



Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Secure Rural Schools Resource Advisory Committee (RAC)



Program Overview

- The Secure Rural Schools program provides critical funding for schools, roads, and other municipal services to more than 700 counties across the U.S. and Puerto Rico.
- Recently USDA announced it is issuing more than \$228 million toward this program.

- ✓Habitat restoration
- ✓School programs
- ✓Search and rescue efforts
- ✓Road work
- ✓Trail building
- ✓Community wildfire protection

Payments are divided into three district categories.



Distribution of Funds



Title I: Roads and Schools

- Benefit of public schools and public roads.
- States distribute to eligible counties.
- Ranging 30%-100 % for school programs.
- Funds must be passed through to local governmental entities for use at the county level.



Title II: Special Projects

- Federal agencies, State and local governments, private and nonprofit entities, and landowner.
- Protection, restoration and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitat, and other natural resource objectives.
- RACs must initiate (recommend) Title II projects by Sept 30th, 2025. Project funds must be obligated by Sept 30th, 2026.



Title III: County Projects

- Carry out activities under the Firewise Communities program.
- Reimburse the participating county for search and rescue and other emergency services..
- Cover training costs and equipment related to the emergency service.
- Develop and carry out community wildfire protection plan.

Title II Eligibility



Projects are considered for Title II funding if they make additional investments in, and create employment opportunities through:

- Improvement of existing infrastructure maintenance;
- Implementation of stewardship objectives that enhance forest ecosystems;
- Restoration and improvement of land health and water quality.
- Projects must comply with all applicable Federal laws and regulations.
- Projects must be consistent with the applicable resource management plan and with any watershed or subsequent plan developed pursuant to the resource management plan.

The funds may be used for projects that have broad-based support and with objectives that include:

- Road, trail, and infrastructure maintenance or obliteration;
- Soil productivity improvement;
- Forest ecosystem health improvements;
- Watershed restoration and maintenance;
- Wildlife and fish habitat restoration, maintenance, and improvement;
- Noxious and exotic weeds control.
- Native species re-establishment.

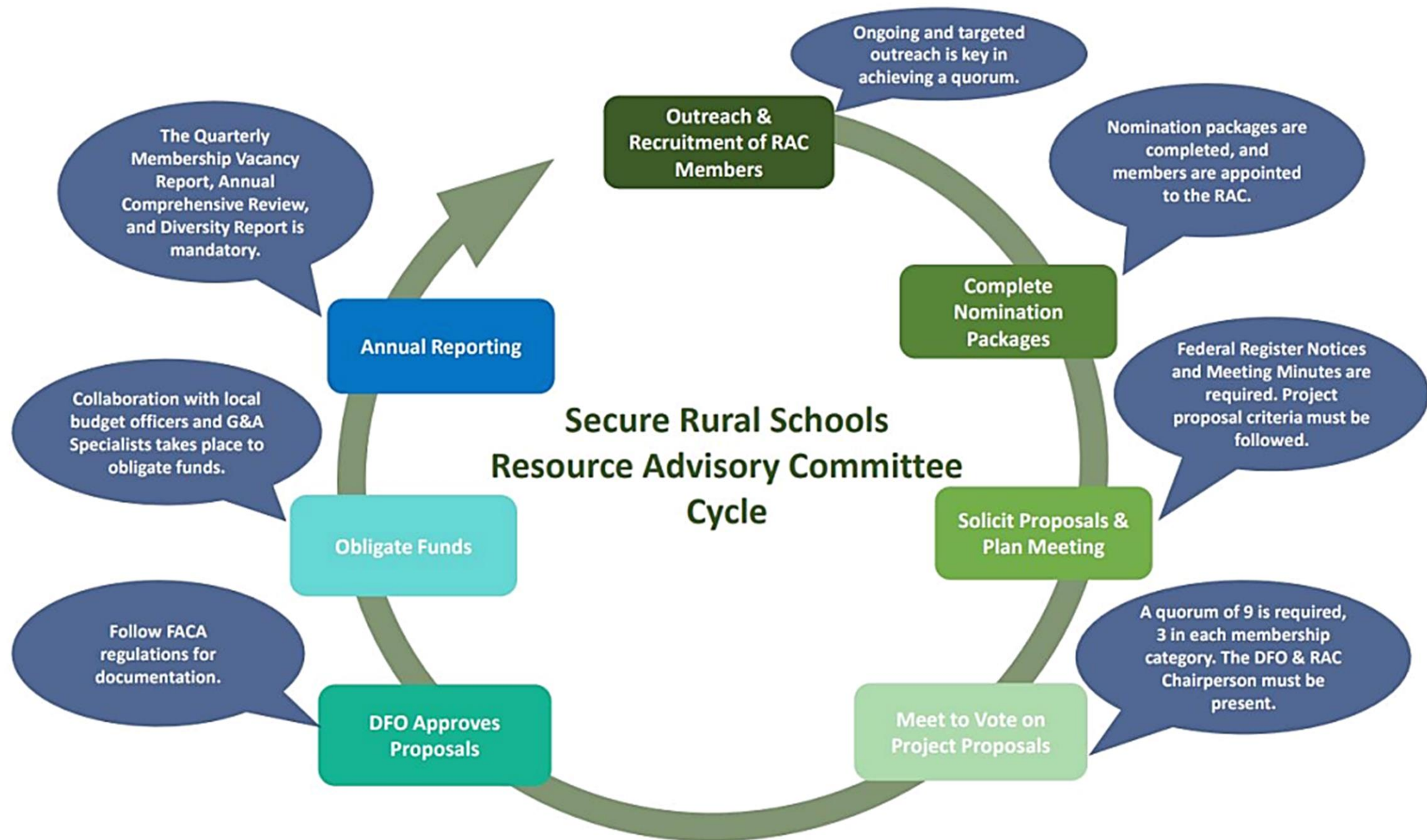
At least 50% of all project funds are to be used for projects that are primarily dedicated to road maintenance, decommissioning, or obliteration; or to restoration of streams and watersheds.

