

AgriLife Fall Grants Workshop Series

Grant Writing Tips

cers.tamu.edu/events

Overview

1. Reviewers
2. Planning
3. Timeline
4. Writing



Reviewers



Planning



Finding Funding Opportunities

- Texas A&M AgriLife CERS weekly funding opportunities newsletter
 - Sign up at cers.tamu.edu
- Funding agency websites
 - USDA NIFA: <https://nifa.usda.gov/grants>
 - NIH: <https://www.nih.gov/grants-funding>
 - EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/research-grants>
 - NSF: <https://beta.nsf.gov/funding>
 - NASA: <https://nspires.nasaprs.com/external/>
 - NOAA: different site for each research division
 - Climate Program Office: <https://cpo.noaa.gov/Funding-Opportunities>
 - Office for Coastal Management: <https://coast.noaa.gov/funding/>
 - Sea Grant: <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/Funding>
 - Ocean Exploration: <https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/about/funding-ops/welcome.html>
 - Weather Program Office: <https://wpo.noaa.gov/Funding-Opportunities/FY22>
- Grants.gov
- Foundations
 - heart.org
 - diabetes.org
 - foundationfar.org
 - And many more!

Read
the
RFP

Planning

What you're looking for

Deadlines.
Preproposal.
Title.
Eligibility.
Purpose.
Budget.
Project Period.

Department of Health and Human Services	
Part 1. Overview Information	
Participating Organization(s)	National Institutes of Health (NIH) U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
Components of Participating Organizations	National Cancer Institute (NCI) National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Center for Tobacco Products (CTP) All applications to this funding opportunity announcement should fall within the mission of the Institutes/Centers. The following NIH Offices may co-fund applications assigned to those Institutes/Centers. Division of Program Coordination, Planning and Strategic Initiatives, Office of Disease Prevention (ODP)
Funding Opportunity Title	Maximizing the Scientific Value of Existing Biospecimen Collections (R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)
Activity Code	R21 Exploratory/Developmental Research Grant
Announcement Type	Reissue of RFA-OD-19-021 - Maximizing the Scientific Value of Existing Biospecimen Collections (R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)
Related Notices	None
Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Number	RFA-OD-21-004
Companion Funding Opportunity	RFA-OD-21-003, R21 Exploratory/Developmental Grant
Number of Applications	See Section III. 3. Additional Information on Eligibility.
Assistance Listing Number(s)	93.077
Funding Opportunity Purpose	<p>The purpose of this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is to invite R21 applications to stimulate exploratory research relevant to the mission of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - Center for Tobacco Products (CTP) using existing (publicly available) biospecimens currently stored in repositories in the United States. This will include, but not be limited to, collections associated with the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's (NHLBI) Biologic Specimen and Data Repository Information Coordinating Center (BioLINCC), and the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian (PLCO) Cancer Screening Trial. Proposed research should seek to maximize the scientific value of these stored collections and to provide researchers with an opportunity to generate preliminary data for subsequent research proposals. Other publicly available datasets would be considered, depending on analyses to be conducted. These applications need to provide justification why the data set is unique, and the research questions cannot be answered from a publicly available, nationally representative, data set.</p> <p>The awards under this FOA will be administered by NIH using funds that have been made available through FDA-CTP and the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (P.L. 111-31). Research results from this FOA are expected to generate findings and data that are directly relevant in informing the FDA's regulation of the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of tobacco products to protect public health. Research Projects must address the research priorities related to the regulatory authority of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - Center for Tobacco Products (CTP).</p>

Planning

Eligibility

*Find detailed information in the Eligibility section of the RFP and in the synopsis tab on Grants.gov

Public and state-controlled institutions of higher education (IHE)

State governments

- Texas A&M AgriLife Research is a state agency

Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), other than institutions of higher education

- Texas A&M AgriLife Research also maintains 501(c)(3) status and is, itself, not an IHE
- 1862 Land Grant Institutions – based on the year the institution gained Land Grant status

Source: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/learn-grants/grant-eligibility.html>

Accessed 08/17/2021

Planning

Purpose

(NAREEEAB) pursuant to the Competitive, Special, and Facilities [U.S.C. 3157](#)). The Secretary delegates the authority to the Under Secretary and the Under Secretary delegates that authority to NIFA.

B. Purpose and Priorities

The purpose of AFRI is to support research, education, and extension to solve key problems of local, regional, national, and global importance in conventional, organic, and urban agricultural systems. These include: increasing profitability and sustainability; ranching; bioenergy; forestry; aquaculture; and entrepreneurship; human nutrition; mitigating impacts of bioterrorism; food production; food safety; mitigating food waste and food loss; rural home economics and rural human ecology; biotechnology; and extension support. AFRI advances knowledge in both fundamental and applied agriculture. Funding this work also allows AFRI to support educational programs that deliver science-based knowledge to end users, allowing them to...



