Extension Online Reporting Tool, or REEport, is the electronic repository for projects funded by NIFA. All institutions that receive RREA funds must submit a five-year project for the period, FY 2017-2021 (October 1, 2016-September 30, 2021). This is where you will submit your new 5-year RREA project. Once it is submitted to REEport by your institution, it arrives in the RREA Program Leaders' REEport mailbox for approval, deferral, or decline. Project Directors will be notified of NIFA's action, and will be provided with comments about deficiencies if the project is deferred or declined.

Your institution has at least one REEport Site Administrator who is very familiar with the operation of REEport and the submission of new projects, progress reports, and final reports. You can depend on that person to answer your questions.

Step 1: Access to REEport

Depending on your institution's REEport management processes, your Site Administrator may simply provide password access for you to initiate the project, or provide technical assistance as you prepare and initiate your project, or request that you provide a document with the required sections and text so that the Site Administrator can cut and paste into the Project Initiation template.

Step 2: Browse the REEport sections before writing

Before entering you FY2017-2021 RREA project, we highly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the Project Initiation template and the sections that you will need to complete.

Open or download the REEport Guide for Project Directors (PD) (also referred to as the PD Guide):
<https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/reeport-guide-project-directors>

The most important information in this manual that you will need for initiating a new project is found on pages 12-3285-114: Submit a Project Initiation under the Capacity-Funded Projects section. Note: RREA is a capacity program, so all the information relevant for RREA projects will be found in this section of the PD Guide.

Step 3: Prepare and complete the Project Initiation screens in REEport.

There are several screens to complete to initiate a new Project and the PD Guide provides detailed information about each of these sections on pages 12-32:

- Cover page – some fields in the cover page will pre-populate. Others will need to be completed by you or your REEport Site Administrator.
- Participants – this is where you indicate who will be involved in planning and delivery the RREA programs.
- Goals – List the Goals and Crosscutting Issues (2-3) from the RREA Strategic Plan
- Products – Describe the products that you expect to produce during the 5-year project.
- Outcomes – Describe what the expected outcomes will be from the project.
- Audience(s) – List and describe the audiences who you will target for your RREA program.
- Methods – Describe the methods that you will use in conducting the RREA program.
- Summary – This section is IMPORTANT. Prepare a non-technical summary that individuals, funders, policy makers, and others can read. This summary will appear in various NIFA public-facing, open-access systems, including the Data Gateway and CRIS, the Current Research Information System. REEport is the agency’s system; the Data Gateway and CRIS is where the public can read about the projects that NIFA funds.
- Classification – You will need to classify your project in terms for Knowledge Areas, Subject of Investigation, and Field of Science. The recommended codes to use for RREA projects are listed in Section 5 of this document.
- Assurance statements – These statements deal with human subjects and live animal use in research.

Step 4: Submit your RREA project

If you have been designated as a Site Administrator at your institution, then you will have two levels of submission. First, you will click “submit for review.” The project will then advance to the next folder in the queue, where you will then go to the submit screen again and click “Submit to NIFA.” It is more likely, however, that you’ve been given access to REEport only as a PD, which means that when you click “submit for review” the project will go to the REEport Site Administrator at your institution who will review it for completeness and then submit it to REEport at NIFA.

Updates and Changes to the Project

Project Directors may make changes to the 5-year project at any time using the “Project Change” function in REEport.

When the FY 2019 – FY 2023 RREA Strategic Plan is published, Project Directors will be asked to review their 5-year project and make any desired changes to reflect emergent stakeholder needs and the priority issues in the new Strategic Plan.

The designated Project Director can be changed at any time by submitting a “Project Director change” through

Section 5: Project Classification

Below are the RREA-specific entries to use for:

- Knowledge Area (KA)
- Subject of Investigation (SOI)
- Field of Science (FOS)

RREA Strategic Goals and Issues and Corresponding Knowledge Areas

(NOTE: Some of these KA's are not the best match but will suffice for the purpose of summing up effort across all programs.)

