



STATE OF VERMONT  
JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

MEMORANDUM

To: Joint Fiscal Committee members  
From: Daniel Dickerson, Fiscal Analyst *DWD*  
Date: February 03, 2020  
Subject: Grant Requests – JFO #2993-2996

Enclosed please find four (4) items, including one (1) limited-service position, which the Joint Fiscal Office has received from the Administration.

**JFO #2993** – \$180,000 from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC). This funding will be used to perform lead testing on drinking water sources within all schools in the State of Vermont. This work will be performed by December 31, 2020. No State matching funds are required.  
*[JFO received 01/31/20]*

**JFO #2994** – \$72,623 from the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) to the VT Dept. of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL). This funding is a sub-grant from a larger pot of money that was awarded to NYFC from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. DAIL will use the funds towards building a network with legal, financial and behavioral resources for farmers. Specific objectives include the development of a peer support model for farmers, a review and analysis of existing mental health resources, development of a comprehensive mental health resource guide for farmers, workshops on mental health, and development of a cohort of resource providers to engage and integrate with other agricultural departments. **DAIL has requested one (1) limited-service position in conjunction with this grant request.** This is a one-year grant with the potential for extension into subsequent years.  
*[JFO received 01/31/20]*

**JFO #2995** – \$10,000 from the U.S. Forest Service to the VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation. This funding has been awarded as part of the Good Neighbor Supplemental Project Agreement to aid in performing water quality monitoring activities on federal land. These activities will include the collection and analysis of samples to monitor forest, rangeland and watershed restoration efforts. This funding will be used in State FY2020. No State matching funds are required.  
*[JFO received 01/31/20]*

**JFO #2996** – \$749,519 from U.S. Dept. of Justice to the VT Dept. of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs. This funding will be used to support and enhance the State response to domestic violence in Windham and Bennington Counties. Specifically, the funds will be used to support

an existing position within SAS that was previously supported by a separate grant, which was redirected for a different use. The funds will also be used to hire consultants and to support partnerships with local jurisdictions to aid in the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence cases. The funds would be used over a three-year period and no State matching funds would be required.

*[JFO received 01/31/20]*

Please review the enclosed materials and notify the Joint Fiscal Office (Daniel Dickerson at (802) 828-2472; [ddickerson@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:ddickerson@leg.state.vt.us)) if you have questions or would like an item held for legislative review. Unless we hear from you to the contrary by February 14, 2020 we will assume that you agree to consider as final the Governor's acceptance of these requests.

JFO 2994

**State of Vermont**  
 Department of Finance & Management  
 109 State Street, Pavilion Building  
 Montpelier, VT 05620-0401


[phone] 802-828-2376  
 [fax] 802-828-2428

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JAN 31 2020

JOINT FISCAL OFFICE

**STATE OF VERMONT**  
**FINANCE & MANAGEMENT GRANT REVIEW FORM**

<b>Grant Summary:</b>	DAIL's Farm First program (a Division of DAIL Invest EAP) has partnered with the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC) and Farm Aid to receive a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for Northeast Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) funds to build a network farmers can turn to for legal, financial, and behavioral health resources.				
<b>Date:</b>	10/14/2019				
<b>Department:</b>	DAIL				
<b>Legal Title of Grant:</b>	Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network Competitive Grants Program: Building an Inclusive and Comprehensive Network for Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance in the Northeast				
<b>Federal Catalog #:</b>	10.525				
<b>Grant/Donor Name and Address:</b>	National Institute of Food and Agriculture/USDA Awards Management Division Washington, DC 20250-2271				
<b>Grant Period:</b>	<b>From:</b>	9/1/2019	<b>To:</b>	8/31/2020	
<b>Grant/Donation</b>	\$320,634				
	<b>SFY 1</b>	<b>SFY 2</b>	<b>SFY 3</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Grant Amount:</b>	\$60,518	\$12,105	\$0	\$0	
<b>Position Information:</b>	<b># Positions</b>	<b>Explanation/Comments</b>			
	1	Farm First Resource Coordinator			
<b>Additional Comments:</b>					
<b>Department of Finance &amp; Management</b>					(Initial)
<b>Secretary of Administration</b>					(Initial)
<b>Sent To Joint Fiscal Office</b>			1/31/20		<b>Date</b>



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STATE OF VERMONT  
FINANCE & MANAGEMENT GRANT REVIEW FORM

JAN 31 2008

JOINT FISCAL OFFICE



# MEMORANDUM

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TO: The Joint Fiscal Committee

FROM: Camille George, Commissioner DAIL

DATE: September 24, 2019

SUBJECT: AA-1 Request for Northeast Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN)

This is a request from the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) to the Joint Fiscal Committee to approve acceptance of the Northeast Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) grant funds as a subrecipient of their award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

## **Background**

On August 26, 2019, the USDA approved the grant application for building an inclusive and comprehensive network for Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance in the Northeast. The application was developed in partnership with three key providers tasked with administration of the grant. Those partners are the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC), Farm Aid, and Vermont Farm First (a program of Invest EAP, a division of DAIL). The goals of the grant are to address the myriad of stress sources facing farmers in the northeast, specifically by (1) establishing a diverse network of local member support organizations; (2) developing a clearinghouse of farmer assistance programs in the regions, including legal, financial, and behavioral health resources; and (3) educational and training assistance providers on working with agricultural employees under stress, and how to best access available resources. This grant will also be evaluated by an external evaluator and researcher from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

## **Term and Amount of Grant**

DAIL is a subrecipient of the grant and has been awarded \$72,623 for Vermont Farm First's role in the project. The grant is for a total one-year term for the period of September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020. This is a planning grant with the potential for new federal funding to continue the project services beyond the initial grant term.

## **Project Design**

Vermont Farm First is a program of Invest EAP, a division of DAIL. Vermont Farm First's role will be one of three primary administrators of the project, and will work with NYFC and Farm Aid to develop a comprehensive network of regional farm assistance providers in the northeast to assist in the development of a resource clearinghouse, and to provide and oversee trainings for farm assistance providers. Vermont Farm First's responsibilities under the terms of the grant are to:



1. Develop a Program for Engaging Farmer Peer Support Providers: Vermont Farm First will develop a peer support model to be implemented and utilized by regional farming communities. Peer support will focus on development of active listening skills, awareness of acute mental health concerns, and training in facilitating referrals to counselors and/or other resource supports.
2. Review and Analyze Existing Mental Health Resources: Vermont Farm First will oversee research and integration of mental health resources for agricultural workers in the northeast region.
3. Develop a Comprehensive Resource Guide on Farmer Mental Health: Vermont Farm First will assist in the development of an online clearinghouse that will utilize mental health support providers that have been researched and integrated into a regional northeast network of providers.
4. Provide Workshops on Mental Health in the Agricultural Community: Vermont Farm First will develop a workshop on mental health in the agricultural community, which will be delivered in the fourth quarter of the term of the grant. The workshop will be provided to regional assistance providers and will focus on the specific causes of stress that are endemic in the agricultural communities, the changing landscape of mental health for agricultural workers, and strategies for approaching and engaging agricultural workers in distress.
5. Develop a Cohort of Resource Providers to Engage and Integrate with Other Regional Agricultural Departments: Vermont Farm First will work with regional support providers to develop and implement a strategy for approaching governmental agencies tasked with oversight and regulation of agricultural industries in the northeast, and engaging them on creating supportive infrastructure to assist and support the mental health of agricultural workers in their respective states.

## **Project Goals**

The primary goals for this project are to:

1. Establish a diverse, regionally representative network of member organizations. The process of establishing a diverse network will aid in the identification of available resources and referral services, gain a greater understanding of available supports, and engage with at least 50 service providers within the region.
2. Develop a clearinghouse of farmer assistance programs in the region, inclusive of professional agriculture behavioral health counseling and referral services. The process of developing an inclusive clearinghouse aims to increase utilization of available support services, as well as to provide an improved knowledge base for local service providers in the region.
3. Educate and train individuals and teams in the region about Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network activities, and how they can access and use existing resources and programs in their work with agricultural workers and communities under stress. The training will provide an increased understanding of available resources. It will also cover best practices for supporting farmers under stress including financial, legal, disaster, and mental health tools. In addition, it will provide an understanding and strategy for engaging other structural options for programming and collaboration between service providers.





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**Project Staffing**

The Department is requesting one limited service position for the FR SAN Project. The position is a Farm Resources Coordinator. A limited service position request is attached. Because this is a planning grant with the potential for longer term funding, we expect the need for a limited service position will extend beyond the initial one year grant term.

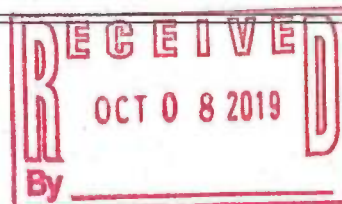
**Contact Person for Project**

James Smith  
DVR Budget and Policy Manager  
[james.smith@vermont.gov](mailto:james.smith@vermont.gov)  
(802) 241-0320



**STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (\*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)**

BASIC GRANT INFORMATION				
<b>1. Agency:</b>	Human Services			
<b>2. Department:</b>	DAIL			
<b>3. Program:</b>	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Employee Assistance Program			
<b>4. Legal Title of Grant:</b>	Farmer and Ranchers Stress Assistance Network in Northeast			
<b>5. Federal Catalog #:</b>	10.525			
<b>6. Grant/Donor Name and Address:</b>				
US Department of Agriculture, Nat'l Institute of Food and Agriculture 202-445-5456				
<b>7. Grant Period:</b>				
<b>From:</b>	10/1/2019	<b>To:</b>	9/30/2020	
<b>8. Purpose of Grant:</b>				
To build and inclusive and comprhensive Network for Farm & Ranch Stress Assistance in the Northeast				
<b>9. Impact on existing program if grant is not Accepted:</b>				
None				
10. BUDGET INFORMATION				
	<b>SFY 1</b>	<b>SFY 2</b>	<b>SFY 3</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>	<b>FY 2020</b>	<b>FY 2021</b>	<b>FY</b>	
Personal Services	\$49,685	\$9,938	\$	
Operating Expenses	\$2,500	\$500	\$	
Grants	\$8,333	\$1,667	\$	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,518</b>	<b>\$12,105</b>	<b>\$</b>	
<b>Revenues:</b>				
State Funds:	\$0	\$0	\$0	
Cash	\$	\$	\$	
In-Kind	\$	\$	\$	
Federal Funds:	\$60,518	\$12,105	\$	100% Federal
(Direct Costs)	\$54,013	\$10,803	\$	
(Statewide Indirect)	\$	\$	\$	
(Departmental Indirect)	\$6,505	\$1,302	\$	
Other Funds:	\$	\$	\$	
Grant (source )	\$	\$	\$	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,518</b>	<b>\$12,105</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>Appropriation No:</b>		<b>Amount:</b>	\$60,518	
	3460010000	\$52,185	\$	
	3460040000	\$8,333	\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60,518</b>	





**STATE OF VERMONT REQUEST FOR GRANT (\*) ACCEPTANCE (Form AA-1)**

**PERSONAL SERVICE INFORMATION**

**11. Will monies from this grant be used to fund one or more Personal Service Contracts?**  Yes  No  
 If "Yes", appointing authority must initial here to indicate intent to follow current competitive bidding process/policy.