Budget & Project Period

Requirements and Evaluation Criteria Checklist

VI. APPLICATION PREPARATION CHECKLIST

We strongly recommend that you conduct an administrative review to ensure that the request for applications (RFA) and this guide prior to its submission is not intended to be an all-inclusive repetition of the application preparation instructions. It is, however, meant to bring awareness to requirements required as a way to assist you in a successful submission of an application.

General:

- Proposal is responsive to the program description/announcement/solicitation
- If a proposal has been previously declined and is being resubmitted, proposal takes into account the comments from the prior NIFA review.
- Proposed work is appropriate for funding by NIFA, and is not a duplicate of, or a proposal already under consideration by NIFA from the same submitter.
- Do all attachments comply with the requirements of Part III, 3.1 (no type restrictions, no file name restrictions, and not password protected)?

B. Evaluation Criteria

We will use the evaluation criteria below to conduct a review of your response to this RFA:

Standard Projects and Coordination Network Projects

1. **Conceptual adequacy (20 points)**
Application clearly states objectives that are achievable and budget.
2. **Design (30 points)**
The application's methodology and analysis are sound and effectively combine research and extension.

Planning

USDA – NIFA – Farm of the Future

Opportunity Number:	USDA-NIFA-OP-008501
Application Deadline:	Oct. 15, 2021
Award Amount:	\$3,936,000
Number of Awards:	1
Cost Sharing:	Not Required.
Project Period:	36-48 months
Project Start:	Approximately no later than September 30, 2022.
Project Types:	Integrated Project: research, extension, and education. Must include at least 2
Grant Type:	Standard grant only.
Margins:	At least 1-inch
Font:	Font not specified, but no smaller than 12-pt.
File Format:	NIFA REQUIRES that attachments be in .pdf
File Name Restrictions:	File names of .pdf attachments must be limited to 50 characters, may not include special characters (e.g., &, -, *, %, /, #), periods (.), blank spaces or accent marks, and must be unique (i.e., no other attachment may have the same file name). An underscore (example: my_Attached_File.pdf) may be used to separate a file name.
File Protections:	The pdf attachment must NOT be password protected.

USDA - NIFA Application Support Templates: <https://nifa.usda.gov/resource/application-support-templates>

Purpose and Priorities

The Farm of the Future under assistance listing 10.230 will integrate advances in precision agriculture, smart automation, resilient agricultural practices, socioeconomics, and plant and animal performance. The site will develop data-driven solutions by combining information to improve productivity, sustainability, and food security.

Evaluation Process and Criteria

Process

Written evaluation consists of two levels of assessment:

- How well (strengths and weaknesses) has the applicant address each evaluation criterion? (see below)
- What is the overall likelihood that the project will have significant outcomes?

Reviewers discuss applications with other reviewers and come to a consensus on the final rating and ranking of each proposal.

Evaluation Criteria for Farm of the Future Program

In priority order of importance:

Rationale and Significance

- Assesses the likelihood that the project will integrate:
 - precision agriculture,
 - smart automation,
 - resilient agricultural practices,
 - applied socioeconomics, and
 - improved crop varieties from advanced genomics and phenotyping.

Objectives and Approach

Evaluation factors include:

- assessment of approach for blending research, education and extension expertise and other outreach
- implementation approaches to address principal objectives

The extent the proposal considers the potential costs of a proposed solution and describe how it can be scaled to be sustainable in the short term and long term will be considered in developing the objectives and approach.

Project feasibility and probability of success will be evaluated.

Planning

Timeline



Planning

Timeline – Funding Agencies and Foundations

Letter of Intent (LOI), Preproposal, or White Paper

- If required

Full Proposal

- If an LOI, Preproposal, or White Paper is required, the full proposal may be by invitation only

Date and Time

- Allow yourself at least 8 weeks of time between starting the proposal and the deadline.
- The time due is either the agency's local time (usually Eastern) or the applicant institution's local time.
- **You should never, ever submit at the last minute.** People are more likely to overlook mistakes that cause the proposal to be rejected.

Timeline – Sponsored Research Services (SRS)

SRS website: <https://srs.tamu.edu>

Notify SRS of your intent to submit a proposal – ASAP

Administrative parts of the proposal – 5 business days prior to sponsor deadline

Technical parts of the proposal – no later than one business day prior to sponsor deadline

- Must be in final format (usually PDF)