GOAL 1: Ensuring Healthy Ecosystems

- Invasive Species
 - KA 211 – Insects, Mites, and Other Arthropods Affecting Plants
 - KA 213 – Weeds Affecting Plants
 - KA 214 – Vertebrates, Mollusks, and other Pests Affecting Plants
 - KA 215 – Biological Control of Pests Affecting Plants
 - KA 216 – Integrated Pest Management Systems
- Land Conversion, Fragmentation and Parcelization
 - KA 131 – Alternative Uses of Land
- Climate Variability
 - KA 132 – Weather and Climate
- Forest and Rangeland Water and Wetland Resources (water and wetlands on forests and rangelands only)
 - KA 111 – Conservation and Efficient Use of Water
 - KA 112 – Watershed Protection and Management

GOAL 2: Enhancing Economic Benefits

- Economic Opportunities for Individuals and Communities
 - KA 134 – Outdoor Recreation (forest- and rangeland-based)
 - KA 511 – New and Improved Non-Food Products and Processes (e.g., wood products, Christmas trees, non-timber forest products)
 - KA 602 – Business Management, Finance, and Taxation
 - KA 604 – Marketing and Distribution Practices
 - KA 608 – Community Resource Planning and Development
- Biomass for Energy
 - KA 511 – New and Improved Non-Food Products and Processes

- Ecosystem Services
 - KA 605 – Natural Resources and Environmental Economics

GOAL 3: Enhancing Resource Management on Working Forests and Rangelands

- Forest Stewardship and Health
 - KA 112 – Watershed Protection and Management
 - KA 122 – Management and Control of Forest and Range Fires
 - KA 123 – Management and Sustainability of Forest Resources
 - KA 124 – Urban Forestry
 - KA 133 – Pollution Prevention and Mitigation (e.g., forestry BMPs)
 - KA 212 – Pathogens and Nematodes Affecting Plants
 - KA 213 – Weeds Affecting Plants
 - KA 214 – Vertebrates, Mollusks, and Other Pests Affecting Plants
 - KA 215 – Biological Control of Pests Affecting Plants
 - KA 216 – Integrated Pest Management Systems

- Rangeland Stewardship and Health
 - KA 121 – Management of Range Resources
 - KA 122 – Management and Control of Forest and Range Fires
 - KA 136 – Conservation of Biological Diversity
 - KA 212 – Pathogens and Nematodes Affecting Plants
 - KA 213 – Weeds Affecting Plants
 - KA 214 – Vertebrates, Mollusks, and Other Pests Affecting Plants
 - KA 215 – Biological Control of Pests Affecting Plants
 - KA 216 – Integrated Pest Management Systems
 - KA 302 – Nutrient Utilization in Animals
 - KA 306 – Environmental Stress in Animals

- Wildlife and Fisheries Resources (on forests and rangelands only)
 - KA 112 – Watershed Protection and Management
 - KA 135 – Aquatic and Terrestrial Wildlife
 - KA 136 – Conservation of Biological Diversity
 - KA 605 – Natural Resources and Environmental Economics

- Food Production, Safety and Security
 - KA 125 – Agroforestry
 - KA 502 – New and Improved Food Product

- Intergenerational Land Transfer
 - KA 801 – Individual and Family Resource Management

GOAL 4: Building Capacity Through Enhanced Connections

- KA 903 – Communication, Education, and Information Delivery

Subject of Investigation (SOI)

Use: 0699 (Trees, forests, and forest product, general) for programs focused on forest lands or 0799 (Rangelands and grasslands, general) for programs focused on range lands. DO NOT USE ANY OTHER SOI codes.

Field of Science (FOS)

Use: 3020 (Education). DO NOT USE ANY OTHER FOS codes.

The following worksheet is an optional planning tool and will not be submitted to NIFA. Using the project that you are planning to initiate, classify your project and estimated percentage of effort for each line of classification. Enter a line of classification for each unique Knowledge Area-Subject of Investigation-Field of Science combination. After completing this worksheet, transfer the information to the REEport Project Initiation – Classification section.

EXAMPLE: Institution “X”

Knowledge Area	Subject of Investigation (use: 0699 for forestlands; 0799 for rangelands)	Field of Science (use: 3020)	Percent effort (in 10% increments)
123	0699	3020	70
135	0699	3020	30
			TOTAL=
			100%

YOUR Project

Knowledge Area	Subject of Investigation (use: 0699 for forestlands; 0799 for rangelands)	Field of Science (use: 3020)	Percent effort (in 10% increments)

Section 6: National Quantitative Indicators (Outputs and Outcomes) for Annual Reporting, By Goal and Crosscutting Issue

National quantitative indicators have been established for each of the RREA crosscutting issues. These indicators were first developed in FY 2006 to provide a set of common indicators for institutions to report on and to enable quantitative data to be summed up across all RREA institutions in order to demonstrate the national impact of RREA extension programs. As each successive 5-year strategic plan was developed, the State and Federal partners re-visited the indicators to determine if changes needed to be made.