Appointing Authority Name: Camille George, Acting Commissioner DAIL Agreed by: CG (initial)

12. Limited Service Position Information:	# Positions	Title
	1	Farm First Resource Coordinator
<b>Total Positions</b>	1	

**12a. Equipment and space for these positions:**  Is presently available.  Can be obtained with available funds.

**13. AUTHORIZATION AGENCY/DEPARTMENT**

I/we certify that no funds beyond basic application preparation and filing costs have been expended or committed in anticipation of Joint Fiscal Committee approval of this grant, unless previous notification was made on Form AA-1PN (if applicable):

Signature: <u>Camille George</u>	Date: <u>9/24/19</u>
Title: <u>Acting Commissioner, DAIL</u>	
Signature: <u>[Signature]</u>	Date: <u>9/27/19</u>
Title: <u>Interim Deputy Secretary, AHS</u>	

**14. SECRETARY OF ADMINISTRATION**

Approved: (Secretary or designee signature) [Signature] Date: 11/5/19

**15. ACTION BY GOVERNOR**

Check One Box:  
 Accepted  
 Rejected  
 (Governor's signature) [Signature] Date: 1/22/20

**16. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED**

- Required GRANT Documentation**
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Request Memo                | <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Donation (if any)              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dept. project approval (if applicable) | <input type="checkbox"/> Grant (Project) Timeline (if applicable) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of Award             | <input type="checkbox"/> Request for Extension (if applicable)    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant Agreement             | <input type="checkbox"/> Form AA-1PN attached (if applicable)     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grant Budget                |   |

**End Form AA-1**

(\*) The term "grant" refers to any grant, gift, loan, or any sum of money or thing of value to be accepted by any agency, department, commission, board, or other part of state government (see 32 V.S.A. §5).

do 9/26/19



**STATE OF VERMONT  
Joint Fiscal Committee Review  
Limited Service - Grant Funded  
Position Request Form**

This form is to be used by agencies and departments when additional grant funded positions are being requested. Review and approval by the Department of Human Resources must be obtained prior to review by the Department of Finance and Management. The Department of Finance will forward requests to the Joint Fiscal Office for JFC review. A Request for Classification Review Form (RFR) and an updated organizational chart showing to whom the new position(s) would report must be attached to this form. Please attach additional pages as necessary to provide enough detail.

Agency/Department: DAIL VR Date: 9/19/2019

Name and Phone (of the person completing this request): James Smith 802 241-0320

Request is for:

- Positions funded and attached to a new grant.  
 Positions funded and attached to an existing grant approved by JFO # \_\_\_\_\_

1. Name of Granting Agency, Title of Grant, Grant Funding Detail (attach grant documents):

Northeast Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN) grant funds as a subrecipient to their award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

2. List below titles, number of positions in each title, program area, and limited service end date (information should be based on grant award and should match information provided on the RFR) position(s) will be established only after JFC final approval:

<u>Title* of Position(s) Requested</u>	<u># of Positions</u>	<u>Division/Program</u>	<u>Grant Funding Period/Anticipated End Date</u>
Resource Coordinator	1	VR Invest EAP	8/21/20 but continuation award is expected

\*Final determination of title and pay grade to be made by the Department of Human Resources Classification Division upon submission and review of Request for Classification Review.

3. Justification for this request as an essential grant program need:

The Resource Coordinator will be responsible to: 1. Develop a Program for Engaging Farmer Peer Support Providers; 2. Review and Analyze Existing Mental Health Resources; 3. Develop a Comprehensive Resource Guide on Farmer Mental Health; 4. Provide Workshops on Mental Health in the Agricultural Community; 5. Develop a Cohort of Resource Providers to Engage and Integrate with Other Regional Agricultural Departments.

I certify that this information is correct and that necessary funding, space and equipment for the above position(s) are available (required by 32 VSA Sec. 5(b)).

Cornell George Rathbun 9/24/19 9/27/19  
 Signature of Agency or Department Head Date

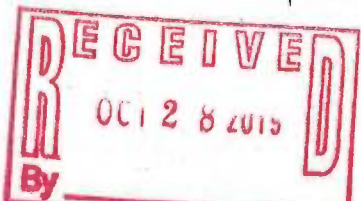
Anna Pope 10/24/19  
 Approved/Denied by Department of Human Resources Date

[Signature] 4 Nov 19  
 Approved/Denied by Finance and Management Date

[Signature] 11/5/19  
 Approved/Denied by Secretary of Administration Date

[Signature] 1/22/20  
 Approved/Denied by Governor (required as amended by 2019 Leg. Session) Date

Comments: Job class will be VR Program Manager



dog/pope/19





# Building an Inclusive and Comprehensive Network for Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance in the Northeast

## Project Narrative

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## **Section A: Introduction**

### **Section A.1. Statement of Need**

Agriculture is an economic and social bedrock of the United States. America's farmers, ranchers and farmworkers drive rural prosperity, steward our land, contribute to the social fabric of diverse American communities, and provide food and fiber for all of us. Success in farming requires a wide array of skills, mastery of varied subject matter, and good fortune. Few occupations require as diverse a background: from business management to technological know-how, from soil science to mechanical handiwork, and so much more.

Farming should be among the most rewarded professions in our country. Instead, farmers are struggling. Since 2013, farmers have experienced a 50 percent decrease in net farm income — a drop so severe that in 2018, median farm income was -\$1,553. Meanwhile, production expenses and interest rates are rising, along with a growing incidence of devastating natural disasters. In addition to an occupation that can be isolating, physically taxing, and where so many factors are beyond an individual's control, these trends are contributing to reports of increased stress levels among farmers. In 2015, suicide rates among farmers were more than twice the rate of the general population (CDC, 2018).

In the Northeast Region, additional trends have influenced the rise of farmer stress. With the majority of farmland located in close proximity to urban centers, Northeast farmers face a shrinking agricultural land base, rising land costs, and declining numbers of regional processors and distributors. This has created challenges for farms needing to expand to keep up with the national market. The current dairy crisis is also placing significant strain on communities in the Northeast as milk prices have dropped to their lowest levels since 2009, hovering around \$15 per hundredweight, far below average cost of production, and forcing many dairies out of business.

Notably, mental and behavioral health services are less available and accessible in rural areas. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 111.6 million people live in designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and a majority of those areas are in rural areas. The Northeast region accounts for 10 percent of the national total, or 11.4 million people, and would need about 830 new mental health professionals to fill this gap (HHS, 2019). The mental health and wellbeing of farmers and farming communities remains the least understood and most underfunded piece of agricultural occupational health (Rosmann, 2008).

Perhaps most importantly, farmer stress and mental health issues are often situational, driven by specific financial and legal circumstances or natural disasters that have put the farm business in peril. Stress assistance approaches that focus solely on farmer mental health, such as seeking counseling or taking anxiety or depression medication, might not directly address these situational factors, making them less effective at meeting the needs of farmers.

In contrast, approaches that integrate mental and behavioral health services with hands-on financial, legal, and/or disaster assistance that can prevent the farmer from losing the farm or resolve other pressing matters are more likely to provide solutions that set the farmer and farm family up for long-term success and well-being. With more integrated approaches, farmers can emerge from their crisis event better equipped with new farm management skills and tools, more robust support networks, and effective stress management techniques.

The establishment of an effective stress assistance network for farmers, ranchers and farmworkers must bring together these disciplines of farm financial, legal and behavioral health support. A

strong network should also include appropriate infrastructure for providers to connect, refer to, and integrate their services; ongoing peer support and education; and trainings and resources that increase the capacity of service providers. This includes training farm service providers with skills such as suicide awareness training, as well as providing mental health practitioners with deeper understanding of the farming population and specific skills to meet their needs. In this way, farm populations can more seamlessly navigate a broader network that is endowed with the diverse skills necessary to meaningfully engage with farmers during a crisis. The training offered by this project will provide service providers with this breadth of knowledge and skills and create the infrastructure necessary to undergird ongoing service integration.

As a national policy and advocacy organization representing young and beginning farmers across the country, the National Young Farmers Coalition (the Coalition) is a primary stakeholder in the issue of farmer mental health. The Coalition represents, mobilizes, and engages young farmers to ensure their success and envisions a country where young people who are willing to work, get trained, and take a little risk can support themselves and their families in farming. The National Young Farmers Coalition has seen the rise in farmer stress first hand. In 2018, a young farmer and Coalition chapter leader in Washington state died by suicide, driven in part by financial and emotional farm-related stressors. His death prompted the Coalition to take a closer look at the issues of farmer mental health and suicide and to commit to engaging with our 45 farmer-led chapters and other farmer organizations working on these issues, both regionally and nationally.

Our partners have witnessed this trend as well. Farm Aid manages a national farm crisis helpline, 1-800-FARM-AID, and an online resource and referral clearinghouse. In 2018, the number of calls to the hotline doubled, with 1,034 farmers calling from around the country. Each week, the organization receives approximately 4 calls from farmers who are contemplating suicide. In a recent survey Farm Aid conducted of other farm helplines across the country, over 77 percent of respondents reported an increase in call volumes. Perhaps more importantly, qualitative feedback from hotline responders demonstrated that calls were becoming more desperate, from farmers in real crisis and with few options to resolve issues at hand (Farm Aid, 2018).

Because of these unique challenges, the development of a Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network is particularly important in the Northeast. While the region has a number of organizations serving beginning, expanding, and transitioning farmers, there is a gap in resources in many states for farmers in crisis. This network will pull together existing resources and clarify gaps in services to identify needs, build and enhance programming, and ultimately, have a significant impact on the ability of farmers in the region to weather challenging times. By collaborating, the network will ensure that farmers understand practical stress management steps, including farm financial, legal, and mental health resources and referrals available to help.

### **Section A.2. Definition of the Region**

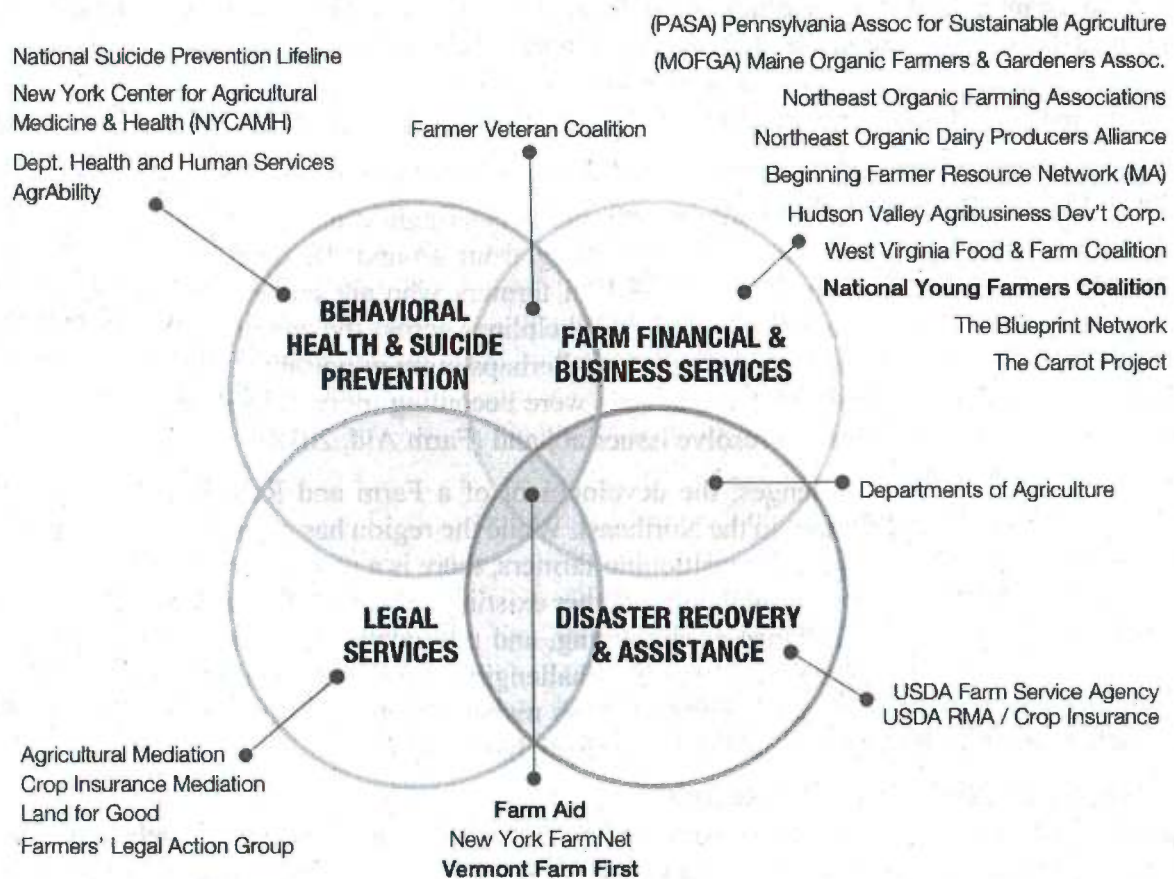
This project will serve all states in the Northeast Region, defined as Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The National Young Farmers Coalition currently has twelve farmer-led chapters in the Northeast region: Vermont, Southern Maine, Maryland, DC, Connecticut, two in Pennsylvania and five in New York. By pairing organizations that serve farmers across the country, such as Farm Aid and the Farmers' Legal Action Group, with state-level organizations such as Vermont Farm First and the West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition, this project will reduce duplication of efforts while providing farmers across the Northeast with the highest level of integrated services.