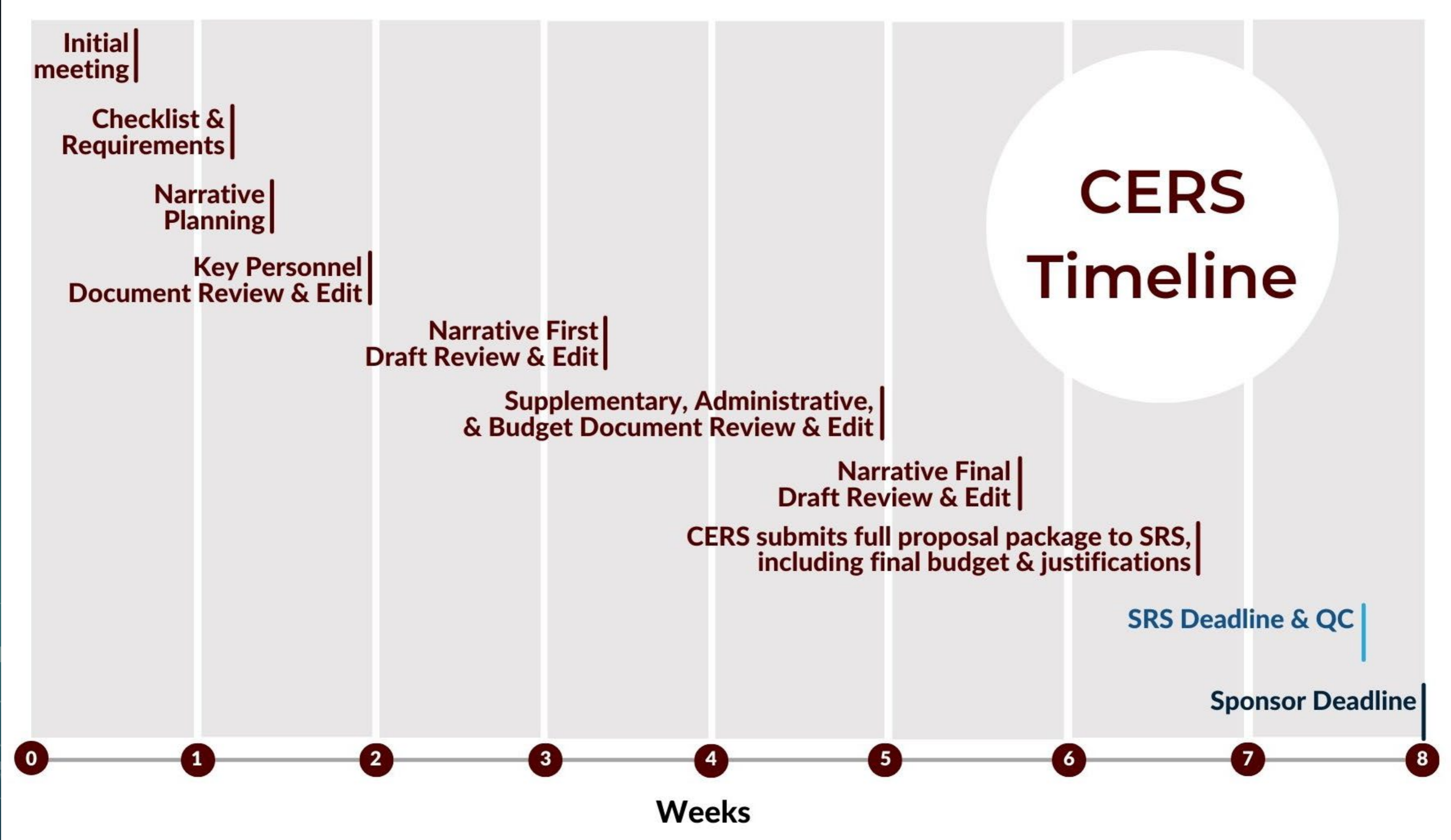
Quality Check

- All proposals submitted in final format to SRS by the deadline will receive a complete quality review of the entire proposal

Deadline

- The SRS deadline may vary from the sponsor deadline. Be sure to confirm this.
- Per Texas A&M University System policy, SRS should always be the one to submit the final proposal to the sponsor.

Planning



The background features a dark teal gradient with abstract network-like structures. These structures consist of interconnected nodes and lines, with some nodes appearing as bright, glowing spheres. The overall aesthetic is modern and technological.

Questions?

