

## FY2009 Value-Added Producer Grant Program / CFDA 10.352 Planning Grant Eligibility Checklist

Application ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes	No	N/A	Requirement
			<p><b>General</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Paper Application <i>Submission</i> Date: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>OR</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Grants.gov Electronic Application <i>Receipt</i> Date: _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>FOR</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> General Funds Competition <i>OR</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Reserved Funds Competition</p> <p style="margin-left: 150px;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Beginning Farmer or Rancher  <input type="checkbox"/> Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher  <input type="checkbox"/> Mid Tier Value Chain Project                      (additional documentation requirements, see VAPG Reserved Funding Options Link on main website:  <a href="http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm">http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm</a>)                 </p>
			<p>Application Meets Submission Deadline for</p> <p>General Funds –</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Paper <i>Postmark and Ship Overnight</i> Deadline: 11/30/2009</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Electronic <i>Receipt</i> Deadline: 11/30/2009</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>OR</i></p> <p>Reserved Funds –</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Paper <i>Postmark and Ship Overnight</i> Deadline: 11/30/2009</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">Electronic <i>Receipt</i> Deadline: 11/30/2009</p> <p>[NOTE: If the paper application is received after the deadline, you must use the tracking number or postmark date to verify that the paper application was shipped by the deadline – and include a printout with the file.]</p>
			<p>If applicant currently has a VAPG, it must be completed <i>prior</i> to 11/30/2009.</p> <p>[NOTE: This information must be determined from the Agency’s records, not the application.]</p>
			<p>Applicant has not already received a planning grant for this project.</p> <p>[NOTE: This information must be determined from the Agency’s records, not the application.]</p>

Yes	No	N/A	Requirement
			Applicant does not have an outstanding judgment obtained by the United States in a Federal Court. [NOTE: Use the system available in your state and include printout.]
			Applicant is not an excluded party. [NOTE: Check CAIVRS and include printout.]
<b>SF-424 APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>			
			Legal name of applicant
			Applicant's address or other contact information
			Applicant's DUNS number (required of <i>all</i> applicant types)
			Employer Identification Number where applicable; or a Social Security Number if an individual or steering committee.
			Signature of authorized representative. [NOTE: Electronic submissions will have the name printed rather than a signature.]
<b>SF-424A BUDGET INFORMATION – NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS</b> (If a Simplified Application requesting less than \$50k grant, this form is not required at application, but if selected for award will be required as part of the conditions of the award.)			
			At least one number is on the form
<b>SF-424B ASSURANCES – NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS</b> (If a Simplified Application requesting less than \$50k grant, this form is not required at application, but if selected for award will be required as part of the conditions of the award.)			
			Signature of authorized representative [NOTE: Electronic submissions will have the name printed rather than a signature.]
			Name of applicant organization.
<b>Title Page</b> (limited to one page) (If a Simplified Application requesting less than \$50k grant, this form is not required at application, but if selected for award will be required as part of the conditions of the award.)			
			Title of project
<b>Table of Contents</b>			
			Detailed, with at least one page number on the page
<b>Executive Summary</b> (limited to one page) Should briefly describe the project, including goals, tasks to be completed, and other relevant information that provides a general overview of the project. Applicants should specify whether they intend to compete in the General Funds or one of the Reserved Funds competitions.			
			Statement saying funds are requested for planning purposes
			Statement indicating the amount of grant funds requested

