



2009 National e-Commerce Extension Initiative

Program Implementation Mini-Grants

Deadline Date: Postmarked by January 15, 2010

The Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) is pleased to announce a new round of funding to help foster the implementation of one of its new e-commerce curricula products. These resources are intended to expand the adoption of e-commerce strategies by communities, small/micro businesses, and entrepreneurs across the country. Land-Grant University (LGU) Extension educators or teams (involving both Extension and non-Extension partners) are invited to submit proposals outlining how they propose to implement any of the FOUR new e-commerce educational curricula that the SRDC has released, or is releasing, by Fall 2009. The maximum amount allowed for any proposal is \$3,000.

This document provides specific application guidelines for those wishing to submit a formal proposal to the SRDC. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at any time.

KEY INFORMATION

PROGRAM TITLE:	<i>National e-Commerce Extension Initiative: Program Implementation Mini-Grants</i>
FUNDING AGENCY:	Southern Rural Development Center, in partnership with CSREES/USDA
GRANT AMOUNT:	Seed funding, in an amount not to exceed \$3,000, to support the launching and delivery of one of four SRDC-funded e-commerce educational curricula released (or slated to be release) in 2009. No indirect costs are allowed.
DEADLINE:	Proposals must be submitted to the SRDC by 5 p.m. Central Time, January 15, 2010.
AWARD NOTIFICATION:	Successful grantees will be notified by February 5, 2010.
ELIGIBILITY:	While non-land grant partners are encouraged to be actively involved in the delivery of these educational curricula, the lead entity for the grant proposal must be a land-grant Extension educator(s).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 2003, the SRDC has served as the lead entity for the *National e-Commerce Extension Initiative*, a focused effort designed to introduce, strengthen and expand the delivery of Extension-based e-commerce programs to small/micro businesses, governments, and communities in the United States. SRDC-led grant investments have resulted in the development of exciting new e-commerce educational resources that are now available to support the educational programming activities of Extension educators across the country, especially for those having an interest in community/economic development and information technology efforts.

Four comprehensive educational products have been released (or are soon to be available) in 2009 for use by Extension educators and as such, the SRDC wishes to promote the delivery of these new educational programs to appropriate stakeholders in the coming months.

CURRICULUM PRODUCTS:

The following are the four curriculum resources that can be adopted for use as part of this later round of mini-grant funding. Priority will be given to applicants choosing to launch one of the curriculum products listed below in their states (or counties). However, applicants wishing to use any other e-commerce curricula product listed in our learning center (http://srdc.msstate.edu/ecommerce/learning_center.html) are encouraged to apply as well. Here are the four new products that will be given priority consideration in this new round of funding:

- **[A Beginner's Guide to e-Commerce: Easy Tools for Profit](#)**
Author Kimball A. Marshall.

The objective of this curriculum is to provide guidance and encouragement to people that may have limited computer skills as they begin to explore the opportunities offered by small-scale Internet-based businesses. In order to do this we, the educators, must instill confidence in our clients' abilities to use e-commerce for the fulfillment of personal goals. In fostering this confidence we must provide technical support and computer know-how as they are developing their Internet skills.

- **[Marketing Food Specialty Products Online](#)**
Author: Stan Ernst

This learning module is designed for use by grocery store managers and marketers of specialty food products. Whether the food business is large with many employees or a small operation with very specialized sales; all can find some benefit from this self-paced learning module. If the business is already involved in using technology, ideas of how to evolve the existing use of information technology to meet changing business priorities or market demands can also be drawn from this lesson.

- **[Web site Basics: A Primer for Hispanic Small Businesses](#)**
Author: Brian Whitacre

Presented in both English and Spanish, this learning module includes an extensive overview of who in the Hispanic population is using the Internet, why a Web site would benefit a Hispanic business, appropriate Web site approaches to Web design, Web design tips, and an overview of self-design techniques. It is intended both businesses that target Hispanic clientele as well as those businesses wishing to expand their markets to the Hispanic population.

- **[E-tailing](#)**
Author: Julie Sexton

Electronic Retailing is a self-paced learning course that will introduce potential and current e-tailers to the concepts that govern conducting business over the Internet. Using online interactions, such as games, simulations and you-fix-it case studies, the learners will be taught the basics of selling online, from understanding what motivates consumers to making practical choices about Web sites and credit-card processing. This course is an entry-level guide to starting an online retail business and will be suitable for Extension educators and clientele alike.

The following is an additional resource that grantees are encouraged to use to supplement the e-commerce curriculum that they propose to implement. It highlights a number of businesses of various

sizes and types that have effectively incorporated e-commerce strategies into their operations. Here is a brief description of this valuable supplementary product:

- **e-Commerce as a Strategy for Improving Business Vitality: Lessons Learned from Small Rural Businesses**
Authors: David L. Barkley, David R. Lamie and Deborah Markley

The project provides “lessons learned” by small rural businesses that use an e-commerce marketing strategy to increase profits and expand markets. These lessons are based on in-depth interviews with several rural businesses and related service providers. The case-study firms represent a cross-section of industries, regions of the country, and firm types (e.g., bricks-and-mortar versus virtual).

PROPOSAL OUTLINE:

Applicants are asked to prepare a 3-5 page proposal (single spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font) that addresses each of the following items:

1. **Specify which curriculum you intend to use.**
2. **Identify the state (and county/counties) in which the program will be implemented.**
3. **Describe the need/opportunity for this type of educational program.**

Provide information or documentation that helps justify the need for this program in your state or county. Make a solid argument as to the importance of this program in your state and/or county.