Eligible or not?



- Installing a septic tank on private property to improve residents' water quality
- Contracting YCC crew to conduct trail maintenance.
- Local Nordic ski club wants to purchase a vehicle and equipment to groom Nordic ski trails that cross NFS, city and county lands.
- Provide funds to local sheriff's department to provide patrols of NFS roads during hunting season

Secure Rural Schools Resource Advisory Committee Cycle



Outreach & Recruitment



- Every Resource Advisory Committee must have a quorum to vote on projects.
- Anywhere from 9-15 members, with a minimum of 3 members in each category who are voting.
- RACs with an approved composition waiver from the Secretary require a minimum of 9 members to be present at a meeting, with a minimum of 6 members to vote.
- A quorum of 6 members requires a representation of 2 members from each category.
- Members are required to live within the state(s) in which the committee has jurisdiction.

A

3



2

1. Organized labor or non-timber groups.
2. Developed outdoor recreation, off-highway vehicle users.
3. Energy and mineral development, or commercial or recreational fishing.
4. Commercial timber industry;
5. Federal grazing permits.

B

3



2

1. Nationally recognized environmental organizations;
2. Regionally or locally recognized environmental organizations;
3. Dispersed recreational activities;
4. Archaeological interests; or nationally or regionally recognized wild horse and burro interest groups, wildlife organizations, or watershed associations.

C

3



2

1. State elected office;
2. County or local elected office;
3. American Indian tribes
4. Area school officials or teachers; or affected public-at-large.