Yes	No	N/A	Requirement
			<p><b>Applicant Eligibility</b></p> <p>Applicant, Product, and Purpose Eligibility responses are limited to a total of six pages combined. <i>Applicant eligibility</i> should be assessed by evaluating the responses provided by the applicant to prompts in the <b>NOFA section IV (B)(7)(i)</b>. The responses to the prompts should indicate that the applicant meets all eligibility criteria for one of the four eligible applicant types.</p>
			<p>Applicant meets the definition of <b>Independent Producer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) 100 percent of the owners of the applicant organization meet the definition of an Independent (Agricultural) Producer;</li> <li>(2) these owners <b>currently own and produce</b> more than 50 percent of the raw commodity that will be used for the Value-Added product; and</li> <li>(3) the product will be owned by the Independent Producers from its raw commodity state through the production of the Value-Added product during the Project.</li> </ul> <p>[Note: Producers who produce the agricultural commodity under contract for another entity but do not own the product produced are not Independent Producers.]</p>
			<p>Applicant meets the definition of <b>Agriculture Producer Group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) the mission of the applicant includes working on behalf of Independent Producers;</li> <li>(2) the <b>majority</b> of the applicant's membership AND board of directors meet the definition of Independent Producer;</li> <li>(3) an identification of the Independent Producers on whose behalf the work will be done is included in the application;</li> <li>(4) these Independent Producers <b>currently own and produce</b> more than 50 percent of the raw commodity that will be used for the Value-Added product; AND</li> <li>(5) the product will be owned by the Independent Producers from its raw commodity state through the production of the Value-Added product during the Project.</li> </ul>
			<p>Applicant meets the definition of <b>Farmer or Rancher Cooperative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) the applicant references the business' good standing as a cooperative in its state of incorporation;</li> <li>(2) the cooperative is 100 percent owned and controlled by farmers or ranchers and the benefits are derived and distributed equitably on the basis of use by each of the farmer or rancher owners;</li> <li>(3) if the applicant is applying on behalf of only a portion of its membership, that portion is identified and the applicant explains how all members in this portion of its membership meet the definition of an Independent Producer;</li> <li>(4) these Independent Producers <b>currently own and produce</b> more than 50 percent of the raw commodity that will be used for the Value-Added product; AND</li> <li>(5) the product will be owned by the Independent Producers from its raw commodity state through the production of the Value-Added product during the Project.</li> </ul> <p>[Note: It is the Agency's position that if a cooperative is 100% owned and controlled by agricultural harvesters (fishermen, loggers), it is eligible only as an Independent Producer and not as a farmer or rancher cooperative.]</p>

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			<p>Applicant meets the definition of <b>Majority-Controlled Producer-Based Business Venture</b></p> <p>(1) the <b>majority of the number of owners</b> are Independent Producers;</p> <p>(2) the <b>majority of the financial interest</b> belongs to Independent Producers;</p> <p>(3) the <b>majority of the voting interest</b> belongs to Independent Producers on the governing board;</p> <p>(4) the Independent Producers <b>currently own and produce</b> more than 50 percent of the raw commodity that will be used for the Value-Added product; AND</p> <p>(5) the product will be owned by the Independent Producers from its raw commodity state through the production of the Value-Added product during the Project.</p> <p>[Note: Only 10 percent of available funds will be awarded to eligible applicants in this category.]</p>
			<p><b>Reserved Funds: Additional Eligibility Requirements</b></p> <p>Ten percent of the available General Funds are reserved for Beginning Farmers and Ranchers, or Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers; and ten percent of the available General Funds are reserved for Mid-Tier Value Chain Projects. Instead of competing in the General Funds competition, an applicant may select to compete in one of the reserved funds categories. In accordance with NOFA section IV(B)(7)(iv), <i>additional</i> eligibility criteria apply to Reserved Funds categories, as per below. The following <i>additional</i> documentation required for Reserved Funds applications will not count towards the page limitations imposed on the balance of the proposal.</p>
			<p>The application clearly states that the applicant wishes to compete in one of the following categories for reserved funding:</p> <p>___ Beginning Farmer or Rancher</p> <p>___ Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher</p> <p>___ Mid Tier Value Chain Project</p>