Writing



**The first
draft
always
stinks.**

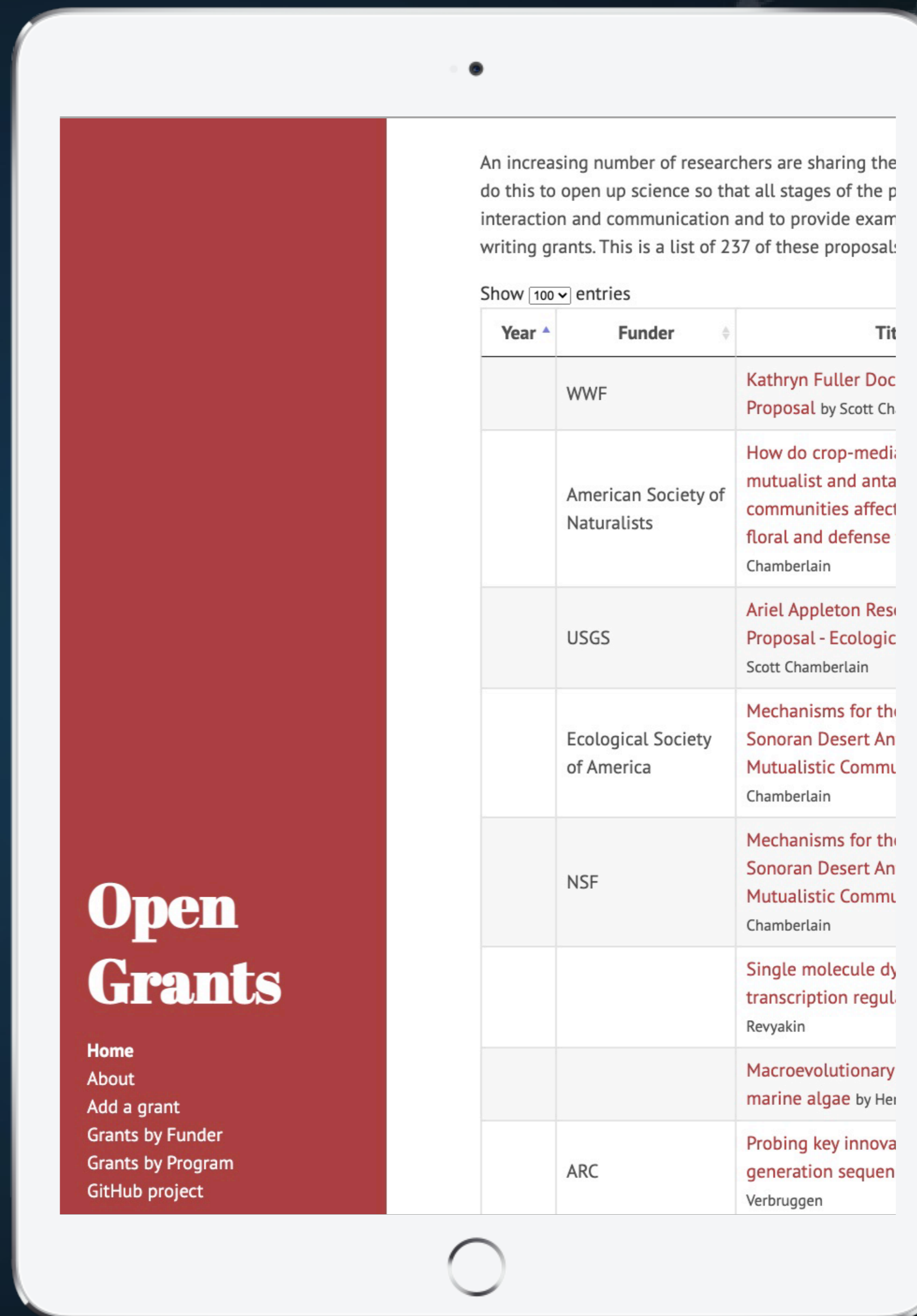
Resources – Writing Help

- CERS
- Texas A&M Writing Center:
 - <https://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Writing-Speaking-Guides/Alphabetical-List-of-Guides/Professional-Writing/Proposals>
- Texas A&M Library:
 - <https://library.tamu.edu>
- Templates: Funding Agencies, SRS, & CERS
- Grant writing tips from funding agencies:
 - USDA-NIFA: <https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/General-Grant-Writing-Tips-for-Success.pdf>
 - NIH: <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/how-to-apply-application-guide/format-and-write/write-your-application.htm>
 - EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/ports-initiative/tips-successful-grant-application>
 - NSF: <https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1998/nsf9891/nsf9891.htm>
 - NOAA: <https://coast.noaa.gov/funding/resources-tips.html>
- Nature Journal article, “Secrets to writing a winning grant”
 - <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03914-5>

Texas A&M AgriLife Research & CERS do not require the use of these resources, nor endorse or guarantee the quality of these resources.

Read Previous Proposals

www.ogrants.org



Resources – Writing Tools

Organizing Your Ideas

- Message Box:
 - <https://www.compasscicomm.org/leadership-development/the-message-box/>
- Xmind
 - <https://www.xmind.net>

Proofreading & Basic Editing

- PerfectIt
 - <https://intelligentediting.com>
- HemingwayApp
 - <https://hemingwayapp.com>
- Grammarly
 - <https://www.grammarly.com>

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Writing – Common Mistakes

- **Not reading the full RFP**
 - Not following instructions
 - Missing requirements
 - Missing the point and purpose of the funding opportunity
- Trying to accomplish too much or too little within the budget and project period
- Recycling old proposals
- Filling every page with text
- Submitting at the last moment
- Using links
- Spelling and grammar mistakes
- Repetitiveness
- Use of jargon
- Overuse of acronyms
- Wordiness

Writing – Wordiness

Before

There is currently a lively, ongoing controversy among many sociologists and other professionals who study human nature : theories are being spun and arguments are being conducted among them about what it means that so many young people—and older people, for that matter—who live in our society today are so very interested in stories about zombies.