To do so, this project will target a broad audience of farmers. The Northeast Region’s agricultural economy includes all sectors, from grain producers to dairy to fruits and vegetables to meat to fiber products and forestry. In addition, the economy includes conventional producers and organic producers, commodity producers and value-added or direct-marketing producers. This network includes organizations that target farmers across this spectrum.

This project is also designed to address the unique needs of a wide demographic array of farmers. Farmers in the Northeast include producers of all ages, races, ethnicities, genders, and economic levels. The network includes organizations with experience working with these diverse audiences and our training will highlight the varied stressors that affect disparate farming populations, including the impact of historical and ongoing discrimination.

### Section A.3. Current Stress Assistance Programming

Stress impacts farmers in diverse ways and is rooted in varied stressors; accordingly, current programming in the Northeast approaches stress assistance from various angles. The image below outlines an array of organizations in the Northeast, organized by their topical expertise.



This project has incorporated feedback to avoid duplication of networking efforts. Many of the beginning farmer organizations participate in networks for that target audience. There are regular collaborations between Cooperative Extension Services and between state Agricultural Mediation programs. However, these organizations have not effectively been brought together across service types in the past. The participants of this project believe that there will be dramatic benefit for all participants by cross-pollinating in this network.

Finally, while there is significant diversity within the stress assistance community in the Northeast, only three groups provide all four types of stress assistance: New York FarmNet, Vermont Farm First, and Farm Aid. Although Farm Aid is national in reach, there is a clear need for additional service providers who can provide a comprehensive approach to farm stress assistance at state and local levels throughout the Northeast. Supporting the development of additional state-level service providers is a goal of this project, covered under Section B.3.

#### **Section A.4. Project Benefits**

This project will create a network with an advisory team comprised of the National Young Farmers Coalition, Farm Aid and Vermont Farm First, with support from University of Maine Extension. This advisory team will be responsible for designing, administering, and evaluating the project. At the network member level, the advisory team will be joined by an additional 20+ organizations providing services to farmers under stress in the Northeast, creating a diverse network of service providers. Together, this network will connect with farmers and service providers in each state, developing a matrix of support and resources for farmers in the Northeast. This network and the resulting resources will be catalogued online in the clearinghouse. Finally, the network will convene during a three-day training on the network and stress assistance best practices.

The development of this diverse, regionally-representative network will provide an array of benefits to the currently available programming. By becoming aware of the ways in which stress assistance is funded, provided, and evaluated in other parts of the region, service providers will be able to improve their programming. By increasing awareness of the array of services available, the network will be able to share these services with the farmers they serve, increasing the use of services and the network's ability to effectively address stress among farmers in the region. Additionally, by partnering with the Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA, the Farmers' Legal Action Group, and the National Center for Appropriate Technology for resource development, this network will access best practices being developed nationally.

However, this project is not only beneficial; it is necessary. The farm and ranch stress levels outlined in Section A.1 are unacceptable. The Northeast region is in a critical moment to bring resources and teams together to serve farmers in the region more effectively. This network, clearinghouse, and training will allow us to meet that need.

### **Section B: Proposed Approach**

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#### **Section B.1. Objective 1: Establish a diverse, regionally-representative network of member organizations.**

This project will develop an effective, comprehensive, and collaborative network structure in the Northeast Region, engaging service providers in three specific ways:

- The **Advisory Team** includes three key partners (National Young Farmers Coalition, Farm Aid, and Vermont Farm First) with diverse stress assistance and programmatic expertise. Although they were unable to sign on as a lead organization, University of Maine Extension also committed to supporting this work by participating in designing the network, attending Advisory Team calls/meetings, and providing training as appropriate.
- The **Network Members** include 20+ organizations (including the Advisory Team) with broad geographic reach, as well as deep target audience connections and experience.

- Finally, the project will expand network participation through the training and clearinghouse to include additional **Service Providers**, i.e. organizations, teams and individuals delivering stress assistance services to farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers.

Farm Aid has video conference and conference call technology that will be made available for Advisory Team and Network meetings.

**Activity 1.1:** Host monthly meetings with the **Advisory Team**, including two in-person meetings, in order to:

- Establish and formalize the network’s management structure
- Identify and recruit additional Network Members, ensuring comprehensive engagement of states and communities across the Northeast
- Guide and oversee development of the regional clearinghouse and of key network programming, including resource development, training, and other activities,
- Plan for the long-term sustainability of the network, and
- Conduct effective evaluation of all areas of the programming.

Timeline: Meetings will occur monthly throughout the grant period.

**Activity 1.2:** Host quarterly meetings with **Network Members** to:

- Provide feedback on network design and development,
- Gather resources and referrals currently available in each state,
- Identify additional resources, referrals, and training topics needed in the region, and
- Conduct outreach to their partner service providers and the farmers they serve regarding the network and clearinghouse.

Timeline: Meetings will occur in each quarter.

**Activity 1.3:** Utilizing contacts identified by the Advisory Team and Network Members, conduct outreach to engage additional **Service Providers** in sharing resources and referrals for the clearinghouse and attending training opportunities.

Timeline: Outreach will occur in Quarters 2-4.

**Outcome 1.1:** Identification of resources and referrals, as well as gaps and needs

**Outcome 1.2:** Enhanced understanding of FR SAN resources and referrals

**Outcome 1.3:** Overall engagement of at least 50 service providers and network members

<b>Objective B.1. Measures and Tools</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Evaluation Tool</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Use</b>
Number of meetings and attendees	Meeting Documentation	At each meeting	NIFA Activity Reporting
75% of network members’ work has been enhanced by participation in the network	Written Survey	At end of Quarter 2 and Quarter 4	Inform/revise purpose and structure of Network Team meetings
90% of network members report increased	Written Survey	At end of Quarter 2 and Quarter 4	Inform/revise meeting structure

understanding of available resources and referrals			
Comprehensive identification of resources and referrals, as well as gaps and needs	Saturation, i.e. Advisory Team members are no longer “hearing anything new”	Goal is to reach saturation by end of Quarter 3	Completion of network outreach process for Year One; additional resources and referrals will continue to be solicited and accepted

The primary limitations to this objective are the current networks of our signed-on partners. This project will address this limitation in multiple ways:

1. Additional partners have already expressed interest in participating and/or staying informed about the network, but were unable to submit a Letter of Commitment within the grant timeline, including University of Maryland Extension, University of Delaware Extension, Northeast Organic Farming Association Interstate Council, Soul Fire Farm, and the Northeast Farmers of Color Network.
2. Specific outreach will be made to service providers outside of participants’ current networks based on internet research, snowball approach, and further communications.

In following NIFA’s RFA, with the exception of Farm Aid’s farmer crisis helpline (offered at no cost to NIFA), this project does not propose deliverables around direct service to farmers in year one. Therefore, the activities and objectives are not specifically focused on serving the farmer audience. However, in developing an effective network that can serve a comprehensive farmer audience in years beyond this grant period, it is of the utmost importance that the unique needs, challenges, and stressors of diverse farmer audiences are incorporated into this year’s project. That includes producers of all types of agricultural products, utilizing all types of production methods, and comprising all ethnicities, races, languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This project will develop a network, clearinghouse, training, and outreach plans that are ethnically, racially, linguistically, and socio-economically sensitive, appropriate, and inclusive. The project achieves that goal by engaging a network of partners that includes expertise and in-depth experience working with farmers, ranchers, and farmworkers of all backgrounds in the Northeast. The network of partners and their expertise are described in Section D.

**Section B.2. Objective 2: Develop a clearinghouse of farmer assistance programs in the region, inclusive of professional ag behavioral health counseling and referral.**

This project will develop an online repository of farm stress programs, curricula, resources, and training materials, including referral links for suicide awareness and prevention. Our partner, Farm Aid, has managed a clearinghouse with this capacity for more than 15 years. They will continue to host the clearinghouse on their site and are currently in the process of making changes to the database that will enhance its utility and make it more user-friendly for farmers and service providers alike. Farm Aid will hire an IT consultant to manage changes to the database; that consultant will be submitted to NIFA for approval prior to final contract approval.

In addition, Farm Aid has submitted Letters of Commitment for FRSSAN applications in the Southern (RAFI), North Central (Wisconsin DATCP), and Western (CSU) Regions, increasing the potential of this clearinghouse to become a universal tool that reduces duplication. Farm Aid has submitted budget requests with each of these Letters of Commitment to ensure that the organization has adequate capacity to meet those commitments as well as their commitment to this application. Nonetheless, because Farm Aid currently operates the clearinghouse and their 1-800-

FARM-AID farm crisis hotline (at no cost to NIFA), this project will be able to track direct service provision to farmers throughout the grant period.

**Activity 2.1:** Conduct outreach to partners in the region (and nationally, should partner applications in other regions be successful) to ensure that the clearinghouse's enhanced functionality will most effectively serve partners' needs.

Timeline: Quarter 1

**Activity 2.2:** Conduct any needed technical changes to the back end of the clearinghouse to enhance its utility and functionality.

Timeline: Quarters 1 and 2. Technical work will be completed and the clearinghouse will be live by the end of Quarter 2.

**Activity 2.3:** In addition to the resources and referrals already included in Farm Aid's clearinghouse, conduct outreach through the Advisory Team, Network Members, and additional Service Providers to add existing resource and referral listings to the clearinghouse.

Timeline: Resources and referrals will be solicited and added to the clearinghouse in Quarter 2, with additional outreach as needed in Quarter 3.

**Activity 2.4:** Review/analyze submitted resources to identify those most effective as well as gaps and needs. Develop four comprehensive resources (equivalent to 10-15 pages each) that integrate or build from existing resources and best practices in a variety of formats including documents, toolkits, articles, and video on the key elements of farmer stress assistance:

- Mental Health/Stress Management
- Financial Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Disaster Assistance

The task of reviewing and analyzing resources and developing new resources is not insignificant. The National Young Farmers Coalition is well skilled in developing new resources and will partner with the national experts below to ensure these resources are useful for service providers, farmers, and communities. To achieve this task in the timeline provided, this project will partner with national experts with specific topical expertise.

- Vermont Farm First, with hands-on experience providing mental health services to farmers for the past ten years, will be responsible for work on mental health and stress management. These resources will be made available on their website, farmfirst.org and will be used for training/workshop development as well.
- Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA, with in-depth experience providing farmers in crisis with financial, legal, and disaster assistance, will be responsible for analysis and input on those topics.
- The Farmers' Legal Action Group, with national expertise on direct farmer legal services, will be responsible for analysis and input on legal assistance.
- The National Center for Appropriate Technology, with experience developing over 450 publications for farmers and service providers on an array of agricultural topics, will be responsible for gathering analysis, compiling best practices, and developing the financial, legal, and disaster resources.