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			<p>For applicants applying for Reserved Funds for Beginning Farmer or Rancher, the application demonstrates that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) all owners have operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 years;</li> <li>(b) all owners materially and substantially participate in the operation of a farm or ranch; and</li> <li>(c) all owners provide substantial day-to-day labor and management of a farm or ranch.</li> </ul> <p>[Note: A description from the individual owner(s) of the applicant organization addressing each qualifying element in the definition above, including the length and nature of their operations experience and activities, along with one Form IRS 1040 (individual) or 1065 (partnership/LLC) from the previous 10 years that shows the individual owner(s) of the applicant organization did not file a Schedule F (individual) or a K1 (partnership/LLC) for farm income, is sufficient. Applicants should redact any personally identifiable information, such as a social security number. Or, a letter from a certified public accountant or attorney certifying the applicant organization meets the eligibility requirements may be used in lieu of IRS tax forms. The applicant’s past experience and activity may or may not be directly associated with the specific VAPG applicant farm or ranch that is the subject of the VAPG application. If the applicant has more than 10 years of farm or ranch operations experience on any farm or ranch, they will not be eligible to apply as a Beginning Farmer or Rancher. Also, the Beginning Farmer or Rancher must currently own and produce more than 50% of the agricultural commodity to which value will be added.]</p>

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			<p>For applicants applying for Reserved Funds for Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher, the application demonstrates that the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) is a <i>person</i> that is directly engaged in farming or ranching or an <i>entity</i> solely owned by individuals who are directly engaged in farming or ranching; that</li> <li>(b) as a farmer or rancher person or entity, is a member of a socially disadvantaged group, whose members have been subjected to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group, without regard to their individual qualities; and</li> <li>(c) in the event that there are multiple farmer or rancher owners of the applicant organization, at least 51% of the owners are members of said socially disadvantaged group.</li> </ul> <p>[Note: A description of the applicant’s farm or ranch ownership structure and demographic profile that indicates membership in a socially disadvantaged group that has been subjected to racial, ethnic or gender prejudice; including identifying the total number of owners of the applicant organization, as well as the number of owners that identify themselves as a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher; along with a self-certification statement from the individual owner(s) of the applicant organization evidencing their membership in said socially disadvantaged group, is sufficient. A self-certification form is available on the VAPG main website.]</p>

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			<p>For applicants applying for Reserved Funds for Mid-Tier Value Chain projects, the application must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) demonstrate that the <i>project</i> proposes development of a <i>Local or Regional Supply Network</i> of interconnected food-related business enterprises<sup>1</sup> through which food products move from production through consumption in a local or regional area of the USA, including a description of the network, its component members, and its purpose;</li> <li>(b) describe at least two alliances, linkages or partnerships within the value chain that link independent producers with businesses and cooperatives that market Value-Added Agricultural Products in a manner that benefits Small or Medium-Sized farms or ranches structured as a Family Farm, including the names of the parties and the nature of their collaboration;</li> <li>(c) demonstrate how the project, due to the manner in which the VA product is marketed, will increase the profitability and competitiveness of at least two <i>eligible</i> Small or Medium-Sized Farms or Ranches that are structured as a Family Farm<sup>2</sup> ;</li> <li>(d) document that the eligible <i>APG/Coop/MCPBBV applicant organization</i> has obtained at least one agreement with another member of the supply network that is engaged in the value chain on a marketing strategy; OR that the eligible <i>Independent Producer applicant organization</i> has obtained at least one agreement from an <i>eligible</i> APG/COOP/MCPBBV engaged in the value-chain on a marketing strategy<sup>3</sup>;</li> <li>(e) demonstrate that the <i>applicant</i> currently owns and produces more than 50% of the raw agricultural commodity that will be used for the value-added product that is the subject of the proposal*; AND</li> <li>(f) demonstrate that the project will result in an increase in customer base and an increase in revenue returns to the <i>applicant producers</i> supplying the majority of the raw agricultural commodity for the project.</li> </ul> <p>[Note 1: Examples of food-related business enterprises are Agricultural Producers, processors, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, consumers, and entities that organize or provide technical assistance for development of such networks.]</p> <p>[Note 2: The application should include sufficient documentation to confirm that the benefitting Small-Medium <i>Family</i> Farms or Ranches meet these definitions in the NOFA.]</p> <p>[Note 3: For Planning Grants, examples of agreements may include letters of commitment or intent to partner on marketing, distribution or processing; and should include the names of the parties with a description of the nature of their collaboration. Independent Producer applicants must provide documentation to confirm that the APG/Coop/MCPBBV <i>partnering entity</i> meets program eligibility definitions in 7 CFR 4284.3. In this context, the applicant IP's APG/COOP/MCPBBV <i>partnering entity</i> does not need to supply any of the raw agricultural commodity for the project.]</p> <p>[Note *: The Agency recognizes that, in a supply chain network, a variety of raw agricultural commodity and value-added product ownership and transfer arrangements may be necessary. So, applicant ownership of the raw agricultural commodity and value-added product from raw through value-added is not required, as long as the proposal can demonstrate an increase in customer base and an increase in revenue returns to the applicant producers supplying the majority of the raw agricultural commodity for the project.]</p>