Instructions

- Report indicator data on all Extension projects for which RREA funds were directly used for partial or total program costs.
- At a minimum, report all output and audience participation data for the RREA goals you have included in your 5-year project. This data can primarily be collected through simple record-keeping.
- Report as much outcome data as possible under the issues you have identified and described in your 5-year project.
- If you have additional data that does not match the national-level indicators, do not hesitate to include it in the narrative section of the annual RREport Progress Report or Popular Report. **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ADD NEW FIELDS** in the fillable pdf form that is attached to the annual e-mail requesting the annual report.
- RREA institutions are strongly encouraged to allocate 8-10% of RREA funds for program evaluation.

Definitions

- Direct contacts are people reached through:
 - Face-to-face contact (workshops, field days, conferences, demonstrations, etc.)
 - One-on-one education (office and field visits, phone conversations, e-mail and other electronic consultations)
 - Indirect contacts are people reached through:
 - Newsletters (electronic, print)
 - Website “hits” and downloads
 - Social media “hits”
 - **DO NOT INCLUDE:** public service announcements, mass media (radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, or billboard announcements).
- Awareness: The individual is conscious of something that is relevant but may not have a full understanding of it. For RREA purposes, awareness will be documented through counts of direct and indirect contacts.

- Knowledge: The individual has a clear understanding of explicit factual information about a particular topic that they did not have before. For RREA purposes, knowledge is best documented through evaluation with direct contacts.
- Implementation: The individual has put into practice on a regular basis, a new technique or innovation that they had not done before. For RREA purposes, intent to implement is not equivalent to implementation. Implementation is best documented through evaluation with direct contacts.

GOAL 1: Ensuring Healthy Ecosystems

Issue: Invasive Species

1. Number of educational events conducted for forest and range landowners and managers on the environmental and economic impacts of invasive species.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of exotic invasive species.
3. Number of forest and range landowners and managers who increased knowledge of at least one exotic invasive species and its control.
4. Number of private landowners and managers and public land users and managers who implemented at least one management program to prevent or control exotic invasive species.
5. Number of acres that received management to prevent or control exotic invasive species on private land.
6. Number of acres that received management to prevent or control exotic invasive species on public land.
7. Number of invasive species related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.

Issue: Land Conversion, Fragmentation, and Parcelization

1. Number of educational events conducted for landowners and managers on options to minimize land-use conversion of forest and rangelands.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of options to minimize land-use conversion of forest and rangelands.
3. Number of direct contacts who increased knowledge about options to minimize land-use conversion of forest and rangelands.
4. Number of landowners who implemented at least one new practice to ensure the retention of current land uses.
5. Number of acres protected from conversion to ensure retention of current forest and rangeland uses.
6. Number of land conversion, fragmentation and parcelization related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.

Issue: Climate Variability

1. Number of educational events for forest and range landowners, natural resource managers, and/or industry clients related to climate science, mitigation and/or adaptation.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of climate variability.
3. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased knowledge of climate variability.
4. Number of climate variability related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.
5. Number of forest and range landowners, natural resource managers, and/or industry clients who adopt at least one climate adaptation or mitigation strategy.
6. Number of acres of forest and rangeland managed to adapt to or mitigate effects of climate-related disturbances.

Issue: Forest and Rangeland Water and Wetland Resources

1. Number of educational events conducted for forest and range landowners and managers on the value, importance and management implications of wetland resources.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of wetland resources.
3. Number of forest and range landowners and managers who increased knowledge of wetland resources.
4. Number of private landowners and managers and public land users and managers who implemented at least one management practice or program with regard to wetland resources.
5. Number of new acres under management for wetland resources on private land.
6. Number of new acres under management for wetland resources on public land.
7. Number of wetland resources related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.

GOAL 2: Enhancing Economic Benefits

Issue: Economic Opportunities for Individuals and Communities

1. Number of educational events conducted for forest and range landowners and managers on forest, range, fish, and wildlife based income-generating opportunities.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of forest, range, fish, and wildlife based income-generating opportunities.
3. Number of direct and indirect contacts with citizens, landowners, and community leaders who increased awareness of the contribution of forest, range, fish, and wildlife resources to local and regional economies.
4. Number of forest, range, fish, and wildlife income-generating businesses created or expanded.
5. Number of new jobs created in forest, range, fish, and wildlife resources.

6. Estimated number of dollars earned or saved by forest, range, fish, and wildlife income-generating businesses.
7. Number of economic opportunity related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.