After

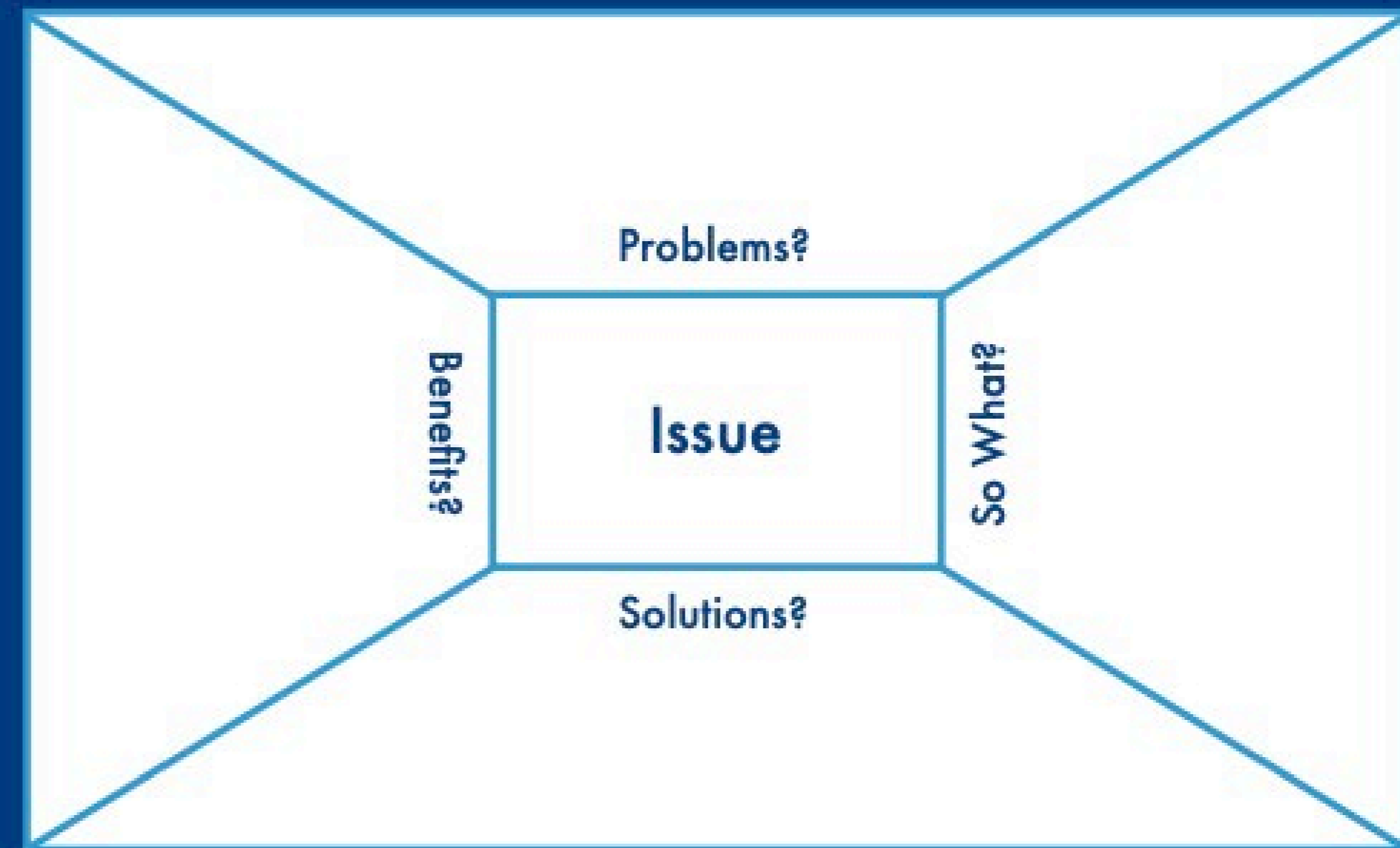
A lively societal debate rages among the human sciences. The contentious issue is: why are so many people fascinated by zombie fiction?