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			<p><b>Product Eligibility</b></p> <p>Applicant, Product, and Purpose Eligibility responses are limited to a total of six pages combined. <i>Product eligibility</i> should be assessed by evaluating the responses provided by the applicant to prompts in the <b>NOFA section IV (B)(7)(ii)</b>. The responses to the prompts should indicate that the value-added product meets all product eligibility criteria resulting from one of the following value-added methodologies in the program for planning grants, as defined below.</p> <p>Applications that propose <b>ONLY</b> branding, packaging or other similar means of product differentiation are not eligible in any category. However, applications may propose branding, packaging, or other product differentiation as a component of an otherwise eligible project.</p>
			<p>The Value-Added product to be marketed meets category 1 (change in physical state):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) application states the raw commodity that will be used;</li> <li>(2) application demonstrates that the change in physical state or form of the product enhances its value;</li> <li>(3) application states the Value-Added product that will be marketed; AND AS A RESULT,</li> <li>(4) the application demonstrates that the customer base for the agricultural commodity or product is expanded, AND a resulting increase in revenue to the agricultural producer is achieved.</li> </ol>
			<p>The Value-Added product to be marketed meets category 3 (<i>physical segregation</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) application states the raw commodity that will be used;</li> <li>(2) application demonstrates how the physical segregation of the commodity enhances its value;</li> <li>(3) application states the Value-Added product that will be marketed; AND AS A RESULT,</li> <li>(4) application demonstrates that the customer base for the agricultural commodity or product is expanded, AND a resulting increase in revenue to the agricultural producer is achieved.</li> </ol> <p>[NOTE: <i>Physical segregation</i> is achieved by ensuring that a physical barrier (i.e. distance or a structure) separates the commodity from other varieties of the same commodity on the same farm during <i>production</i> and <i>harvesting</i>, that the commodity will continue to be separated during <i>processing</i>, and that the Value-Added product produced will be separated from similar products during <i>marketing</i>.]</p>

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			<p>The Value-Added product to be marketed meets category 4 (an agricultural commodity or product that is a source of farm- or ranch-based renewable energy, including E-85 fuel):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) application states the raw agricultural commodity that will be used to produce renewable energy;</li> <li>(2) application explains the process used to generate renewable energy;</li> <li>(3) application demonstrates that the renewable energy will be generated on a farm or ranch owned or leased by the owners of the applicant organization; AND AS A RESULT,</li> <li>(4) application demonstrates that the customer base for the agricultural commodity or product is expanded, AND a resulting increase in revenue to the agricultural producer is achieved.</li> </ol> <p>[NOTE 1: For renewable energy produced on-farm from an agricultural commodity or product, documentation for expansion of customer base may include a practice known as net metering, or reserving all or a portion of the energy generated for on-farm use; and documentation for calculating increased revenue returns to the producer-owner(s) may include the savings that results from use of the on-farm generated renewable energy and/or from the sale of excess renewable energy and its associated attributes such as RECs/GHG Emission Reductions/Offsets).]</p> <p>-----</p> <p>[NOTE 2: For non-agricultural commodity based renewable energy sources on-farm: Please check an appropriate box below when the value-added product meets one of the other Product Eligibility categories, but includes the use of ___ solar, ___ wind, ___ geothermal or ___ hydro in the production of the value-added product. It is the Agency's position that on-farm generation of energy through wind, solar, geothermal and hydro are eligible ONLY when they are used in the production of an eligible value-added product that is the subject of an otherwise eligible VAPG application. Wind, solar, geothermal and hydro are not eligible if they are simply converted to energy/electricity and sold off the farm.]</p>