The National Young Farmers Coalition will also provide direct farmer feedback on these resources by user-testing the clearinghouse with Coalition chapter leadership in the Northeast. Our chapter leaders work directly with hundreds of young farmers in the Northeast. These chapter leaders, along with diverse farmers and ranchers in served by the broader network, will ground-truth and provide much-needed farmer feedback on the clearinghouse and resources, ensuring we are effectively meeting the needs of farmers.

Timeline: Work will take place between the end of Quarter 2 and the beginning of Quarter 4. All materials will be finalized in advance of the training in Quarter 4.

**Outcome 2.1:** Increased usage of the clearinghouse, 1-800-FARM-AID, USDA programs, and other governmental programs.

**Outcome 2.2:** Improved knowledge among network members of resources and referrals available in the region.

<b>Objective B.2. Measures and Tools</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Evaluation Tool</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Use</b>
Number of new educational and promotional materials	Document tracking	Prior to Quarter 4 training	NIFA Activity Reporting
Number of clearinghouse site visits and 1-800-FARM-AID hotline calls	Hotline and clearinghouse data tracking systems	Throughout the project	Inform/revise outreach and publicity of clearinghouse and hotline
Number of page views and/or hotline referrals to USDA programs such as the Agriculture Mediation Program and/or Crop Insurance Mediation program	Hotline and clearinghouse data tracking systems	Throughout the project	Inform/revise education of hotline respondents on these resources and/or increase the visibility of their listings on the clearinghouse site
Number of page views and/or hotline referrals to other governmental programs and resources through agencies such as HHS Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency and Veterans Affairs	Hotline and clearinghouse data tracking systems	Throughout the project	Inform/revise education of hotline respondents on these resources and/or increase the visibility of their listings on the clearinghouse site
90% of network members report increased understanding of available resources and referrals	Written Survey	At end of Quarter 2 and Quarter 4	Inform/revise organization of the Clearinghouse, and/or training plans

This objective will undoubtedly provide challenges to implementation. Website updates and the design of new features are prone to technological issues. This project has taken steps to reduce the impact of this limitation by Farm Aid's work over the past year to evaluate its current clearinghouse, conduct initial outreach and research to identify more effective ways of organizing the clearinghouse, develop an RFP to receive proposals from IT consultants to conduct the planned changes, and hold conversations with IT consultants to identify challenges or issues that may

emerge. Through these steps, Farm Aid has developed a refined plan for the clearinghouse changes. The existing clearinghouse will stay live until the launch of the redesigned site so that there is no gap in service.

**Section B.3. Objective 3: Educate and train individuals and teams in the region about Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network activities and how they can access and use existing resources and programs in their work with agricultural workers and communities under stress.**

This project will train individuals and teams in the Northeast Region through a three-day in-person training in Quarter 4. There are multiple elements of this training that are worth noting. First, the training will engage a diverse array of Service Providers with strong connections to the various target audiences of this project and with broad geographic coverage throughout the Northeast. This will include individuals and teams in state and federal government programs, Cooperative Extension staff, non-profit service providers, and peer service providers. The project team believes this final group to be one of the most innovative approaches used in this proposal.

Throughout the mental health field, there has been increased interest in the benefit of using peer service providers: individuals who share similar experiences, such as farmers who have experienced stress and mental health issues in the past. As noted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association, “Peer support offers a level of acceptance, understanding, and validation not found in many other professional relationships. By sharing their own lived experience and practical guidance, peer support workers help people to develop their own goals, create strategies for self-empowerment, and take concrete steps towards building fulfilling, self-determined lives” (SAMHSA, 2017).

Through the National Young Farmers Coalition twelve farmer-led chapters in the Northeast region, this project will recruit farmers to be trained in peer support at our three-day in-person training. Our partners, Farm Aid and Vermont Farm First have significant experience in developing peer models. Farm Aid’s network of farm service providers, many of the most effective of whom were farmers who had lost their farms in the 1980s farm crisis, provides support to farmers in similar situations. Vermont Farm First’s parent organization, Invest EAP, currently provides peer support training to police, emergency first responders, and key hospital personnel. Working with other network partners, Farm First will lead on developing this peer support expertise for farmers.

Second, while the training will focus on training attendees in FRSAN activities, available resources and referrals, and best practices for farmer stress assistance, the training will also include sessions focused on the infrastructure of developing and enhancing farm stress assistance programs. Utilizing expertise from our region, such as Vermont Farm First’s unique Agency of Agriculture-funded structure, as well as sharing structural options from other regions, this portion of the training will ensure that service providers learn not only how to provide effective programming, but also how to make that programming sustainable. There is a diverse array of models from across the country that provides varying levels of service, are housed in different types of agencies, and are funded through diverse mechanisms. By highlighting the infrastructure options for stress assistance programming, this project will enhance the likelihood that strong, meaningful stress assistance will continue to be offered throughout the Northeast Region in perpetuity. In addition, it will provide support for agencies and organizations who may seek funding in Year Two of the FRSAN program, ensuring that organizations applying for funds for direct service to farmers are thoroughly prepared and structured to make effective use of those funds.

Finally, this project will use the training planning process and event itself to identify and develop cohorts of similarly-structured programs who can continue to operate beyond the life of this grant to further support one another in providing effective service to farmers. As of the writing of this proposal, cohorts have been identified for:

- Legal Providers (civil and tribal legal aid services, non-governmental or public organizations providing farm law services, and state bar associations and legal networks), to be organized by the Farmers' Legal Action Group, and
- State Departments of Agriculture looking to develop farmer stress assistance programming, to be organized by Vermont Farm First and the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

We expect additional cohorts to emerge as training planning commences and will welcome the opportunity to connect like individuals to support one another more effectively in the future.

**Activity 3.1:** Through Advisory Team and Network Member meetings, identify key topics for training. Training topics will include information on the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network, available resources and referrals, and how to access the network and resources using the clearinghouse. The training will also offer workshops covering best practices of farmer stress assistance, such as:

- Identifying farmers under stress and in crisis
- Making referrals to programs equipped to provide direct behavioral care assistance
- Providing immediate mental health services when unable to refer a farmer in crisis, i.e. Mental Health First Aid or QPR protocols
- Implementing peer support strategies, tools, and techniques
- Strengthening farmer coping skills and stress management tools
- Assisting farmers in analyzing and problem-solving farm financial issues
- Providing legal information to farmers facing bankruptcy and other legal issues
- Connecting farmers with available disaster resources and advising farmers on best practices for effective use of those resources
- Infrastructure and funding options for farmer stress assistance programming

These workshops will be grounded in the clearinghouse resources and the new resources developed by the team in Activity 2.4. Finally, the training will include collaborative space for cohorts to develop next steps for enhancing available resources at the state and regional level.

Timeline: Planning will occur in the first three quarters; the training will occur in Quarter 4.

**Outcome 3.1:** Training provided for 50 individuals.

**Outcome 3.2:** Increased understanding of FRSAN activities and existing resources.

**Outcome 3.3:** Increased understanding of best practices for supporting farmers under stress, including financial, legal, disaster, and mental health tools.

**Outcome 3.4:** Increased understanding of structural options for offering stress assistance programming and collaboration between service providers.

<b>Objective B.3. Measures and Tools</b>			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Evaluation Tool</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Use</b>
Number of trainings and trainees	Training tracking	Quarter 4	NIFA Activity Reporting
75% of trainees report increased understanding of FR SAN activities and how to use existing resources and programs	Written Survey	At end of training	Inform/revise future trainings and/or FR SAN outreach and publicity
75% of trainees report increased understanding of best practices for supporting farmers under stress, including financial, legal, and mental health tools	Written Survey	At end of training	Inform/revise future trainings and resource development
75% of trainees report increased understanding of structural options for offering stress assistance programming and collaboration between service providers	Written Survey	At end of training	Inform/revise future trainings, collaborative efforts, and/or infrastructure-related resource development

This objective includes many of the same limitations and challenges that other trainings face: identifying the most engaging and needed topics and presenters; promoting the event and obtaining the right audience; ensuring the event runs smoothly; etc. However, the structure of this project addresses many of these challenges. By grounding the training in the network, this project will ensure that the planning stages provide the necessary information to offer the most needed skills and knowledge and effectively engage attendees. With the Advisory Team providing direction, the Network providing feedback, and Farm Aid staff coordinating and planning the event, this project has adequately addressed these potential limitations.

### **Section C: Project Performance Assessment Plan**

Specific measures, tools, timelines, and use of findings are outlined in Section B under each objective and correspond to the outcomes outlined below in the Logic Model. Measurement tools include:

- Documentation of all meetings/trainings, attendees, and materials developed
- Written surveys of network members at the end of Quarters 2 and 4 to evaluate the effectiveness of network meetings
- Hotline and clearinghouse data tracking systems throughout the grant period to track usage of the clearinghouse, hotline, and referrals
- Written surveys at the end of the training to evaluate changes in understanding

In addition, the Advisory Team will use the qualitative data measure of ‘saturation’ to determine when to stop the active search for existing resources and materials. ‘Saturation’ is oftentimes colloquially defined as the point when researchers are no longer ‘hearing anything new.’ The results of each of these measures will be shared with the Network and NIFA as they are received.

## Section C.1. Logic Model

<b>Problem Statement:</b> Farming is emotionally and physically taxing and involves significant risk. Combined with decreased prices and increased input costs and damaging weather events, farmers are reporting increased levels of stress and suicidality.				
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Outputs/Activities</b>	<b>Short-Term Outcomes</b>	<b>Long-Term Outcomes</b>
Convene an effective network in the Northeast Region	Network Members with combined topical, geographic, and farmer audience expertise, including: Agricultural Mediation programs, State Departments of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Systems, Non-governmental organizations, and Farmer Peer Support Providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12 Advisory Team meetings to design, implement, and evaluate the network</li> <li>• 4 Network meetings with 20+ network members</li> <li>• Broader network outreach to NE service providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of resources and referrals, as well as gaps and needs</li> <li>• Enhanced understanding among network members of FR SAN resources and referrals</li> <li>• Overall engagement of at least 50 service providers and network members within the Northeast region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased collaboration among service providers</li> <li>• Reduced duplication of efforts</li> <li>• Enhanced provision of services to farmers</li> </ul>
Develop a clearinghouse of farmer stress assistance resources and referrals	User Audience includes: Farmers under stress, including disadvantaged farmers, farmworkers, and farm families; Service providers in the region working with farmers under stress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online clearinghouse of resources and referrals</li> <li>• 4 resources on mental health, financial, legal, and disaster assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased usage of the clearinghouse, 1-800-FARM-AID, USDA programs, and other governmental programs</li> <li>• Improved knowledge among network members of resources and referrals available in the region</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased farmer access to/use of resources and referrals</li> <li>• Decreased farmer stress and suicidality</li> </ul>
Train service providers on FR SAN resources and farmer stress assistance best practices	Network Members, Service Providers, and Farmer Peer Support Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 three-day training of at least 50 individuals</li> </ul>	<p>Increased understanding of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FR SAN activities and how to use existing resources and programs</li> <li>• Best practices for supporting farmers under stress</li> <li>• Structural options for offering stress assistance programming and collaboration between service providers.</li> </ul>	