4. **Identify your target audience and how many people you plan to reach.**

For example, are you proposing to deliver this program to key stakeholders? If so, which ones and how many are you hoping to reach? Or do you wish to provide training to Extension educators in your state (i.e., state specialists, regional/district directors, multi-county or county Extension educators), and if so, about how many Extension educators do you intend to train?

5. **Describe your implementation plans and timeline.**

How do you intend to launch your project? Do you plan to conduct face-to-face workshops, Web-based sessions, or some combination of these delivery mechanisms with your target audience? Or do you have other innovative strategies in mind for delivering your chosen curricula to your target audience? Please describe your specific plans on how you intend to implement the program. In addition, provide a timeline of your activities. That is, develop and briefly describe a month by month timeline of your proposed implementation plans. You will have 12 months to complete your program and to submit an accomplishment report to the SRDC.

6. **Describe your expected outcomes and evaluation activities.**

What do you hope to accomplish as a result of implementing this educational program? How do you plan to evaluate the outputs and outcomes of your program? *PLEASE NOTE:* The SRDC will work closely with grantees in the design/development of the pre/post assessments and in conducting six month and 12 month follow-up evaluations with your program participants.

7. **Describe your sustainability plans.**

Indicate how you plan to support and sustain this program after your project is completed. Is this a program that will be an integral part of your Extension outreach education work?

8. Identify the staff who will be involved in carrying out this program.

Who will be the Project Coordinator? What other staff, if any, will be involved in carrying out this effort? What skills and abilities do the P.I and support staff brings to the project? NOTE: A brief resume/vita (approximately three pages) for the P.I. must be attached to the grant application but does not count in the page limit. Also, the P.I must be an Extension educator (state, regional, or county/parish).

9. Identify partnering organizations.

Do you have organizations or individuals who will partner with you on this effort? If so, please indicate who they are and briefly describe the role they will play in supporting your e-commerce program.

10. Provide a budget.

Detail you budget and provide a budget justification for the items in your proposal. *PLEASE NOTE* that indirect costs are not allowed for this program nor are the purchase of any equipment.

REVIEW CRITERIA:

SCORING OF PROPOSALS

All proposals will be reviewed by the National e-Commerce Advisory Committee members. Proposals will be reviewed on the following criteria:

1. Effectiveness in documenting the need for the program (20 points)
2. Quality of the project implementation plan (25 points)
3. Sustainability plan (15 points)
4. Evaluation plan (15 points)
5. Background of project coordinator and staff (15 points)
6. Partnerships (10 points)

FORMATTING INSTRUCTIONS

Page length: Proposals are limited to five pages, not including budget information and staff bios/vitas. Single spacing is allowed.

Margins: One inch margins on all edges

Font: Times New Roman, 12 point

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Please submit one copy of your proposal by January 15, 2010. Proposals may be submitted electronically or via first class or overnight mail.

Electronic proposals must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time on January 15, 2010. E-mail your completed proposal to Shannon Turner at shannont@srdc.msstate.edu.

Mailed proposals using first class mail must be postmarked by January 15, 2010. Copies sent by regular U.S. Postal Service first class mail should be mailed addressed:

Southern Rural Development Center
P.O. Box 9656
Mississippi State, MS 39762
ATTN: Shannon Turner

Overnight mailing of proposals submitted through FedEx, UPS, or other relevant carriers should be mailed to:

Southern Rural Development Center
190 Bost-North, Room 410
Mississippi State, MS 39762
ATTN: Shannon Turner 662-325-3207

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Shannon Lane Turner
SRDC e-Commerce Extension Initiative Coordinator
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Mississippi State, MS 39762
662-325-3207
shannont@srcd.msstate.edu

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS GRANT OPPORTUNITY AND UPCOMING E-COMMERCE WEBINARS?

Those interested in learning more about the SRDC e-Commerce Implementation Mini-Grants are encouraged to join Shannon Turner on September 22, 2009 for a special one hour Webinar to discuss this new round of mini-grant funding and be introduced to the **Marketing Food Specialty Products Online** curriculum. Following this kickoff Webinar, the SRDC will be hosting at least three additional Webinars showcasing the newest curriculum products.

The dates for the FOUR Webinars are as follows:

Introduction to Mini Grant Program and Marketing Food Specialty Products Online

September 29, 2009

2 - 3 pm CDT.

Dr. Shannon Lane Turner

Website Basics – A Primer for Hispanic Small Businesses

October 6, 2009

2 - 3 pm CDT

Dr. Brian Whitacre

A Beginner's Guide to e-Commerce: Easy Tools for Profit

October 20, 2009

2 - 3 pm CST

Dr. Kimball Marshall

Etailing

October 27, 2009

2 – 3 pm CST

Dr. Julie Sexton

If you would like to take part in any of these Webinars, just click the following link: <http://srdc.msstate.edu/eccommerce/webinar.html> . Look for the Webinar topic that you would like to part in. Just prior to the scheduled time for the webinar, link to the Web site listed under your topic. You will be connected to the Adobe Connect system.

After you have entered the Adobe Connect system, simply enter your name under the "Enter as a Guest" heading. Next, click "Enter Room." PLEASE NOTE that Webinar participants will have to have a microphone that can be used through your computer in order to be able to interact verbally with the presenter.