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			<p>The Value-Added product to be marketed meets category 5 (a locally produced agricultural food product that is raised, produced, and distributed in the locality or region in which the final product is marketed, so that the total distance that the product is transported is less than 400 miles from the origin of the product; or within the State in which the product is produced.):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) application states the raw agricultural food commodity that will be used;</li> <li>(2) application explains the process used to add value, and/or documents and quantifies how local sales and marketing adds value to the commodity or product (explain increased profits/lower costs due to local marketing, etc.);</li> <li>(3) application describes the final value-added agricultural food commodity or product (for example, conventional or organic local lettuce to be sold to local schools);</li> <li>(4) application indicates that 100% of the agricultural food commodity or product that is raised or produced will be marketed and distributed within 400 miles of the farm that produced the commodity, or within the same state as that farm; AND AS A RESULT,</li> <li>(5) application demonstrates that the customer base for the agricultural commodity or product is expanded, AND a resulting increase in revenue to the agricultural producer is achieved.</li> </ol> <p>[Note: Applications must document and quantify how local sales and marketing results in added value to the product. For example, specific local grapes with characteristics attributable to the growing area will be sold to a processor that will produce a select/vintage local wine; or local corn advertised and sold at a premium as a fresher locally-produced alternative to non-local produce.]</p>
<b>Purpose Eligibility</b>			<p>Applicant, Product, and Purpose Eligibility responses are limited to a total of six pages combined. The <i>Purpose eligibility</i> assessment should be based on the responses to the prompts in NOFA section IV(B)(7)(iii), as well as the evaluation of the budget and work plan submitted in response to that Proposal Evaluation Criterion to determine the eligibility of the use of funds.</p>
			<p>Application specifies that grant funds will be used for planning activities, and requests \$100,000 or less in grant funds.</p> <p>[NOTE: If there is a discrepancy in the amount requested, use the amount from the Work Plan/Budget.]</p>
			<p>The proposed project consists of eligible planning activities directly related to the processing and/or marketing of a Value-Added product, as defined in NOFA section IV(E)(1). Working Capital activities are not eligible.</p>
<b>Goals of the Project</b>			<p><b>PROPOSAL NARRATIVE – Limited to 15 pages total, including Goals of the Project, Performance Evaluation Criteria, and Proposal Evaluation Criteria.</b> (If a Simplified Application requesting less than \$50k grant, the Goals of the Project information is not required at application, but if selected for award will be required as part of the conditions of the award.)</p>
			Statement indicating the goals of the project
			Explanation of how the market will be expanded through the project