Issue: Biomass for Energy

1. Number of educational events for forest and range landowners, natural resource managers, and/or industry clients related to the production and use of biomass for energy.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who developed an awareness of biomass and bioenergy.
3. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased knowledge of biomass and bioenergy.
4. Number of new bioenergy enterprises developed, based on biomass use from forest or rangelands.
5. Number of forest or range landowners who have implemented at least one biomass-related management practice.
6. Number of existing companies who have adopted bioenergy as a new energy source, or who have produced energy from forest and range biomass sources.
7. Number of new jobs created as a result of bioenergy enterprises.
8. Number of biomass and bioenergy related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.

Issue: Ecosystem Services

1. Number of educational events conducted for forest and range landowners and managers on ecosystem services opportunities and barriers.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of ecosystem services.
3. Number of forest and range landowners and managers who increased knowledge of ecosystem services.
4. Number of private landowners and managers and public land users and managers who implemented at least one management activity with regard to ecosystem services.
5. Number of new acres under production for ecosystem services on private land.
6. Number of new acres under production for ecosystem services on public land.
7. Number of new forest, range, fish, and wildlife ecosystem services businesses created or expanded.
8. Number of new jobs created in forest, range, fish, and wildlife resources based on ecosystem services.
9. Estimated number of dollars earned or saved by forest, range, fish, and wildlife ecosystem service income-generating businesses.
10. Number of ecosystem services related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.

GOAL 3: Enhancing Resource Management on Working Forests and Rangelands

Issue: Forest Stewardship and Health

1. Number of educational events conducted for forest landowners and managers on the benefits and opportunities of forest stewardship practices.
2. Number of forest landowners and managers trained to develop forest stewardship plans.
3. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of the benefits and opportunities of forest stewardship practices.
4. Number of direct contacts who increased knowledge of the benefits and opportunities of forest stewardship practices.
5. Number of forest stewardship plans initiated, supported or developed with
6. Extension support/involvement.
7. Number of forest landowners who implemented at least one new forest stewardship practice.
8. Number of acres on which forest management was improved.
9. Number of forest stewardship and health related social media products, web- based products, and communication tools.

Issue: Rangeland Stewardship and Health

1. Number of educational events conducted for rangeland owners and managers on vegetation, water, and animal management on rangelands.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of vegetation, water, and animal management on rangelands.
3. Number of direct contacts who increased knowledge of vegetation management, water management, and animal management on rangelands.
4. Number of acres on which rangeland management was improved.
5. Number of range landowners and managers who implemented at least one new range management practice.
6. Number of rangeland stewardship and health related social media products, web- based products, and communication tools.

Issue: Forest and Rangeland Wildlife and Fisheries Resources

1. Number of educational events conducted for forest and range landowners and managers on wildlife and/or fish habitat management principles and practices.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of wildlife and/or fish habitat management principles and practices.
3. Number of direct contacts who increased knowledge of wildlife and/or fish habitat relationships.

4. Number of landowners who implemented at least one new wildlife and/or fish habitat management practice.
5. Number of acres/and or stream miles on which wildlife and/or fish habitat is improved.
6. Number of wildlife and fisheries related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.

Issue: Food Production, Safety, and Security

1. Number of educational events conducted for forest and range landowners and managers on forest/range related food production (e.g. agroforestry, maple syrup, game fowl, etc.), safety and security principles and opportunities.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of forest/range related food production (e.g. agroforestry, maple syrup, game fowl, etc.), safety and security issues.
3. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased knowledge of forest/range related food production (e.g. agroforestry, maple syrup, game fowl, etc.), safety and security issues.
4. Number of landowners and managers who implemented at least one new forest/range related food production practice (e.g. agroforestry, maple syrup, game fowl, etc.), safety and security practice.
5. Number of food production, safety and security related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.

Issue: Intergenerational Land Transfer

1. Number of educational events conducted for forest and range landowners and managers related to intergenerational land transfer and estate planning.
2. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased awareness of forest and rangeland intergenerational land transfer and estate planning.
3. Number of direct and indirect contacts who increased knowledge of forest and rangeland intergenerational land transfer and estate planning.
4. Number of private landowners and managers who prepared plans and/or implemented at least one new practice addressing the threats and opportunities associated with intergenerational land transfer.
5. Number of acres protected from conversion following intergenerational land transfer and estate planning.
6. Number of intergenerational land transfer related social media products, web-based products, and communication tools.

GOAL 4: Building Capacity through Enhanced Connections

1. Number of distinct project/program collaborations with research programs.
2. Number of distinct project/program collaborations with external public and private entities.