Organize Your Message

Learn more about The Message Box at
<https://www.compassscicomm.org/>

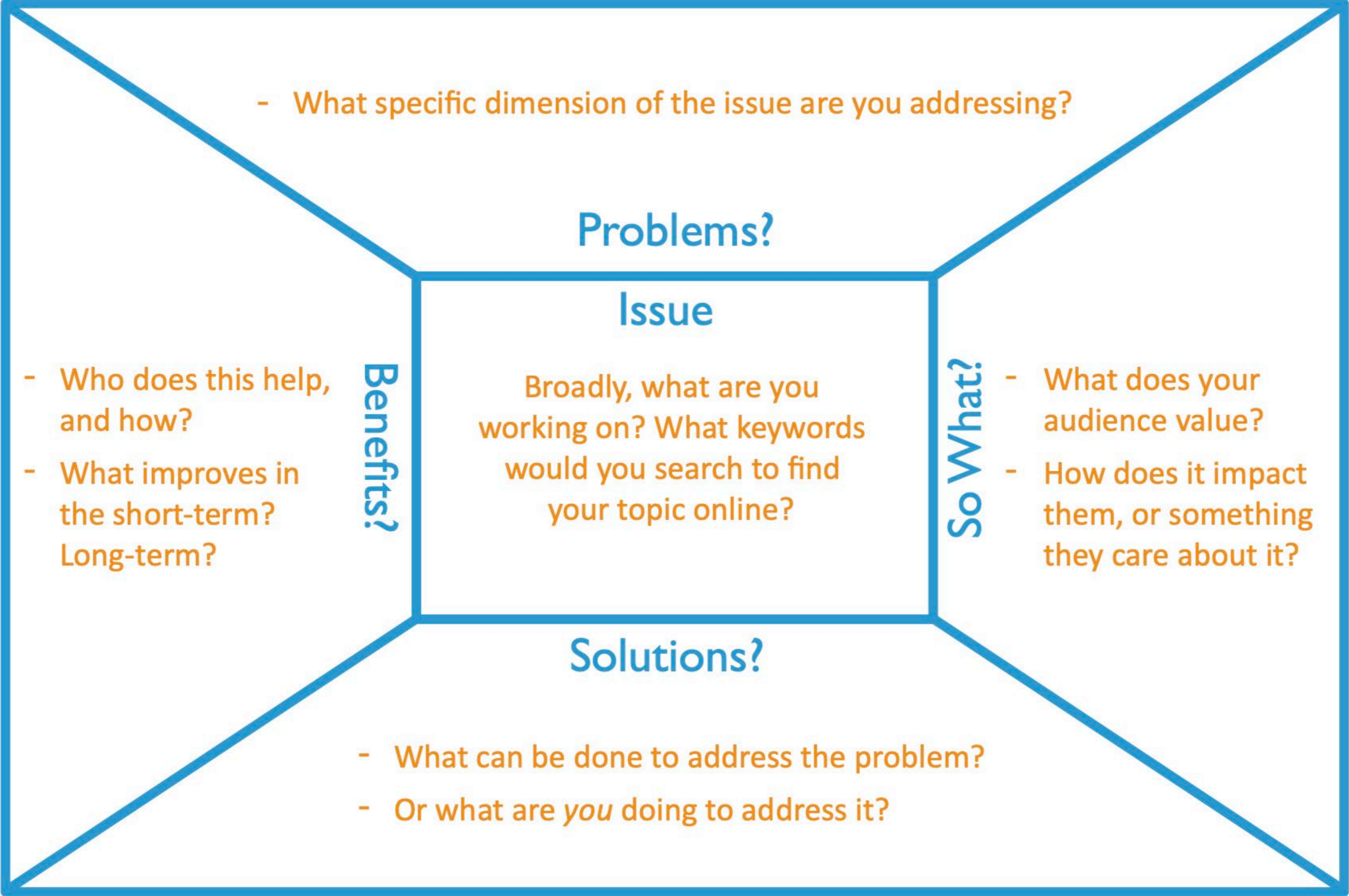
The Message Box Workbook

Communicating Your Science Effectively

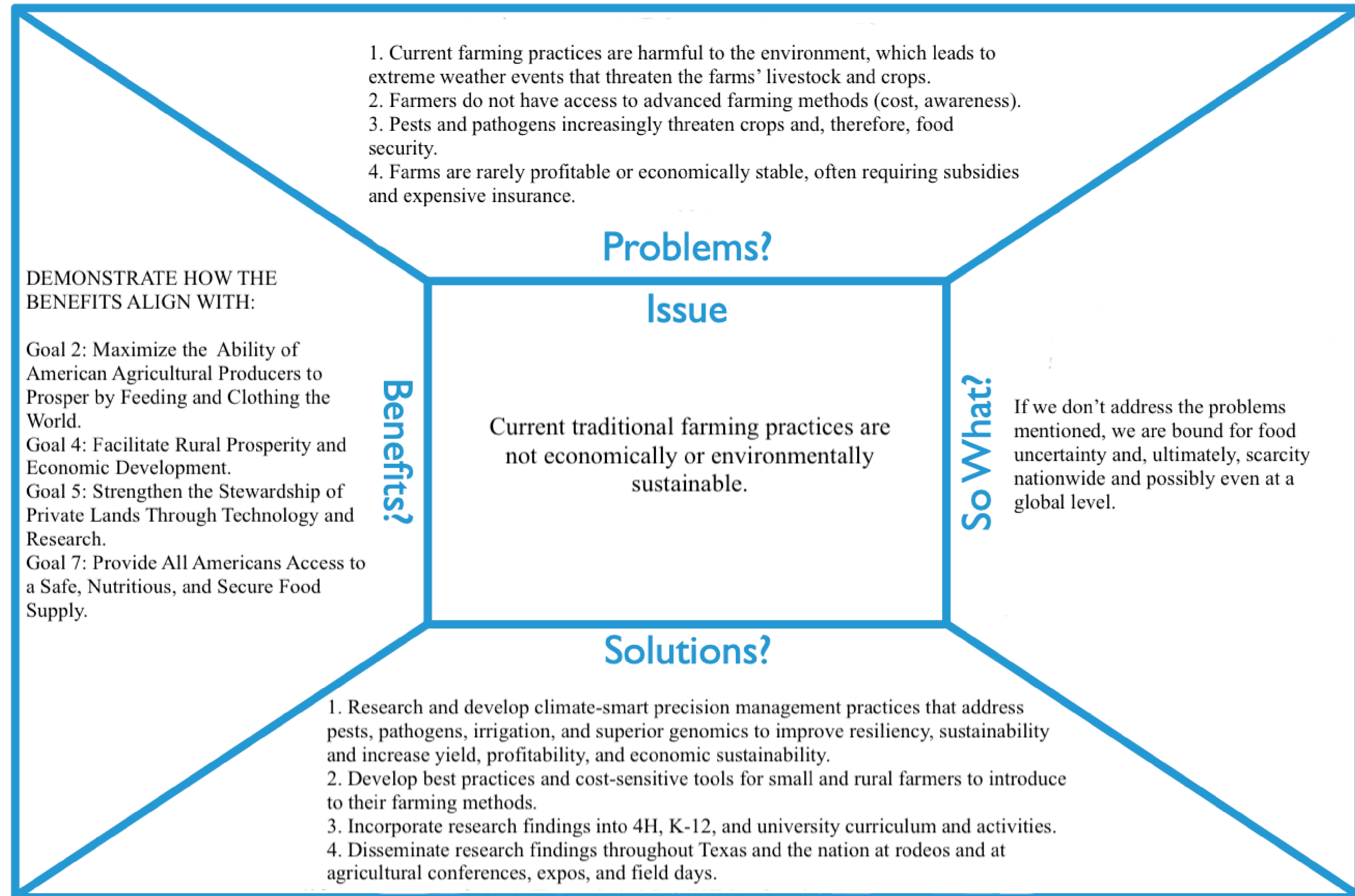


Message Box Method