**Section C.2. Timeline for Activities and Division of Labor**

	Quarters:			
	1	2	3	4
<b>Objective 1: Convene the Network</b>				
Host monthly Advisory Team meetings to plan, oversee, and evaluate the project. Meeting Support: Farm Aid; Participating: NYFC*, Vermont Farm First				
Host quarterly meetings with Network Members to gain feedback, identify resources and referrals, and plan outreach. Meeting Support: Farm Aid; Participating: Advisory Team/Network Members				
Conduct outreach to additional Service Providers to share resources and referrals and attend training opportunities. Support: Farm Aid; Conducting Outreach: Advisory Team/Network Members				
<b>Objective 2: Develop the Clearinghouse</b>				
Provide 1-800-FARM-AID hotline and clearinghouse; track usage and referrals. Management and Tracking: Farm Aid				
Conduct outreach to partners for feedback on clearinghouse functionality. Outreach: Farm Aid; Analysis: Advisory Team				
Conduct technical changes to the clearinghouse and launch the site by end of Q2. Oversight: Farm Aid				
Identify existing resource and referral listings and add to the clearinghouse. Organizing: Farm Aid; Outreach: Advisory Team/Network Members/Etc.				
Review/analyze submitted resources, develop new resources on best practices, ground-truth/obtain feedback from NYFC chapters and Network Members. Oversight: Advisory Team; Labor: NCAT, RAFI, FLAG, Vermont Farm First, NYFC				
<b>Objective 3: Host the Training</b>				
Plan training for 50 service providers, including Farmer Peer Support Providers. Detail Management: Farm Aid; Planning: Advisory Team; Feedback: Network				
Host training for 50 service providers, including evaluation. Detail Management: Farm Aid; Hosting and Evaluation: Advisory Team				
<b>Additional Grant Management Tasks</b>				
Manage evaluation process and communicate with external evaluator. Oversight: NYFC; Support: Advisory Team				
Share evaluation findings and results (as they are obtained). Oversight: NYFC; Support: Advisory Team				
Administer grant fiscal and reporting requirements. Oversight: NYFC; Support: Advisory Team				

\*NYFC = National Young Farmers Coalition

**Section C.3. Evaluation Oversight**

For this project, NYFC has contracted an external evaluator, Jan Perez, to conduct the evaluation process. Perez reviewed the evaluation plan and committed to:

- Develop the Network Member surveys (end of Quarters 2 and 4), including researching questions for network assessment, meeting with the Advisory Team, and preparing the survey to be sent to the Network
- Develop the Training survey (end of training), including researching questions for train-the-trainer evaluation, meeting with the Advisory Team, and providing the survey for administration by the Advisory Team at the event
- Analyze results and develop final reporting for NIFA, along with programmatic suggestions for project refinement/application of findings

Use of an external evaluator will enhance the utility of the Northeast Region's findings for other regions, as well as for integrating findings into enhancing the work of this project. Perez brings a specific skillset to this project that will further enhance the utility of the evaluation plan and findings. Perez has been involved in program evaluation for 20 years, including evaluation of farmer education and support programs, as well as mental health. Perez has served as the external evaluator on several NIFA grants, including one to evaluate the national NIFA BFRDP program. In addition to her work as an independent evaluator, Perez brings experience as a Specialist and Researcher at University of California – Santa Cruz. Her position as an evaluator from outside of the Northeast Region, but with significant experience working with agriculture-related programs nationally, will position her excellently as an unbiased evaluator for this project.

As noted, Perez will work directly with the Advisory Team, with the National Young Farmers Coalition as primary contact. National Young Farmers Coalition, Farm Aid, and Vermont Farm First bring diverse experience managing USDA grants and conducting evaluation plans.

## **Section D: Institutional Capacity, Division of Labor, and Management Plan**

### **Section D.1. Partner Organizations**

As outlined elsewhere in this proposal, this project includes a diverse array of partners and collaborators, each of whom lend specific expertise, geographic coverage, and audience reach.

#### **Advisory Team**

The Advisory Team consists of a strong partnership between complementary organizations with shared project leadership: National Young Farmers Coalition, Vermont Farm First, and Farm Aid, with support from University of Maine Extension as outlined below under "Network Members." These organizations were selected for their experience, expertise, and network reach, as well as to represent multiple scales of service provision: National Young Farmers Coalition works with farmer members, Farm Aid provides referrals and resources to farmers on a national level, and Vermont Farm First provides integrated in-depth services for farmers in crisis, with a focus on mental health.

In addition to the specific roles outlined for each Advisory Team member, these organizations played an important role in the development of this proposal and have committed to participating in monthly meetings to design, implement, and evaluate this project. Together, the Advisory Team members will collaborate in managing the project, including development of the network and clearinghouse, and hosting the training.

#### **National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC)**

Roles: Lead grant applicant; Project Director; Fiscal grant management; Grant reporting; Evaluation lead; Network outreach and coordination support; Farmer engagement as peer support service providers and to provide feedback on new resources.

As a national organization representing young and beginning farmers around the country, the National Young Farmers Coalition is a primary stakeholder in the issue of farmer mental health. The Coalition represents, mobilizes, and engages young farmers to ensure their success and envisions a country where young people who are willing to work, get trained, and take a little risk can support themselves and their families in farming. Since its inception in 2011, the Coalition has built out a nationwide network of farmer-led chapters, provided business services to farmers, and led several program and research grants. Currently, the Coalition has 45 farmer-led chapters in 28

states. In the Northeast, the Coalition has twelve chapters: Vermont, Maine, Maryland, DC, Connecticut, two in Pennsylvania, and five in New York. In addition, the Coalition is in the process of training staff in Mental Health First Aid.

### Farm Aid

Roles: Project coordination, including staff support for the Advisory Team and Network Member meetings; Clearinghouse development; Staff support for planning and hosting the training.

Farm Aid brings diverse experience and strengths to this proposal. Since 1985, Farm Aid has worked to keep family farmers on the land by providing immediate and effective support services to farm families in crisis. Through its national hotline and clearinghouse, Farm Aid's in-house hotline staff receive calls and emails from farmers and ranchers across the country seeking assistance when in crisis. Farm Aid provides farmers with resources and referrals to farm service organizations, including agricultural mediation programs, USDA programs, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs programs in every state. Staff has been trained in QPR suicide prevention protocols. Between 2002 and 2018, Farm Aid responded to requests for assistance from over 10,000 farmers. In addition, Farm Aid has more than 26 years of experience responding immediately to farmers in the face of natural disaster.

Beyond farmer stress assistance experience, Farm Aid has extensive experience supporting networks, developing and maintaining a clearinghouse, and planning and hosting events. In addition to its annual festival attracting over 20,000 attendees, Farm Aid has played a national role in trainings on farm crisis support and stress assistance. In the past year alone, Farm Aid has offered trainings for six different organizations. In 2018, Farm Aid also started working with the American Psychological Association (APA) to train member psychologists on serving farmers and rural communities. Finally, each year Farm Aid grants proceeds from its festival to organizations across the country (nearly \$700,000 in 2018). This expertise and capacity will be an asset for Year Two FRSAN projects, if selected.

### Vermont Farm First (VFF)

Roles: Develop program for engaging Farmer Peer Support Providers; Review and analyze existing mental health resources; Develop a comprehensive resource on farmer mental health; Provide workshop on mental health at the training in Quarter 4; Engage other State Departments of Agriculture in advance of and during the training to develop a cohort to support Departments of Agriculture in building infrastructure similar to Vermont's.

Launched by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture in 2010, Vermont Farm First (VFF) provides solution-focused counseling, resources, and referrals to farmers. VFF's staff of licensed mental health counselors provide counseling and support to meet farmers' immediate needs and can refer to a network of licensed mental health counselors for longer-term support. Often, farmers' presenting problems relate to stressful circumstances on the farm. Farm First counselors connect farmers with resources to address their immediate crisis and in the process, engage farmers to provide ongoing emotional support. That support varies based on the needs and desires of the farmer, from multiple in-person meetings at the farm or a series of shorter telephone contacts. Each year, between 50-80 Vermont farmers contact Farm First for help. Additionally, far more interact with Farm First staff at agricultural conferences and meetings. The program also trains and supports farm service providers and others on how to best assist farmers experiencing stress. Farm First has developed diverse resources, hosted at farmfirst.org, as well as an in-depth mental health



website at the Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing. As part of this grant, VFF will integrate these websites and thus provide others with access to replicable online resources with detailed mental health support information for farmers, including self-assessment instruments that provide immediate feedback to farmers, a plethora of pertinent help articles and videos, and access to an online system that helps users work on reducing stress in their lives.

### **Network Members**

In addition to the Advisory Team members, this project has already received letters of commitment from 16 organizations to participate in the Network. Beyond any additional role commitments (outlined below), each of the following organizations have committed to:

- Participate in the network by attending quarterly network calls,
- Provide information on programs, resources, and training materials for the clearinghouse,
- Participate in our training on farmer stress assistance, and
- Assist in outreach about the network, clearinghouse, training, and further opportunities.

All of the organizations on this project were invited to submit budget requests. In addition, several organizations are interested in engaging with the organization but were not able to submit letters of commitment due to the short RFA timeline, including University of Maryland Extension, University of Delaware Extension, Soul Fire Farm, and the Northeast Farmers of Color Network. In Quarter 1, this project will conduct outreach to identify other potential Network Members whose participation will enhance the project outcomes. In particular, the Advisory Team is committed to conducting outreach to State Departments of Agriculture (with support from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture) and Cooperative Extension Systems that may have committed to other FRISAN proposals to ensure comprehensive engagement in this project.

Coalition of Agricultural Mediation Programs, representing Agricultural Mediation Programs in Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

University of Maine Extension, serving beginning and established farmers and providing Agricultural Mediation, Crop Insurance Education, and AgrAbility Programs. Additional roles: Participating in design of the network, attending monthly Advisory Team calls and in-person meetings, and providing training as needed.

Pennsylvania State University, providing connections to the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NE-SARE), as well as to the faculty of the Departments of Agricultural Sciences and Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and Education.

West Virginia University Extension, serving diverse farmers in West Virginia, including a significant percentage of military veterans.

Pennsylvania Office of Rural Health, coordinating health care and pesticide safety in rural areas of Pennsylvania with an emphasis on agricultural producers, migrant and immigrant farmworkers, and the Amish and Mennonite communities.

Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, committed to building the network of State Agriculture officials involved in this project, as well as participating in a cohort of State Departments of Agriculture interested in developing programming similar to Vermont's.

Northeast Center for Occupational Safety and Health: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, offering research, education, and intervention programs in West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Maine, including counseling services for farm family and leading a stakeholder network in New York focused on the physical and mental health of dairy farmers.

Migrant Clinicians Network, providing research and technical assistance to medical service providers to improve outcomes for migrant and immigrant farmworkers. Additional roles: Offering expertise regarding migrant and immigrant farmworkers.

New England Farmers Union, serving farmers across New England, many of whom are in crisis, in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

The Blueprint, a network of farm service providers advising agricultural entrepreneurs at all stages, scales, types, and populations across New England.

Northeast Organic Farming Association of New York, serving over 1,000 organic producers including dairy farmers in crisis, trained in 2019 on identifying and serving farmers under stress.

Northeast Organic Farming Association of Massachusetts, serving organic producers and with an annual outreach of over 243,000 in the Northeast.

The Carrot Project, providing information, training, skills, and capital to 60-75 farms per year in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New York, also annually reaching 400 farmers with educational workshops and 1,500 via e-news and online resources.

New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, annually serving over 300 beginning farmers in Massachusetts with training, land access, technical assistance, and farm stress assistance.

Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation, an economic development agency offering technical assistance to diverse farmers in New York.

West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition, serving diverse farmers in West Virginia, including those impacted by recent flooding and other natural disasters.

### **National Topical Expertise**

This project also engages three national organizations with key expertise in meeting Objective 2, Activity 2.4: Reviewing and analyzing submitted materials and developing new resources on farmer stress assistance specifically related to mental health, financial, legal, and disaster issues. Vermont Farm First will take the lead on developing resources on mental health and will partner with these national organizations as follows:

National Center for Appropriate Technology with experience managing a farmer helpline and developing over 300 resources for farmers and service providers on an array of agricultural topics, will be responsible for gathering analysis, compiling best practices, and developing three comprehensive resources (10-15 pages each) on financial, legal, and disaster assistance.