3. Number of distance education events (e.g. webinars, podcasts).
4. Number of social media sites developed and managed.
5. Number of multi-state and regional programs and projects.
6. Number of peer-to-peer programs (not individual events), such as Master Woodland Stewards/Managers, Master Naturalist, Covert or other forest and rangeland resource peer-to-peer programs.

Section 7: Project Reporting

An annual report is required for your RREA project on a federal fiscal year basis. The annual report consists of three parts.

Submission Formats

Part	Submission
REEport Progress Report	Submitted electronically by all RREA institutions to REEport by the institution's REEport Site Administrator
Popular Report	Submitted electronically as a one-page pdf document to: rrea@nifa.usda.gov
National Quantitative Data	Submitted electronically as an attachment using the <u>NIFA-provided</u> fillable PDF to: rrea@nifa.usda.gov

Annual reports are required on a fiscal year basis for each institution that receives RREA funds. NIFA RREA staff will issue the request for a fiscal year annual report to RREA Project Directors approximately 4-6 weeks prior to the due date. Upon receipt of all parts of an annual report (described below) from an institution, RREA Program Staff will commence a review of the annual report. Annual reports will be either APPROVED or DEFERRED, and RREA Project Directors will be notified

When an annual report is DEFERRED, , NIFA will indicate any additional information that needs to be included or deleted in the report. Once the information is received, the review process will continue until the institution's annual report can be APPROVED and accepted. Notification of the report's APPROVAL will be provided to the institution's RREA Project Director and the NIFA Staff Accountant for Capacity Funds so that RREA funds are released quarterly, assuming the funds are made available by Congress.

Content and Format

The fiscal year annual report consists of three parts (a, b, and c below):

- a. REEport Progress Report – (REEport Project Director Guide: pages 35-47)
<https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/reeport-guide-project-directors>

(Note: If your NIFA National Program leader defers this part of your annual report, you will be notified by the REEport system that the report has been “sent back” to you for editing; the report is then back into draft status, you may make changes, and then resubmit to NIFA through REEport.)

The Progress Report describes in narrative and quantitative form the program impacts that have been achieved during the year. It is submitted electronically to REEport. It should include:

- Narrative summarizing significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations, and program impacts.
- Quantitative data on the most significant performance indicators for the strategic issues that have been described in your FY 2017 – FY 2021 project.
- Brief 2-3 sentence non-technical summary of the program’s economic, environmental, and/or social impact.
- List of significant RREA funding-supported publications issued during the reporting period.

Submission – The report is submitted electronically to REEport. NOTE: Unless you have complete access to REEport, when you hit SUBMIT to goes to your REEport Site Administrator for review and final submission to NIFA.

b. Popular Report

This is a one-page fact sheet submitted by each institution that receives RREA funding. It should provide convincing and compelling evidence that your institution offers high quality educational programs focused on one or more the RREA Goals and Crosscutting Issues. This report will be used in a variety of ways: posted on the RREA web site; provided to USDA officials in advance of trips to individual states and institutions; distributed to other USDA agencies and other departments whose program goals include outreach and possible collaboration with the Cooperative Extension System; provided to stakeholders, including funders, as appropriate. The Popular Report should also have utility for the institution in demonstrating to university and extension administrators and program partners how extension reaches target audiences with impactful programs.

Format

Overall length – one page maximum

Use the file name: [institution]_RREA_[fiscal year]

Use Times New Roman, regular 12-point font, for all text

Margins: Top: 1.0” preferred, 0.75” minimum Bottom: 1.0” preferred, 0.50” minimum

Right & Left: 1.0”

Save the document in PDF format ONLY

Content

One report per institution – If there is more than one RREA institution in your state and if the RREA program is a combined program, one Popular Report may be submitted, but it must contain the names and logos of all institutions (see below).

University logo: Insert your university/Extension logo/s (graphic image) at the top of the page

Importance of RREA

In 1 or 2 sentences summarize the primary educational programs and audiences targeted by RREA funds during the reporting period

Dollars leveraged by RREA

In one sentence describe the total dollars leveraged by RREA during the reporting period (or estimate an average over a period of years) and the sources of funds leveraged (e.g., state, county, corporate, nonprofit). RREA funds are often used to match non-federal grants or are blended with other funds to conduct programs. Count all funds associated with projects in which RREA funds were directly involved.