Audience: Who is impacted by this? Who can change this? Who cares about this?



Audience: USDA reviewers: research, education, extension, and other subject matter experts



Persuasive Structure

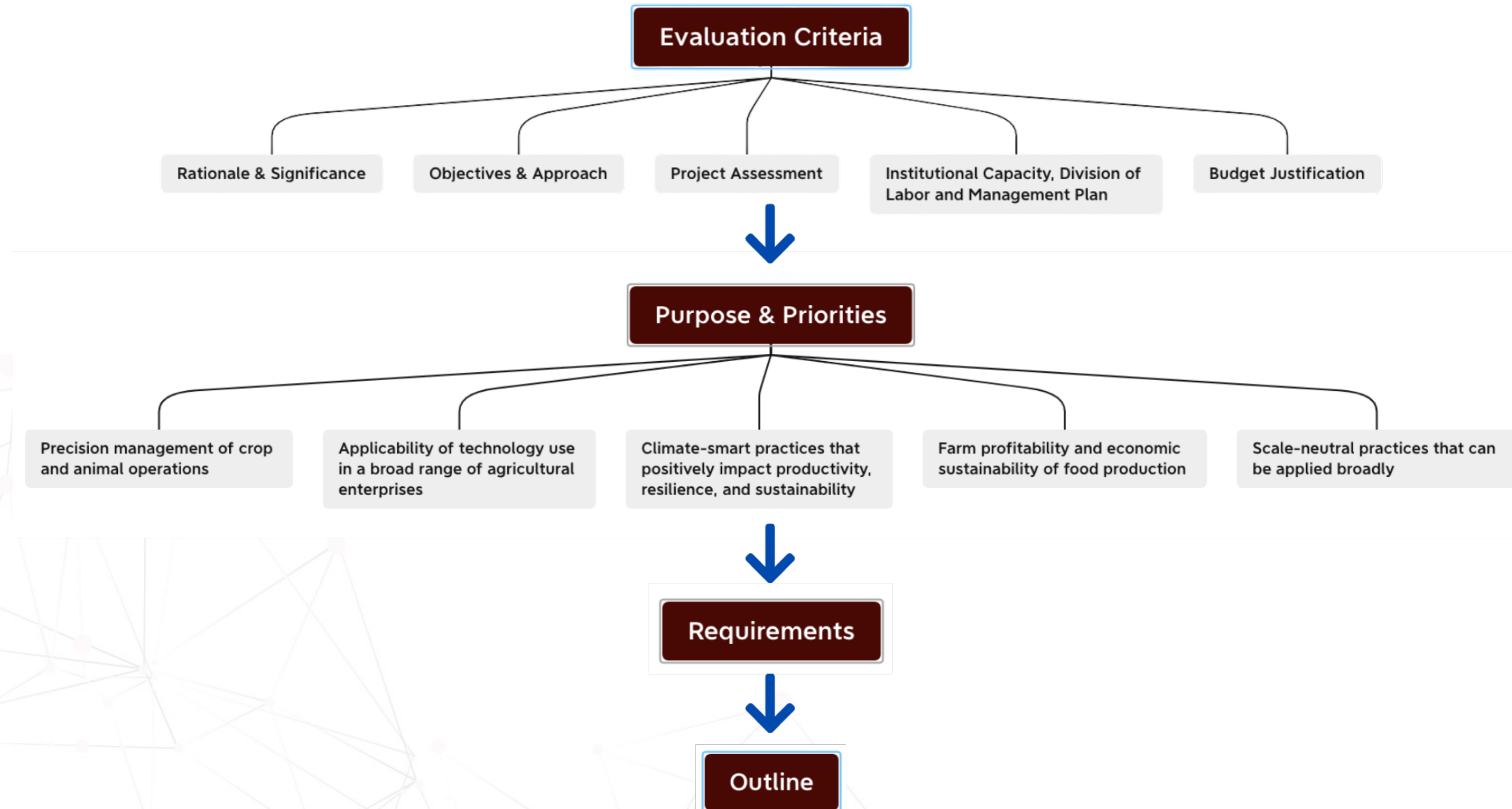
GOALS: 1) Get the reviewer excited to read the full proposal