➤ 9-15 Members

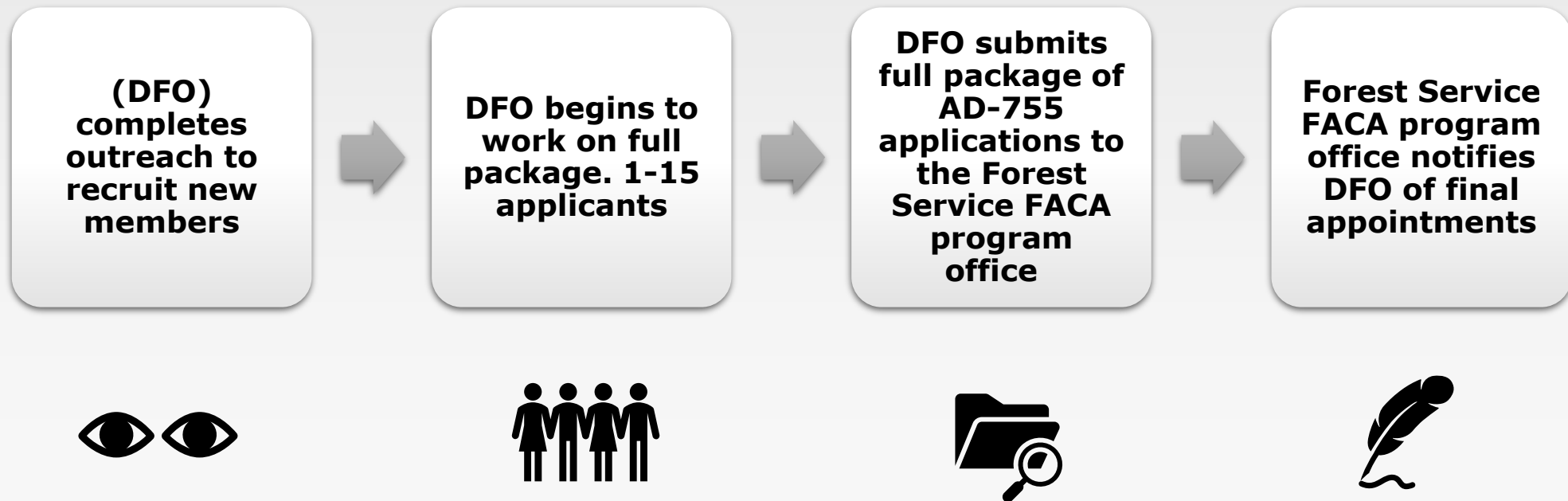
➤ 9-6 Members

RAC Member Management

- **Compensation:** Members of the RACs are uncompensated volunteers. However, travel expenses can be reimbursed by DFO approval.
- **Appointment:** Members of the RAC are appointed by the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture (Secretary).
- **Terms of service:** In accordance with the Act, members are appointed to 4-year terms and may be reappointed for an additional 4 years.
- **Reappointment process:** Members are to be reappointed in the same manner as their original appointment.
- **Termination of Membership:** The Secretary may, after written notice, terminate the service of a member if in the judgment of the Secretary or his/her authorized representative removal is in the public interest.

Complete Nomination Packages

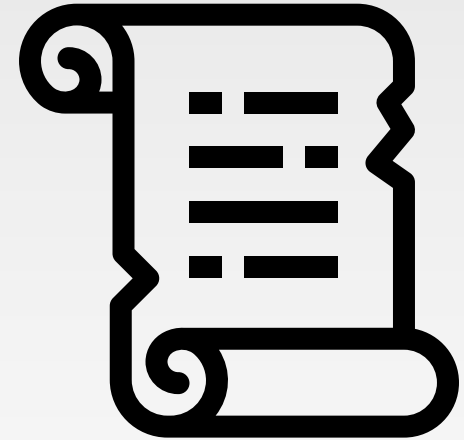
Once the Forest has concluded outreach and determined its recommended RAC candidates, the RAC coordinator/DFO can begin getting a nomination package ready for approval by the Secretary.



Solicit Proposals & Plan Meetings

When it comes time to solicit projects, engage the RAC and any other potential project proponents by sending out a press release or a letter indicating that solicitation has begun.

- How long in advance project proposals must be submitted to the DFO before a meeting?
- How much time each project proponent gets to speak?
- Mutual respect protocol during meetings?
- Key contact information?
- Reimbursements?
- General goals?



Federal Register Notices



To follow FACA and assure public access, the public must be notified in advance via Federal Register Notice (FRN) published in the [Federal Register](#) at least **15 calendar days** before the scheduled meeting. Failure to comply with this rule is a violation of FACA.

All FRN's are required to have the following:

- 1.Date;
- 2.Time (start and end);
- 3.Location;
- 4.Agenda; and
- 5.Contact information.

Meeting Participants

Public Participants:

- May attend open meetings;
- May speak to or otherwise address the RAC when the procedures for doing so are published in the FRN;
- Must be allowed to submit written statements to the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) as outlined for in the FRN;
- Should be advised that committee members are given copies of all written statements submitted by the public which becomes part of the meeting minutes.