Success stories:

Describe 2 to 5 successful Extension programs (1 or 2 sentences each) in which RREA funds were used during the reporting period. Describe the educational content you delivered, audience you targeted, and measured outcomes or impacts. Format each success story as a "bullet point."

Quotes from program participants or collaborators:

Show one or more quotes from Extension program participants or collaborators from other organizations that testify to the value of the educational program supported by RREA funds. Look for quotes on evaluation forms from Extension programs. For each quote, provide the person's name and title or a phrase describing the educational program in which the person participated (e.g., Participant at Woodland Advisor Training, May, 2007)

1 or 2 digital photos with captions:

Insert 1 or 2 digital photos showing educational activities funded by RREA. Write a caption for each photo. Place photos on the page to create a visually balanced, pleasing layout.

RREA Program Contact:

At the bottom of the page, show contact information for one person (preferably the RREA PI) who can answer questions about how RREA funds are being spent in your state.

[State name] RREA Contact: Name, title, address, phone, e-mail

NOTE: Deviations from the prescribed format and content described above will result in the annual report being DEFERRED until the necessary corrections are made.

c. National Quantitative Indicator Data

Quantitative data is required for the indicators for the specific Crosscutting Issues that you identified in the FY 2017-2021 project. Data for some indicators may not be available to you, such as outcome data that has not yet been collected. At a minimum, output data must be reported. This data is submitted in a fillable pdf spreadsheet provided by NIFA and will be attached to the annual request for submission of annual reports. DO NOT use a fillable form that was provided in previous years.

Due Dates

All three parts of the Annual Report are due 60 days following the end of reporting year (fiscal year, NOT calendar year):

- FY 2017 (October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2017) – DUE December 1, 2017
- FY 2018 (October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018) – DUE December 3, 2018
- FY 2019 (October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019) – DUE December 2, 2019
- FY 2020 (October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020) – DUE December 1, 2020
- FY 2021 (October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021) – DUE December 1, 2021

Section 8: Final Report

At the end of the 5-year duration of your RREA project, you must submit a final report covering the entire period of the project: October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2021

See pages 134-138 of the REEport Users Manual:

<https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/REEport%20User%20Manual.pdf>

Content

The final report should not be a report into which you paste your last five years' annual REEport Progress Reports; it will be declined by NIFA. The final report does not need to be an exhaustive report of everything you did or achieved. Focus on:

- What you said you were going to do
- What you actually did
- What were the impacts – use qualitative data and some of the most significant quantitative indicators that you can sum up and report.

Upon submission of the Final Report to NIFA, it will be reviewed and either ACCEPTED or DECLINED and returned for correction of deficiencies.

Due Date

The final report will be due on January 29, 2021.

Section 9:

Essential Financial Information for Program Staff: Request for Applications and Allocations, Carryover, Permitted Uses and De-Obligated Funds

Request for Applications and Allocations

RREA capacity funds are awarded based on: 1) the calculated amount using the formula, and 2) an institution's request to receive the funds.

All funds that are awarded by NIFA require the submission of an application through grants.gov. For the capacity programs, a Request for Applications (RFA) is posted on grants.gov. It is both a responsibility and requirement for each RREA institution to submit an application to request the funds. The amount that is to be requested by each institution is listed in Appendix A of the RFA.

In an effort to make funds available soon after the beginning of a fiscal year, the amounts shown in the RFA are the previous year's allocations. Once a final appropriation is received from Congress, Appendix A is updated to reflect the current fiscal year's allocation.

When the RFA is posted, the NIFA Capacity Funds Branch will send the RFA announcement to the Extension Business Offices and the RREA Program Leader will send it to each institution's RREA leader. This is to ensure that both entities are aware of the RFA to ensure that someone submits the application.

Carryover

Up to 50% of an annual allocation may be carried over for one additional fiscal year. Carryover of more than 50% (excess carryover) must be approved by NIFA. To request permission to carryover excess funds, send an e-mail to the RREA Program Manager and include the following:

- Indicate the fiscal year of the funds being requested for carryover;
- Provide a short (4-6 sentences) description as to how the excess carryover would be used;
- Provide a brief description of the circumstances that resulted in excess carryover, and; and
- Provide a brief description of the internal controls and processes that will be used to avoid future excess carryover.

The request will be reviewed and either approved or deferred if additional information is needed.

RREA Program Leaders are strongly encouraged to be in regular contact with their Extension Business Offices to ensure that funds are being spent and that excess carryover does not occur.

Permitted uses of RREA funds

In accordance with the Renewable Resources Extension Act of 1978, RREA funds are to “Provide for an expanded and comprehensive extension program for forest and rangeland renewable resources.”