2) Get the reviewer's recommendation for funding

In the Project Summary and Introduction section of the Project Narrative:

- What's Wrong? – Issue
- Why is that Happening? – Problems
- Why Should Anyone Care? – So What?
 - **MAKE IT PERSONAL**
 - **MAKE IT URGENT**
 - **Background**
- What are you going to do about it? – Solutions (NSF – Intellectual Merit)
 - Compare Background & similar projects to your proposed project demonstrating the superiority of your ideas - verbally and visually.
- And what will that accomplish? – Benefits (NSF – Broader Impact)

Writing – Outline Planning Process



Writing – Scope & Sequence (a.k.a. the Outline)

- Introduction
 - Page 1: Issue, Problems, So What
 - Page 2+: Background, Solutions, Benefits
- Rationale & Significance
 - Must fit program priorities
 - Include how your project meets the sponsor's strategic plan goals if possible.
- Objectives & Approach
 - Specific objectives, methods, and work plan
 - Detailed analysis, educational program delivery, instructional materials development, etc.
- Detailed activities in chronological order by project year
- Potential pitfalls and how to address them
- Summary of previous work
 - What others have tried and the results
 - Successes of our PIs
- Project Timeline
 - Overview of Activities & Milestones by project year
- Logic Model (see NIFA template)

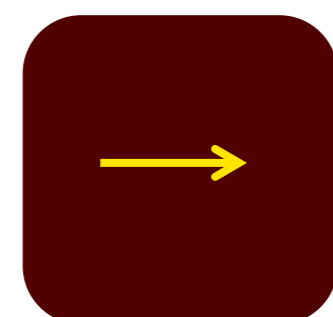
Visually Easy to Read

- White Space
 - Break up paragraphs into 5-6 sentences each
 - Space between paragraphs
 - Graphics
- Citations: inline vs. numbered
 - American Chemical society (ACS) Style Guide
 - <https://tamu.libguides.com/citingandwriting>

The background features a dark teal gradient with abstract network diagrams. These diagrams consist of interconnected nodes and lines, with some nodes highlighted in a bright, glowing green. The network structures are positioned in the top right and bottom left corners of the frame.

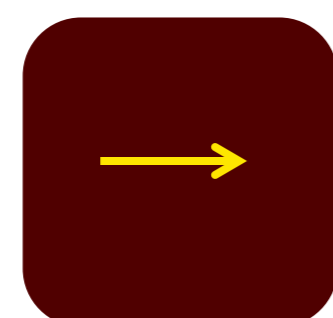
Questions?

AgriLife CERS Contacts



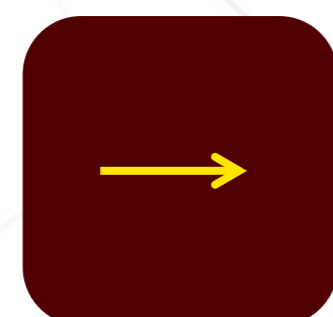
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