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			Explanation of the degree to which incremental revenue will accrue to the benefit of the producer(s)
<b>Performance Evaluation Criterion</b>			(If a Simplified Application requesting less than \$50k grant, this Performance Evaluation Criterion is not required at application, but if selected for award will be required as part of the conditions of the award.)
			At least one criterion by which the applicant's performance can be evaluated
<b>Proposal Evaluation Criteria</b>			Each of the proposal evaluation criteria in NOFA section V.A.1 must be addressed in narrative form. Points are graduated for 8 of 10 categories and for the Administrator category. Lump sum points are awarded for Grant Amount requested and for Applicant Type Priority.
			Nature of the Proposed Venture (0-8)
			Qualifications of Those Doing the Work (0-8)
			Commitments and Support (0-5)
			Project Leadership (0-8)
			<p>Work Plan and Budget (0-8)</p> <p>(1) Budget presents a detailed breakdown of all estimated costs associated with the planning activities and allocates those costs among the listed tasks;</p> <p>(2) Source and use of grant and matching funds are specified in the budget, and are all related to the processing and/or marketing of the value-added product;</p> <p>(3) Matching funds will be spent at a rate equal to or greater than grant funds;</p> <p>(4) Time frame of budget is a maximum 36 months, scaled to complexity, with unique tasks for the first year, and any subsequent years;</p> <p>(5) Project Start Date Range is 6/1/2010 – 11/30/2010; and if applicant currently has a VAPG, it will be completed prior to 11/30/2009; AND</p> <p>(6) Project Period concludes not later than 11/30/2013.</p> <p>[NOTE: Any expenses associated with working capital activities or that involve a conflict of interest are considered ineligible.]</p>
			<p>Grant Amount Requested (0 or 5)</p> <p>[Note: The amount used must come from the work plan and budget.]</p>
			Project Cost per Owner-Producer (0-3)
			Business Management Capabilities (0-10)
			Sustainability and Economic Impact (0-15)
			<p>Applicant Type Priority for a Beginning Farmer or Rancher, a Socially Disadvantaged Farmer or Rancher, or an Operator of a Small or Medium-Sized Farm or Ranch that is Structured as a Family Farm (0 or 15)—see definitions in NOFA section I, Eligibility Checklists, and the VAPG main webpage.</p> <p>Documentation is required at time of application.</p>
			Administrator Points (maximum 5 points, but not to exceed 10% of the total points awarded for the other 10 criteria)
<b>Certification of Matching Funds</b>			
			Includes a statement that matching funds will be available at the same time as grant funds are anticipated being spent.

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			Statement that matching funds will be spent in advance of grant funding, such that for every dollar of grant funds advanced, not less than an equal amount of matching funds will have been expended prior to submitting the request for reimbursement.
<b>Verification of Matching Funds</b>			Documentation for all proposed matching funds is required at application, both cash and in-kind. Template letters for each type of matching funds are available at <a href="http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/verifymatch031407.htm">http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/verifymatch031407.htm</a> .
			Cash from the applicant is verified by a bank statement with an ending date within one month of the application submission and showing an ending balance equal to or greater than the amount of cash Matching Funds proposed.
			A line of credit from the applicant is verified by a signed letter from the lending institution verifying the amount available, the dates of availability of the funds within the grant period, and the purposes for which funds may be used.
			In-kind funds from the applicant are verified by a signed letter from the applicant verifying the goods or services to be donated, the dates when the goods and services will be donated within the grant period, and the value of the goods or services. [NOTE: Make sure that funds designated as in-kind from the applicant are truly in-kind donations and not cash contributions for applicant purchasing goods or services during the grant period. Also, check to make sure no conflict of interest exists, and that match does not include applicant time spent on FS or BP activities. Also, if an owner or employee of the applicant organization is personally donating goods or services, the contribution is considered a third-party in-kind contribution and must be verified as such.]
			Cash from a third-party is verified by a signed letter from that third-party verifying how much cash will be donated and the dates it will be donated within the grant period.
			In-kind funds from a third-party are verified by a signed letter from the third-party verifying the goods or services to be donated, the dates when the goods and services will be donated within the grant period, and the value of the goods or services.
			The proposed amount of matching funds equals at least 50 percent of the total project cost.
			All proposed matching funds will be contributed during the proposed time period of the grant.
			All proposed matching funds come from eligible sources and will be used for eligible planning grant purposes.
			All proposed matching funds appear to be correctly valued.

APPLICATION IS: (circle one)

ELIGIBLE

INELIGIBLE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name of person determining eligibility

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person determining eligibility

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date