RREA funds may be allocated to program costs which may include:

- Salary, wages and fringe benefits for extension educators and other program staff;
- Program costs such as facility rental, publications;
- Travel to educational program sites;
- Website development and maintenance;
- Equipment and supplies; and
- Mailing, and any other program costs.

Funding for administrative support and program leadership and oversight which does not directly tie to the delivery of extension programs should be minimized (e.g., <15 percent).

Prohibited uses of RREA funds

The prohibitions on the use of RREA funds are the same as for all formula funds, and include:

- Food and beverages;
- Prizes and promotional materials;
- Student tuition (student wages that are directly related to program delivery are allowed)

RREA-specific prohibitions:

- RREA is an EXTENSION-ONLY program; research and academic expenses may not be charged to RREA;
- Travel (domestic, international) not related to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of extension forest and rangeland resource programs;
- Programs not focused on forest and rangeland resources (e.g., aquaculture, cropland and pasture water and wildlife; urban nuisance wildlife)

De-Obligation of RREA Funds

RREA funds are available to institutions for two fiscal years:

- The fiscal year of the appropriation; and
- One additional year.

For example, RREA funds that are appropriated in FY 2017 can be spent in FY 2017 and FY 2018.

Any funds remaining at the end of two years revert to the U.S. Treasury. This is known as de-obligation of funds.

De-obligations of funds is a serious problem. It is interpreted by NIFA, the Department of Agriculture, the President's Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and Congress to mean that the institution does not need the funds. This puts the RREA appropriation in jeopardy. Every effort by every institution to completely spend the funds before the end of two years should be pursued.

In the event that an institution de-obligates funds, an e-mail will be sent to the institution's leadership with notification of the amount of funds that are being de-obligated, and a request for the following information:

- What circumstances led to the de-obligation of funds;
- What internal controls will be put in place to ensure that no future funds are de-obligated;
- What is the current balance of any existing funds that are in their second year; and
- What will be done to ensure that funds in their second year are fully expended by September 30.

Additionally, the institution's leadership will be asked to evaluate whether or not it should continue to participate in the RREA program. While an institution may be eligible to receive RREA funds, there is no requirement that they do so. Information about how to drop out of the RREA program will be provided if requested.

Section 10: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

1. Why is a separate RREA and report required?

The 1998 Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Reform Act (AREERA) requires planning and reporting for specific formula funded programs, including Smith- Lever 3 (b) & (c), Hatch, and McIntire-Stennis. It does not include the Smith-Lever 3(d) funds or other (e.g. RREA) formula funds. Thus, in order to fulfill accountability requirements, each program must develop its own planning and reporting process.

2. What reports are required and to whom are they submitted?

<u>REPORT</u>	<u>SUBMITTED TO:</u>
FY 2017-2021 Project Initiation	REEport
Annual Progress Report	REEport
Annual Popular Report	RREA@nifa.usda.gov
National Quantitative Indicators	RREA@nifa.usda.gov

3. When are the reports due?

See Section 7 (Annual Report) and Section 8 (Final Report)

4. What is the RREA “Popular Report”?

This is a 1-page impact report, written in a "popular report" format. It is submitted as a pdf file and contains the information described in Section 7 of this Guide. They are used at the local and national level by NIFA to describe the impacts of the RREA program on a state-by-state basis. They are also intended to be used by the RREA institutions to make stakeholders and funders aware of the program impacts in your state or service area.

5. How were the National Reporting Indicators developed?

The indicators were initially developed by a working group of state and federal partners at a special workshop in September, 2005, using the Performance Measures in the RREA Strategic Plan as the framework. The output of the workshop was then edited and formatted for consistency and clarity. The indicators were reviewed and updated during the development of the FY 2012-2016 RREA Strategic Plan.

6. If the RREA funds are blended with other funding sources, what is to be reported?

Report all program impacts that resulted from RREA funding, regardless of whether the program was exclusively or partially funded by RREA. DO NOT report program impacts that did not involve RREA funds. Because of the blending that occurs in many states, you are asked to estimate the dollar contribution from other sources that a dollar of RREA attracts. (e.g., for every \$1 of RREA fund, \$X are provided by other sources).The blending and leveraging that occurs with RREA funding is an important overall program indicator of the ability to attract other funding sources.

7. How can a five-year project be developed when the funding is allocated on an annual basis?

The RREA funding has been relatively stable from year to year. Thus, developing a five- year project with the expectation of level funding is a reasonable approach. Should the funding be significantly increased or decreased for any given year, you would be notified as soon as possible and given the opportunity to revise your 5-year project.