Rural Advancement Foundation International – USA with in-depth experience providing farmers in crisis with financial, legal, and disaster assistance in-person and via a helpline will be responsible for analysis and input on these topics.

Farmers' Legal Action Group (FLAG) with national expertise on direct farmer legal services via its helpline will be responsible for analysis and input on legal assistance. In addition, FLAG will

build the Legal Provider cohort, connecting with civil and tribal legal aid services, non-governmental and public legal service organizations, and state bar associations to enhance connectivity and effective education of legal providers working with farmers in the region.

### **Section D.2. Coordination of Partner Organizations**

This project will be administered and managed by the Advisory Team, a strong partnership of complementary organizations committed to shared leadership. Advisory Team meetings and Network Member meetings will be staffed by Farm Aid, who will be responsible for scheduling, collaborative agenda-setting, and recording meetings and key decisions. Farm Aid will also be responsible for communication and data-sharing among Network Members, as well as outreach regarding meetings, training promotion, and network and clearinghouse updates. The National Young Farmers Coalition will lead on program evaluation, and be responsible for communicating results, findings, and reporting to the Network and will share results as they become available from each measurement tool. Finally, the Advisory Team has agreed to equitable decision-making based on collaborative processes and all Network Members have agreed to the Management Plan.

### **Section D.3. Key Staff**

National Young Farmers Coalition: **Martin Lemos**, Interim Executive Director, 10% FTE

As Project Director, Lemos will contribute to the overall administration and management of this project, including fiscal management and reporting, and outcomes-based reporting. Lemos serves as the Interim Executive Director of the National Young Farmers Coalition and comes to the Coalition with a diverse background in sustainable agriculture and food systems. His experience includes directing farm operations at the Green Earth Institute, serving as senior agronomist and project manager in Ghana for AgDevCo, coordinating local food systems in Brooklyn, and most recently, leading partnerships for the Healthy Business Coalition, a collaborative initiative driven by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and leading companies to reimagine how business can invest in health along the value chain. Lemos was recently named a Castanea Fellow. Lemos holds an MBA in Sustainability from Bard College.

Lemos' time on this project will be supplemented by:

- **Caitlin Arnold**, National Chapter Coordinator, participating in network calls, meetings and trainings, and coordinating farmer clearinghouse feedback: 30% FTE

Arnold supports the Coalition's farmer-led chapters nationwide. Before joining the Coalition, Caitlin spent over a decade market farming vegetables and flowers, and organized with the Washington Young Farmers Coalition. Arnold holds an MS in Sustainable Food Systems through Green Mountain College in Vermont, and her Masters thesis focused on the issue of farmer mental health.

- **Jaklyn Van Manen**, Development Director, providing administrative support, including coordinating evaluation and reporting: 7.5% FTE

Van Manen has 10 years of experience in government, nonprofit, and higher education, engaging in direct service work, education, and research on mental health. She holds an MA from New York University in Trauma and Violence Transdisciplinary Studies.

- **Kindle Dunning**, Bookkeeper, overseeing financial grant management, including budgeting and reimbursements: 12% FTE

Dunning has extensive experience in financial management, bookkeeping and consulting with environmental and social justice non-profits based out of Buffalo, NY.

- **Jessica Manly**, Communications Director, overseeing communication efforts with farmer leaders, reviewing reports and publications, and drafting outreach documents: 12% FTE

Manly has a decade of experience in food systems work, including serving as a FoodCorps Service Member in Montana and leading sourcing for a food distribution service in Virginia. Additionally, Manly has reported on food and farming issues for magazines and newspapers for over a decade. Manly holds an MS in Agriculture, Food, and Environment from the Tufts Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy.

Farm Aid: **Alicia Harvie**, Advocacy and Farmer Services Director, providing oversight and advising network development strategy: 15% FTE

Harvie provides strategic oversight and leadership for Farm Aid's national hotline, resource network, and disaster programming, helps direct the organization's \$700,000+ grantmaking programming, and builds and manages relationships with a wide array of farm organizations, rural leaders and lawmakers across the country to drive the organization's issue analysis and advocacy agenda, including championing the creation and funding of the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network in the 2018 Farm Bill. Harvie has an MS in Agricultural & Environmental Science and Policy from the Tufts Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy and prior to her work at Farm Aid, conducted research into U.S. farm household economics and worked in Oxfam America's domestic programs office. She is also a registered yoga teacher and has training in trauma sensitive yoga and body-based trauma recovery work.

Harvie's time on this project will be supplemented by:

- **Carolyn Mugar**, Executive Director, providing strategic oversight: 7% FTE

Carolyn has been the executive director of Farm Aid since its founding in 1985. Previous to that, she was an organizer with the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union and the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers International Union. She also founded the Armenia Tree Project, based in Massachusetts and Yerevan, Armenia.

- **Caroline Campbell McCormick**, Operations Director, operational oversight: 3% FTE

Caroline has nearly twenty years of nonprofit leadership and management experience. At Farm Aid, she oversees organizational planning and financial management of its operating budget and assets, and directs its human resources, information technology, and other business operations. Since 2012, she has led Farm Aid's efforts to improve financial and operational infrastructure, including accounting, development, governance, and auditing systems. She previously worked at Tufts University in the areas of development, coordination, and budget management.

- **Madeline Lutkewitte**, Hotline Manager, manage clearinghouse development: 20% FTE

Madeline is Farm Aid's Hotline Manager, answering calls and emails from farmers across the country and working one-on-one to address their needs, and managing the resource referral clearinghouse. Prior to Farm Aid, she completed the University of Vermont's Farmer Training Program and also worked as consultant for IBM.

- **Network Manager** (to be hired pending grant approval), providing staff support to network development and training planning: 40% FTE

Vermont Farm First: Steven Dickens, Director, 5% FTE

Dickens directs Invest EAP Centers for Wellbeing, a statewide employee assistance program that includes Vermont Farm First and serves 160,000 Vermonters and 200 organizations. Dickens provides logistical support, supervision, and coordination to staff counselors, conducts outreach to businesses across the state, and directs all administrative and clinical aspects of the program. Dickens is a Visiting Scholar Emeritus with the TH Chan Harvard School of Public Health.

Dickens' time on this project will be supplemented by:

- **Taryn Austin**, Clinical Operations Director, coordinating and assisting project implementation, objectives, and timeline: 5% FTE
- **Allen Matthews**, Project Manager, assisting with implementation of objectives and producing deliverables: 5% FTE
- **Resource Coordinator** (to be hired pending grant approval), implementing and producing deliverables: 50% FTE

#### **Section D.4. Partner Commitment and Sustainability**

Every organization that has submitted a Letter of Commitment is highly committed to this project. Given the brief timeline of the FRSAN RFA, organizations were given limited time to determine if they would like to join the project, yet all were deeply enthusiastic and committed to improving outcomes for farmers in the Northeast Region. The Advisory Team members believe this points to a high level of ongoing commitment to this work and the long-term sustainability of the network. In addition, the development of the clearinghouse provides for long-term sustainability of this project, as Farm Aid will sustain it into the foreseeable future. Farm Aid has committed to maintaining the clearinghouse site, ensuring it will remain a functional and user-friendly resource that serves farmers and farm stress assistance providers for years to come.

During Advisory Team and Network Member meetings, project partners will develop a strategic plan that clearly defines how the network will be developed and sustained over time. This will include specific objectives for expanding the provision of resources and services to farmers and ensuring the network most effectively serves all states and farm communities. A key element of this plan will be the cohorts, which will provide long-term support for the implementation of new stress assistance programming and improvement of existing programming.

Finally, by providing a comprehensive and in-depth in-person training for service providers, this project will create a knowledge base in the Northeast that is enhanced by personal relationships built over the course of the training. Unfortunately, it does not appear that the factors causing farm stress are likely to subside in the near future and the partners on this grant are all well aware of that reality. The partners on this project are committed to providing comprehensive, meaningful, and strategic farmer stress assistance that efficiently and effectively serves farmers in the Northeast, the backbone of our economy.

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**Northeast Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN)  
The Vermont Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Invest EAP Program  
Budget Narrative for Period September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020**

**Staffing**

The FRSAN program will be implemented within the DVR/Invest EAP program. The project will be managed by Taryn Austin. A FRSAN Resource Coordinator will be hired on .5 FTE basis to implement the project. Staff positive report time spent on the FRSAN to ensure only project activities are charged to the project. The staff assigned to the project, their salaries, and proportion of time assigned to the project for twelve months, are laid out in the following table which have been rounded to the nearest dollar:

<b>Staff Person and Title</b>	<b>Annual Salary</b>	<b>Fringe</b>	<b>Time Assigned to FRSAN</b>	<b>Annual Cost to FRSAN Salary</b>	<b>Annual Cost to FRSAN Fringe</b>
Taryn Austin Clinical Operations Director	\$81,286	\$47,426	5%	\$4,065	\$2,371
TBD Resource Coordinator	\$60,507	\$30,253	50%	\$30,253	\$15,127
<b>Total Salaries and Fringe</b>	<b>\$141,793</b>	<b>\$77,679</b>		<b>\$34,318</b>	<b>\$17,498</b>

**Fringe Benefits**

As noted, all staff are employees of the State of Vermont and receive the state government benefits package. The individual fringe rates for staff depend on both the number of dependents and the healthcare options selected. Ranges vary by individual.

A complete description of the State of Vermont employee salaries and benefits can be found at <http://www.vermontpersonnel.org/employee/benefits.cfm>

**Total Personnel Costs: \$51,816****Operating Costs****In-State Travel**

Staff mileage will be reimbursed at the federal rate. DVR/Invest EAP has budgeted \$3,000 for staff travel.





## Supplies

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DVR/Invest EAP will provide supplies for the FRSAN project.

**Total Operating Costs: \$3,000**

## Contractual Costs

DVR/Invest EAP has budgeted \$10,000 for a marketing and web design contract for FRSAN.

**Total Contractual Costs: \$10,000**

**Total Funds for Direct Costs Requested \$64,816**

## Indirect Costs

The State of Vermont has a federally approved cost allocation plan for all state agencies. A copy of the cost allocation plan and approval can be found at: <http://humanservices.vermont.gov/departments/office-of-the-secretary/cost-allocation-plan> . The cost allocation plan requires that all of the regional and central supporting costs be shared among funded projects. These funds support the location of project staff in the DVR central office and in the twelve regional and district offices. This includes rent, utilities, supervision, clerical support, and other administrative overhead. It also includes the costs of the DVR management staff that oversee the program.

DVR requests \$7,807 in indirect costs.

