Tips for Preparing the Engagement /Extension Portion of a Sea Grant Research Proposal

For the 2015-2017 competition, Sea Grant research proposals featuring strong research accompanied by meaningful engagement/extension components will be considered more competitive! Here are two important tips to help develop and strengthen the engagement components of your Sea Grant research proposal, whether or not Sea Grant or Cooperative Extension staff are formally involved.

1. Engage Extension staff EARLY (i.e., during initial planning) in the proposal preparation process.

The benefits of working with an extension staff member EARLY ON are many! They may, for example:

- have access to needs assessments of the end users for whom you may be interested in providing information, knowledge or tools;
- have access to audiences, stakeholders, volunteers or citizen scientists important for your work;
- have outreach venues and opportunities already in place that would work for you;
- know willing partners for demonstration projects, pilot projects or collaborative research;
- be familiar with social science associated with successful implementation of new knowledge in your field;
- help you locate more appropriate engagement partners if Extension is not the right partner.

All extension staff have experience designing, developing and implementing outreach/education projects. Most have experience conducting needs assessments and evaluations. Many conduct applied research themselves. Any of them should be able to help plan meaningful outreach components, contribute significantly to integration of outreach and research and add value to the project.

Engaging with extension staff early in the proposal preparation process increases the likelihood that they will be able to contribute value to the project and/or commit time and effort if needed. The level of effort required and/or availability of other funding help determine whether or not salary funds will be needed from the proposed project for extension staff. Browse these sites to locate staff who might be able to help you or identify others who can help.

- Sea Grant Extension staff: http://seagrant.unh.edu/staff
- Cooperative Extension program areas: http://extension.unh.edu/About-UNH-Cooperative-Extension

2. Consider these questions.

If preparing a PRE-proposal, use the questions below to help identify potential engagement directions and opportunities. You can reach out to Extension staff for help. If preparing a FULL Proposal, we suggest that you discuss these questions with an Extension staff member EARLY in the proposal preparation process to help determine IF and WHAT extension could be included:

1. What new knowledge/tool will result from your project?
2. Why is this knowledge/tool needed?
3. Who could use that knowledge (aside from other scientists) and what would they use it for (e.g., decision making, improving practices, increasing profitability, reducing risk, etc.)?
4. Do you have some information indicating that the knowledge resulting from your project is needed or desired by the intended end users or by stakeholders?
5. What would it take for the end users to apply that new knowledge/tool?
6. If end users were able to apply the new knowledge/tool that resulted from your work, would there be an improvement in social, economic or environmental conditions?

Questions or comments?
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