8. Why are RREA institutions asked to focus on only 1-2 cross-cutting issues?

The RREA funding is relatively modest for most institutions. Thus, concentrating limited resources on a small number of cross-cutting issues is more likely to result in real impacts than spreading limited funding across many issues. The one exception to this is if RREA funding has leveraged significant funding from other sources to support impactful education programs on many strategic issues.

9. How are we supposed to do the program evaluation to be able to report impacts and quantitative data?

You should work with your Extension Program Development and Evaluation staff to develop an evaluation plan that is doable and realistic, given the funding level. Allocating RREA funds to do program evaluation is not only allowable but is recommended. Some indicators, such as *outputs* simply require record-keeping (e.g., numbers of events, number of contacts) and is relatively easy and inexpensive to collect. Other data, such as knowledge gained, practices adopted, or acres impacted, require some record-keeping about your "students" so that you can do follow-up surveys or interviews. Some of that data collection might be done by sampling a small number of your students. Because no two extension programs are the same, it is not possible for NIFA to create and provide generic data collection instruments. Not doing any program evaluation is not an option in the RREA program. Talk to your extension administration about your need to have evaluation expertise available in your organization.

10. What is the role of my Extension Business Office/Administrative Officer related to the RREA Program?

In addition to your institution's budget process, your Administrative Officer may be the person that submits the Request for Application to grants.gov to get your RREA funds every year. No funds are allocated without the submission of the applications that are requested in the Request for Applications that is sent to RREA Program Contacts and Extension Administrative Officers.

Additionally, your Extension Business Office can keep you apprised of RREA funding balances by fiscal year and inform you if a request to carryover excess funds is required. Finally, your Extension Business Office should know the status of funds in their second and final year and work with you to develop a plan to ensure that those funds are spent and not returned to the U.S. Treasury.

11. What is the role and purpose of the Project Director/Principle Investigator?

The Project Director/Principle Investigator is the person that NIFA will communicate with regarding planning, delivery, evaluation and budgeting of the RREA program. As the PI, you need to have both program and budget responsibility and authority.

12. How can I plan, conduct and evaluate an RREA program if I don't have any say on how the funding is spent?

This is a significant problem at many institutions. The RREA funding arrives, but program people may have no knowledge of the amount or access to use it. The implementation of electronic reporting, the allocation of funds only after required reports are submitted, and the requirement for each RREA institution to name an *RREA Project Director/Principle Investigator* are intended to address the disconnect between those who administer the RREA program and those who actually deliver the extension programs.

RREA funding is not to be used as a supplemental discretionary fund to cover miscellaneous costs that are not directly related to program development, delivery, and evaluation.

13. Why is an electronic reporting system for research projects being used for extension programs?

Throughout NIFA and across all the missions of land-grant universities, various electronic reporting systems are being used. At NIFA, the REEport system provides for the efficient filing of reports, the ability of extension educators to cut and paste between various reports, and provides searchable data bases that can be used to answer various Administration and Congressional queries about program investments and impacts.

14. How should RREA be recognized as a funding source on extension publications, programs, etc.?

As with most funders of programs, NIFA requires that the funding source be acknowledge. In most cases this is done with the standard phrasing on most extension publications. Additionally, it would be helpful if you would acknowledge RREA funding on any programs and publications that are partially or fully funded by RREA. Some possible wording for your use:

"This [program] [publication] [newsletter] [website] is funded by the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA)"

"This [program] [publication] [newsletter] [website] is funded in part by the Renewable Resources Extension Act (RREA)"

Section 11: Program and Formula Funds Staff

For questions about the overall program and the strategic plan:

Eric Norland,
National Program Leader, Forest Resource Management
202-401-5971; enorland@nifa.usda.gov

Jim Dobrowolski,
National Program Leader, Rangeland and Grassland Ecosystems
202-401-5016; jdobrowolski@nifa.usda.gov

For questions about RREA and Forest Resources: Eric Norland

For questions about RREA and Rangeland Resources: Jim Dobrowolski

For questions about the submission of 5-year projects, project changes, and annual reports:

Rodney Vance
Program Specialist, Division of Global Climate Change
202-401-4044; rvance@nifa.usda.gov

For questions about the Request for Applications and capacity award processes

Brenda Barnett
Supervisory Grants and Agreements Specialist, Awards Management Division
202-401-6520; bbarnett@nifa.usda.gov