**Total Funds for Indirect Costs Requested: \$7,807**

**Total Funds Requested: \$72,623**



**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
AWARD FACE SHEET**

<b>1. Award No.</b> 2019-70028-30464	<b>2. Amendment No.</b>	<b>3. Proposal Number</b> 2019-06038	<b>4. Period of Performance</b> 09/01/2019 through 08/31/2020	<b>5. Type of Instrument</b> Grant
<b>6. Type of Action</b> New	<b>7. CFDA Number</b> 10.525	<b>8. FAIN</b> 20197002830464	<b>9. Method of Payment</b> ASAP 70028304647002819000	<b>10. CRIS Number</b>

**11. Authority:**  
7 U.S.C. 5936, Section 7522 of FCEA of 2008, Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network (FRSAN)

<b>12. Agency (Name and Address)</b> Awards Management Division National Institute of Food and Agriculture/USDA Washington, DC 20250-2271	<b>13. Awardee Organization</b> NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION, INC DBA: NATIONAL YOUNG FARMERS COALITION HUDSON, NY 12534-2419
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<b>14. Program Point of Contact:</b> Richard Elrod Telephone: 202-690-3468 richard.elrod@usda.gov	<b>Administrative Point of Contact:</b> Bora Mpinja Telephone: 2024014986 bora.mpinja@usda.gov	<b>15. Project Director/Performing Organization</b> Martin Lemos National Young Farmers Coalition Hudson, NY 12534-2419
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<b>16. Funding:</b>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>Non-Federal</u>	<b>17. Funds Chargeable</b>			
<b>Previous Total</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00	<u>FY - FDC</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>FY - FDC</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<b>+ or -</b>	\$480,000.00	\$0.00	19- 913-70028	\$480,000.00		
<b>Total</b>	\$480,000.00	\$0.00				
<b>Grand Total</b>	\$480,000.00					

**18. Title of Proposal**  
Building an Inclusive and Comprehensive Network for Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance in the Northeast

**PROVISIONS**

**This Award incorporates the following:**

- All funds for this award are withheld from payment pending a full administrative review by NIFA. The awardee must initiate the project in REEport. Also, the awardee may be required to provide NIFA with additional budget or organizational information for this administrative review. This award may be rescinded or reduced as deemed necessary pending the full administrative review of the proposal and budget; the grantee organization's Institutional Information, including financial status; and the award matching requirements, if applicable. Should the award be reduced or rescinded, NIFA will not be responsible for any costs incurred prior to funds being released.
- The referenced proposal and any revision thereto - incorporated by reference
- Research Terms and Conditions and NIFA Agency Specific Terms and Conditions (6/17) at <http://nifa.usda.gov/terms-and-conditions>
- General Provisions found in Title 2: 2 CFR Part 400; 2 CFR Part 415; 2 CFR Part 416; 2 CFR Part 418; 2 CFR Part 422; and, Title 7: 7 CFR Part 3430 - all incorporated by reference and found at <https://nifa.usda.gov/>
- The Award Budget - PENDING APPROVAL
- NIFA Project Initiation Documents - incorporated by reference
- Section 1462(a) and (c) of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (NARETPA) limits indirect costs for the OVERALL award to 30 percent of Total Federal Funds Awarded (TFFA) under a research, education, or extension grant or the grantee's Federally Negotiated Rate, whichever is less. The cap applies to the prime recipient and all sub-awardees. Please be aware that when IDC for the recipient and all sub-awardees are totaled, they must not exceed 30% of the TFFA. Be advised that the prime recipient is responsible for ensuring the maximum indirect cost allowed for the award is not exceeded when combining indirect costs for the Federal portion (i.e., prime and subawardee(s)) and any applicable cost-sharing (see 7 CFR 3430.52(b)). Amounts exceeding the maximum allowable indirect cost is considered unallowable. See sections 408 and 410 of 2 CFR 200. The Terms and Conditions allow the Authorized Representative of the prime recipient organization to make the budget changes without notifying NIFA.
- The obligation of funds may be terminated without further cause unless the recipient commences the timely drawdown of funds; initial drawdown of funds signifies acceptance of award terms and conditions and should commence in a timely manner within the award period.
- Colleges/Universities/Institutions of Higher Education Only: The negotiated rate(s) for F&A/IDC costs in effect at the time this award was approved is the F&A/IDC rate(s) that must be used for the life of this award.

**FOR THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

This award, subject to the provisions above, shall constitute an obligation of funds on behalf of the Government. Such obligation may be terminated without further cause unless the recipient commences the timely drawdown of funds; such drawdowns may not exceed one year from issuance date of the award.

<b>Typed Name</b> Garland Carl Robertson Authorized Departmental Officer	<b>Signature</b> GARLAND.ROBERTS ON	<b>Date</b> 09/01/2019
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National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
**AWARD FACE SHEET**

<b>1. Award No.</b> 2019-70028-30464	<b>2. Amendment No.</b>	<b>3. Proposal Number</b> 2019-06038	<b>4. Period of Performance</b> 09/01/2019 through 08/31/2020	<b>5. Type of Instrument</b> Grant
<b>6. Type of Action</b> New	<b>7. CFDA Number</b> 10.525	<b>8. FAIN</b> 20197002830464	<b>9. Method of Payment</b> ASAP 70028304647002819000	<b>10. CRIS Number</b>

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<b>16. Funding:</b>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>Non-Federal</u>	<b>17. Funds Chargeable</b>			
Previous Total	\$0.00	\$0.00	<u>FY - FDC</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>FY - FDC</u>	<u>Amount</u>
+ or -	\$480,000.00	\$0.00	19- 913-70028	\$480,000.00		
Total	\$480,000.00	\$0.00				
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$480,000.00</b>					

**18. Title of Proposal**  
Building an Inclusive and Comprehensive Network for Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance in the Northeast

**PROVISIONS**

- 10. Prohibition against using funds under Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Entities that require certain internal confidentiality agreements are referenced at <https://nifa.usda.gov/prohibition-confidentiality-agreements>
- 11. Inquiries regarding ASAP Payment Accounts should be directed to the Financial Management Division at [asapcustomerservice@usda.gov](mailto:asapcustomerservice@usda.gov).

FOR THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

This award, subject to the provisions above, shall constitute an obligation of funds on behalf of the Government. Such obligation may be terminated without further cause unless the recipient commences the timely drawdown of funds; such drawdowns may not exceed one year from issuance date of the award.



VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL  
Request for Classification Review  
Position Description Form A

- **This form is to be used by managers and supervisors to request classification of a position (filled or vacant) when the duties have changed, and by managers and supervisors to request the creation of a new job class/title (for a filled, vacant, or new position), and by employees to request classification of their position.**
- This form was designed in Microsoft Word to download and complete on your computer. This is a form-protected document, so information can only be entered in the shaded  areas of the form.
- If you prefer to fill out a hard copy of the form, contact your Personnel Officer.
- To move from field to field use your mouse, the arrow keys or press Tab. Each form field has a limited number of characters. Use your mouse or the spacebar to mark and unmark a checkbox.
- Where additional space is needed to respond to a question, you might need to attach a separate page, and number the responses to correspond with the numbers of the questions on the form. Please contact your Personnel Officer if you have difficulty completing the form.
- The form must be complete, including required attachments and signatures or it will be returned to the department's personnel office. All sections of this form are required to be completed unless otherwise stated.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Tell us about the job. The information you provide will be used to evaluate the position. It will not be used in any way to evaluate an employee's performance or qualifications.

Answer the questions carefully. The information you give will help ensure that the position is fairly evaluated. Here are some suggestions to consider in completing this questionnaire:

- Tell the **facts** about what an employee in this position is actually expected to do.
- Give **specific examples** to make it clear.
- Write in a way so a person unfamiliar with the job will be able to understand it.
- Describe the job **as it is now**; not the way it was or will become.
- Before answering each question, read it carefully.

**To Submit this Request for Classification Review:** If this is a filled position, the employee must sign the original\* and forward to the supervisor for the supervisor's review and signature. The Personnel Officer and the Appointing Authority must also review and sign this request before it is considered complete. The effective date of review is the beginning of the first pay period following the date the complete Request for Classification Review is date stamped by the Classification Division of the Department of Personnel.

\*An employee may choose to sign the form, make a copy, submit original to supervisor as noted above, while concurrently sending the copy to the Classification Division, 144 State Street, Montpelier, with a cover note indicating that the employee has submitted the original to the supervisor and is submitting the copy as a Concurrent filing.

If this is a request (initiated by employees, VSEA, or management) for review of all positions in a class/title please contact the appropriate Classification Analyst or the Classification Manager to discuss the request prior to submitting.

## Request for Classification Review Position Description Form A

For Department of Personnel Use Only

Notice of Action # _____		Date Received (Stamp)
Action Taken: _____		
New Job Title _____		
Current Class Code _____	New Class Code _____	
Current Pay Grade _____	New Pay Grade _____	
Current Mgt Level <input type="checkbox"/> B/U <input type="checkbox"/> OT Cat. _____	EEO Cat. _____	FLSA _____
New Mgt Level <input type="checkbox"/> B/U <input type="checkbox"/> OT Cat. _____	EEO Cat. _____	FLSA _____
Classification Analyst _____	Date _____	Effective Date: _____
Comments: _____		Date Processed: _____
Willis Rating/Components:	Knowledge & Skills: _____	Mental Demands: _____
	Working Conditions: _____	Accountability: _____
	Total: _____	

### Incumbent Information:

Employee Name:  Employee Number:   
Position Number:  Current Job/Class Title:   
Agency/Department/Unit:  Work Station:  Zip Code:   
Supervisor's Name, Title, and Phone Number:   
How should the notification to the employee be sent:  employee's work location  or  other address, please provide mailing address:

### New Position/Vacant Position Information:

New Position Authorization:  Request Job/Class Title: VR Program Manager  
Position Type:  Permanent or  Limited / Funding Source:  Core,  Partnership, or  Sponsored  
Vacant Position Number:  Current Job/Class Title:   
Agency/Department/Unit: AHS/DAIL/VR Work Station: Burlington Zip Code: 05401  
Supervisor's Name, Title and Phone Number: Steve Dickens, EAP Manager, 863-7509

### Type of Request:

- Management:** A management request to review the classification of an existing position, class, or create a new job class.
- Employee:** An employee's request to review the classification of his/her current position.



## 1. Job Duties

This is the **most critical** part of the form. Describe the activities and duties required in your job, **noting changes (new duties, duties no longer required, etc.) since the last review**. Place them in order of importance, beginning with the single most important activity or responsibility required in your job. The importance of the duties and expected end results should be clear, including the tolerance that may be permitted for error. Describe each job duty or activity as follows:

- **What it is:** The nature of the activity.
- **How you do it:** The steps you go through to perform the activity. Be specific so the reader can understand the steps.
- **Why it is done:** What you are attempting to accomplish and the end result of the activity.

For example a Tax Examiner might respond as follows: **(What)** Audits tax returns and/or taxpayer records. **(How)** By developing investigation strategy; reviewing materials submitted; when appropriate interviewing people, other than the taxpayer, who have information about the taxpayer's business or residency. **(Why)** To determine actual tax liabilities.

### I. What it is: Liaison and grant manager

- Represent EAP on USDA-NIFA grant advisory team.

How you do it:

- Provide leadership, facilitation, and expertise to the advisory group around needed supports and strategic planning to support farmers in the Northeast.
- Collaborate and develop needed network of supports for farmers, with emphasis on farmers mental health and wellbeing with advisory group.
- Provide specific expertise in regard to mental health best practices and research to support the advisory team and the deliverables of the Grant.
- Manage, produce and coordinate grant tasks, reports and deliverables.
- Partner with the individual grant entities as needed to ensure the advisory team is functioning and communicating effectively and the grant is achieving the outline deliverables and goals.
- Partner with other EAP staff in regard to grant management, tasks or deliverables to ensure EAP is meeting the requirements of the grant. This would include services and supports, training, financials and other critical items needed for success.

Why it is done:

- VR/EAP is a foundational partner to the advisory group. This position must have the leadership, facilitation skills, and expertise to engage and lead the advisory group to develop and implement the deliverable grant outcomes and deliverables.

### II. What it is: Resource Strategy Development

- Determine, develop and operationalize specific systems and supports for VR/EAP new USDA grant 'Building an Inclusive & Comprehensive Network for Farmers and Ranchers Stress Assistance in the Northeast'.

How you do it:

- Using existing best practice research and programming to work on producing and **adapting EAP** and other extant systems to support farmers across our region.

