



2007 National Rural E-Commerce Grants Program Request for Pre-Proposals

*Building Quality E-Commerce Educational Resources
to Support Extension Programming*

**Pre-Proposal Deadline Date: Email by 5 p.m. CST
March 15, 2007**

The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC), in partnership with its sister Regional Rural Development Centers, is pleased to announce another round of funding for its e-commerce competitive grants program. The intent of this program is to support the development or expansion of innovative educational resources focusing on key e-commerce topics.

This document is designed to provide specific guidelines for individuals* wishing to submit a formal *pre-proposal of approximately two pages in length* (single spaced, 12-point font). A select number of persons submitting pre-proposals will be invited to complete a more detailed proposal for consideration by the National e-Commerce Extension Advisory Committee. These invitations will be made by April 1, 2007. Those invited to submit a full proposal will have until May 15, 2007 to complete their document. Grants of up to \$25,000 will be awarded to support the e-commerce work of the successful grant applicants. The length of the grant is one 15 months, with the beginning date of the grant being July 1, 2007.

*Please Note: This is a national competitive grants program open to any Extension educator in the U.S.

PRE-PROPOSAL GUIDELINES:

There are FOUR major sections that applicants are requested to complete as part of their e-commerce pre-proposal application.

1. **TITLE:** Identify the title of your proposed e-commerce project and provide the name, address, telephone number and email address for the project PI.
2. **PROJECT ABSTRACT:** Provide an up to 250-word abstract of the project that you propose to undertake in support of the National Rural e-Commerce Grants Program, including the target audience(s) for this project.
3. **BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Present a brief description of the specific e-commerce educational resources you propose to develop as part of your project. In particular, provide a description of the following in your pre-proposal:
 - a. State the proposed focus of your e-commerce project and indicate why it is important to invest in this area of work. Please indicate the e-commerce "priority topics" with which your project most closely aligns (see the list provided in this document).
 - b. Describe the educational modules or other Extension educational resources that you plan to develop as part of your e-commerce project.
 - c. State how Extension educators are likely to benefit from your proposed e-commerce project. Moreover, state which Extension customers are the primary targets for your e-commerce-related program.
 - d. Describe the method(s) do you plan to use to pilot test your e-commerce educational products prior to their submission to the SRDC.
 - e. Present an outline of your proposed project budget as well as a brief budget justification.

4. **PROJECT LEADER AND COLLABORATOR(S):** Indicate who will serve as the PI for this project and list the names of all project collaborators. Briefly identify the relevant experiences of the PI and collaborators. Provide a brief (2-3 page) vita of the PI. [NOTE: Non-land-grant personnel are allowed to be part of the project, but only in the collaborator role and not as a PI.]

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Kathy Ibendahl or Bo Beaulieu at 662-325-3207, or by e-mail at kibendah@srcd.msstate.edu or ljb@srcd.msstate.edu.

E-MAILING PRE-PROPOSALS:

How to e-mail your pre-proposal to the SRDC:
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Your proposal must be sent no later than 5 p.m. Central Standard Time on March 15, 2007.2. E-mail the pre-proposal to Kathy Ibendahl at kibendah@srcd.msstate.edu3. Please request verification that your proposal has been received. The SRDC will make every effort to notify you within one business day of receiving your pre-proposal. If you do not received such notification, please contact the SRDC immediately at 662-325-3207.

LIST OF E-COMMERCE PRIORITY TOPICS:

The following is a list of priority topics for this year's competitive grants program.

1. **Building a Business e-Strategic Plan:** Proposals that design, develop and pilot test educational products that specifically address relevant and achievable ways for small business owners/managers to develop e-strategic plans.
2. **Strengthening Business-to-Business (B2B) Activities:** Proposals that offer small businesses a primer on how to become involved in B2B activities are of high priority in this year's e-commerce grants program.
3. **Improving Business-to-Government/Government-to-Business Activities (B2G/G2B):** Proposals are highly sought that focus on the development of educational products that can help small enterprises better understand how to locate government bid opportunities, and how to compete for such contracts through electronic means. Proposals that examine the G2B aspect of the e-procurement process are encouraged as well.
4. **Expanding Global Economic Activities Through e-Commerce:** Proposals are sought that help small businesses engaged (or interested) in e-commerce understand the barriers associated with international e-commerce activities (such as cultural differences, language barriers and monetary exchanges) and provide them with clear, practical and informative approaches/strategies for overcoming these barriers.
5. **E-Commerce Educational Programs for Targeted Populations:** E-commerce projects that address the unique needs of specific populations, such as Native American or Hispanic/Latino communities, are strongly encouraged. Efforts to employ e-commerce strategies that support value-added agricultural activities (such as agri-tourism or other niche marketing endeavors) are encouraged as well.

6. Security and Back Office Concerns: Small businesses often overlook basic topics dealing with security and control. Best practices dealing with data security, firewalls, proper back up, etc. should be built into e-commerce strategies and implementation. Educational resources that help small businesses understand these various key issues are greatly needed.
7. Other Innovative e-Commerce Educational Programs/Products: The SRDC and its National e-Commerce Advisory Board are open to other innovative e-commerce curricula that help fill important informational and educational needs of small businesses or communities in rural America.
8. Technology Innovations: Delivering e-Commerce Training/Educational Resources in New Ways: We welcome proposals that are designed to deliver existing high quality e-commerce educational products through the use of innovative delivery methods such as Podcasts, blogs, Web-based conferencing training systems, etc.