- Review and analyze existing mental health resources. This will include a review of the existing resources known by each of the three advisory team members and partnering with these national organizations to develop the northeastern supports and services for farmers.
- Develop a Program for engaging farmer peer support. This position will develop a peer support model to be implemented and utilized by regional farming communities. Peer support will focus on development on active listening skills, awareness of acute mental health concerns, and training in facilitating referrals to counselors and/or other resource supports.
- Develop a comprehensive resource on farmer mental health. The incumbent will oversee the development of an online clearinghouse that will utilize mental health support providers that have been researched and integrated into a regional northeast network of providers.
- Dovetail existing organizational policies with best practice from the clinical mental health field in development and implementation of support and services. Consult with partners, EAP staff and employer or industry leadership in development and training of projects.
- After identification of need or support to be developed, hold primary project management, coordination, facilitation and development of deliverable system, tool or product.
- Work with variety of partners to develop, test and train components of the service to ensure high quality functioning.
- Determine delivery methods and outreach tools to make services and supports available to the targeted members.
- Manage process improvement for the newly developed systems as they are rolled out to members and employers.

Why it is done:

- EAP is a critically thinking partner to in the collaborative USDA network of partners to support and maintain farmers wellbeing, mental health, productivity and skills. This role will be a critical component of this process and support the various opportunities and priorities of the Farm First USDA Grant.

III. What it is: Farmer Education and Outreach

- A crucial component of this role is to create and operationalize a system for farmers across the region to be aware of the supports and services developed through the USDA-NIFA grant and the partnership of the advisory group.

How you do it:

- This outreach and education would take on many forms from training and presentations to participating in conferences, to communication with farming leaders and Secretaries of Agriculture, to multiple media outreach tools, including the revision and upgrade of the Farm First Website.
- Develop promotional and informational materials to connect farmers and their partners to the supports and service we are offering.
- Develop a cohort of resource providers to engage and integrate with other regional agricultural departments. The incumbent will work with regional support providers to develop and implement a strategy for approaching governmental agencies tasked with oversight and regulation of agricultural industries in the northeast, and engaging them in creating supportive infrastructure to assist and support the mental health of agricultural workers in their respective states.

One of the key tools for this education and outreach will be the Farm First website. This site will need significant revision and upgrading to be the conduit for outreach to farmers. This person in this position will need to have a strong grounding in this technology and be able to facilitate and implement its use as this platform of engagement.

Develop and provide a workshop on mental health in the agricultural community, which will be delivered in the fourth quarter of the term of the grant. The workshop will be provided to regional assistance providers and will focus on the specific causes of stress that are endemic in the agricultural communities, the changing landscape of mental health for agricultural workers, and strategies for approaching and engaging agricultural workers in distress.

Tasks performed by the incumbent will entail high level skills in presentation, training and communication with farming, State and Federal leadership.

Why it is done:

It will be critical to connect the developed services to the farmers who are in need of these supports and services. As Farm First is the model of how the support network will work across the northeast EAP will be instrumental in engaging and partnering with the advisory team and the state and local partners to achieve success in getting farmers to engage with the network.

IV. What it is: Special Programs

Oversee small to mid-size EAP research programs.

How you do it:

Meet with and coordinate service delivery with other organizations to ensure grant obligations are met

Oversee our budget on these research projects

Coordinate EAP staff to deliver services as specified

Why it is done:

Every year the EAP obtains grant monies and contracts from other organizations for special research projects. Dedicated staff are required to oversee smaller research projects.

## 2. Key Contacts

This question deals with the personal contacts and interactions that occur in this job. Provide brief typical examples indicating your primary contacts (not an exhaustive or all-inclusive list of contacts) other than those persons to whom you report or who report to you. If you work as part of a team, or if your primary contacts are with other agencies or groups outside State government describe those interactions, and what your role is. For example: you may *collaborate, monitor, guide, or facilitate change.*

Examples:

This position interfaces with leaders of organizations in the northeast, including Executive Directors, State Commissioners, Secretaries, farmer-owners, leaders in farming business as well as our national partners on the advisory committee and other federal leaders connected to farming.

This position works in a collegial way with scholars and/or practice leaders in the fields of psychology, social work, and farmer health and wellness to enhance best practice in some of the programmatic clinical areas connected to the USDA-NIFA grant.

Other key contacts include but are not limited to leaders at our vendors who will be involved in revising and developing the outreach and programmatic supports for the grant.

**3. Are there licensing, registration, or certification requirements; or special or unusual skills necessary to perform this job?**

Include any special licenses, registrations, certifications, skills; (such as counseling, engineering, computer programming, graphic design, strategic planning, keyboarding) including skills with specific equipment, tools, technology, etc. (such as mainframe computers, power tools, trucks, road equipment, specific software packages). Be specific, if you must be able to drive a commercial vehicle, or must know Visual Basic, indicate so.

The position requires a graduate degree in a related field, such as Business, Law, Psychology, or Organizational Development. Position requires understanding and a working knowledge of research-based, best practice workplace interventions including organizational development, crisis management, and supervisory skills with additional expertise in the complexities and difficulties facing farmers in the northeast. Position requires sophisticated diplomatic skills to handle challenging political situations. Position requires ability to facilitate high-level teams and navigate state and federal level rules and procedures.

**4. Do you supervise?**

In this question "supervise" means if you direct the work of others where you are held **directly** responsible for assigning work; performance ratings; training; reward and discipline or effectively recommend such action; and other personnel matters. List the names, titles, and position numbers of the classified employees reporting to you:

No.

**5. In what way does your supervisor provide you with work assignments and review your work?**

This question deals with how you are supervised. Explain how you receive work assignments, how priorities are determined, and how your work is reviewed. There are a wide variety of ways a job can be supervised, so there may not be just one answer to this question. For example, some aspects of your work may be reviewed on a regular basis and in others you may operate within general guidelines with much independence in determining how you accomplish tasks.

This position operates autonomously while in frequent consultation with the EAP Program Director and management team. All program development or other innovations are reviewed with the Program Director and often with other members of the management team for brainstorming, edits and finalization.

The Director often delegates new initiatives to the position incumbent to carry out. The Director meets on an as-needed basis with this manager to strategize on complex matters.

**6. Mental Effort**

This section addresses the mental demands associated with this job. Describe the most mentally challenging part of your job or the most difficult typical problems you are expected to solve. Be sure to give a specific response and describe the situation(s) by example.

- For example, a purchasing clerk might respond: *In pricing purchase orders, I frequently must find the cost of materials not listed in the pricing guides. This involves locating vendors or other sources of pricing information for a great variety of materials.*
- Or, a systems developer might say: *Understanding the ways in which a database or program will be used, and what the users must accomplish and then developing a system to meet their needs, often with limited time and resources.*

- The incumbent must be able to manage long term goals and deliverables of the grant, including having the ability to manage all of the smaller tasks and collaborative contacts to steadily move the development and implementation of the services and support for the network we are working to create.
- Additionally, a high level of independent judgment and original thinking is required to unravel and address the complex systems issues, and navigate/facilitate solutions with the grant's advisory team and other partners. The incumbent needs to be ready to pivot, multi-task and respond appropriately at every turn.
- A core issue with any new initiative is the ability to think through the complex array of issues and outcomes before implementing or creating systems and services. This requires a high level intellectual and analytic skill as well as the emotional intelligence to be able to communicate and coordinate with multiple partners.

## 7. Accountability

This section evaluates the job's expected results. In weighing the importance of results, consideration should be given to responsibility for the safety and well-being of people, protection of confidential information and protection of resources.

What is needed here is information not already presented about the job's scope of responsibility. What is the job's most significant influence upon the organization, or in what way does the job contribute to the organization's mission?

Provide annualized dollar figures if it makes sense to do so, explaining what the amount(s) represent.

For example:

- A social worker might respond: *To promote permanence for children through coordination and delivery of services;*
- A financial officer might state: *Overseeing preparation and ongoing management of division budget: \$2M Operating/Personal Services, \$1.5M Federal Grants.*

The Director of Resource Development is responsible for ensuring that all Farm First and USDA grant deliverables are achieved. This would include any reporting, financial and state requirements.

Responsible for a privy to sensitive organizational information that must be handled diplomatically and confidentially.

This position will interact with a variety of high-level decision makers that are potential consumers of our overall EAP services, These interactions need to be professional and highly effective so EAP as a marketable entity has the opportunity to grow and expand.

**8. Working Conditions**

The intent of this question is to describe any adverse conditions that are routine and expected in your job. It is not to identify special situations such as overcrowded conditions or understaffing.

- a) What significant mental stress are you exposed to? All jobs contain some amount of stress. If your job stands out as having a significant degree of mental or emotional pressure or tension associated with it, this should be described.

Type	How Much of the Time?
High level meetings and complex systems issues would be stressful.	Periodic
Travel out of state.	3%

- b) What hazards, special conditions or discomfort are you exposed to? (Clarification of terms: **hazards** include such things as potential accidents, illness, chronic health conditions or other harm. Typical examples might involve exposure to dangerous persons, including potentially violent customers and clients, fumes, toxic waste, contaminated materials, vehicle accident, disease, cuts, falls, etc.; and **discomfort** includes exposure to such things as cold, dirt, dust, rain or snow, heat, etc.)

Type	How Much of the Time?

- c) What weights do you lift; how much do they weigh and how much time per day/week do you spend lifting?

Type	How Heavy?	How Much of the Time?
Boxes of program brochures and presentation materials.	10-30 pounds	weekly

- d) What working positions (sitting, standing, bending, reaching) or types of effort (hiking, walking, driving) are required?

Type	How Much of the Time?
Sitting	80%
Driving	20%

**Additional Information:**

Carefully review your job description responses so far. If there is anything that you feel is important in understanding your job that you haven't clearly described, use this space for that purpose. Perhaps your job has some unique aspects or characteristics that weren't brought out by your answers to the previous

questions. In this space, add any additional comments that you feel will add to a clear understanding of the requirements of your job.

Employee's Signature (required): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*[Faint signature and date]*

*[Faint signature and date]*

*[Faint signature and date]*

*[Faint signature and date]*

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**Supervisor's Section:**

Carefully review this completed job description, but **do not** alter or eliminate any portion of the original response. Please answer the questions listed below.

1. What do **you** consider the most **important** duties of this **job** and **why**?

Coordinate implementation of this grant. Provide strategic resource ideas and direction to national partners. Develop mental health resources for farmers. These duties will determine the success of our role in this national project and will make or break the success of this planning project, determining the likelihood of further implementation funding.

2. What do you consider the most important knowledge, skills, and abilities of an employee in this job (not necessarily the **qualifications** of the **present employee**) and **why**?

The position requires someone with expert research skills to develop resources and high level facilitation skills needed to ensure our leadership and input into this multi-organizational cross-state grant.

3. Comment on the accuracy and completeness of the responses by the employee. List below any missing items and/or differences where **appropriate**.

4. **Suggested Title and/or Pay Grade:**

VR Program Manager, PG-26.

Supervisor's Signature (required):



Date:

10/23/19

**Personnel Administrator's Section:**

Please complete any missing information on the front page of this form before submitting it for review.

Are there other changes to this position, for example: Change of supervisor, GUC, work station?

Yes  No If **yes**, please **provide detailed** information.

Attachments:

- Organizational charts are **required** and must indicate where the position reports.
- Draft job specification is **required** for proposed new job classes.

Will this change affect other positions within the organization? If so, describe how, (for example, have duties been shifted within the unit requiring review of other positions; or are there other issues relevant to the classification review process).



[Empty box]

Suggested Title and/or Pay Grade:

VR Program Manager, PG 26

Personnel Administrator's Signature (required): [Signature] Date: 10/24/19

**Appointing Authority's Section:**

Please review this completed job description but **do not alter** or eliminate any of the entries. Add any clarifying information and/or additional comments (if necessary) in the space below.

[Empty box]

Suggested Title and/or Pay Grade:

VR Program Manager PG 26

[Signature] Date: 10/24/19  
Appointing Authority or Authorized Representative Signature (required)

Handwritten text at the top left, possibly a date or reference number.

Handwritten text in the upper middle section, possibly a name or title.

Handwritten text in the middle section, possibly a date or reference number.

Handwritten text in the lower middle section, possibly a name or title.

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