Meeting Minutes



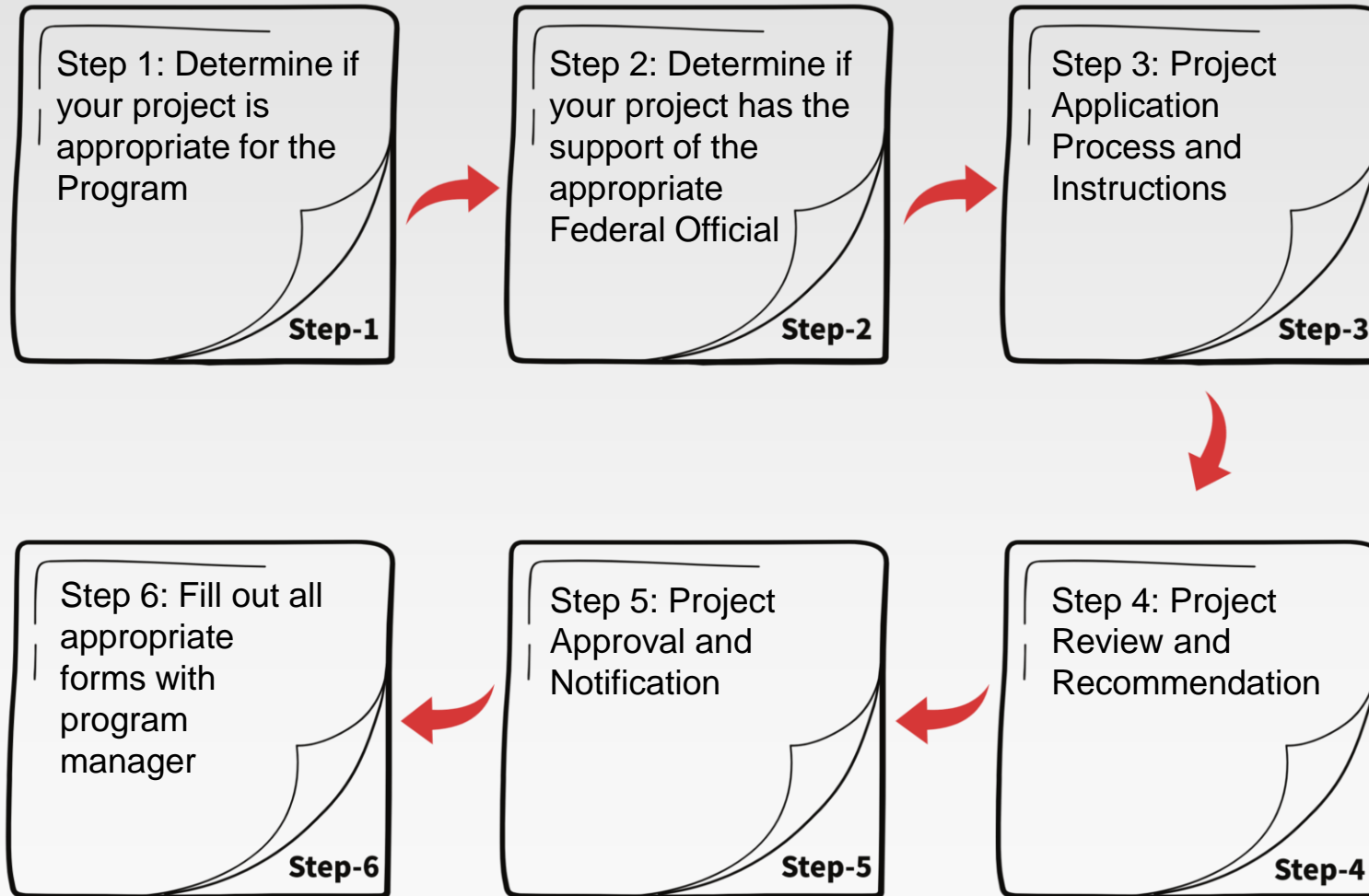
- Must include the time, date, and place of the meeting;
- Must include a list of the persons who were present at the meeting, including advisory committee members and staff, agency employees, and members of the public who presented oral or written statements;
- Must include an accurate description of each matter discussed .
- Must include copies of each report or other document received, issued, or approved by the advisory committee.

After a Meeting

- Distributes copies of the meeting minutes to each RAC member within **20** days following the meeting
- RAC members will have one week after e-mail receipt of the draft minutes for review and suggested changes.
- Ensures the RAC Chairperson certifies and/or signs the minutes within **90 days**;
- Ensures any travel reimbursements to members are processed in a timely manner via local budget staff.



Proposal Criteria



Project Submittal Package

1. Project Proposal Application Form
2. Project Area Map
3. Letter of support
4. Submit Package to sm.fs.modoc_info@usda.gov

[For more information and downloadable forms click here](#)

Our next slide will highlight some points from past proposal forms where there was either a lack of information or insufficient detail.

Submit an appropriate *Project Area Map* along with the submission form. The following information should be contained on the map: project title; project boundary; stream names; road numbers; legal location; township, range, and section designations; scale bar; compass orientation; and legend. The map scale should be no larger than 2.64 inches/mile and no smaller than 1 inch/mile.

In the space allotted, provide a concise *Project Description*. Do not reiterate other descriptive details provided elsewhere in the project submission form. Be sure to highlight any unique aspects or special circumstances. (max. 30 lines)

Funding Fiscal Year(s):	
2. Project Name:	
3a. State:	3b. County(s):
4. Project Submitted By:	
5. Date: <small>Date Format (MM/DD/YYYY)</small>	6. Contact Phone Number: <small>Phone Format (1 23) 456-7890</small>
7. Contact E-mail:	
8. Project Location:	
a. National Forest(s):	
b. Forest Service District:	
c. Location (Township-Range-Section)	
9. Project Goals and Objectives:	
10. Project Description:	
a. Brief: (in one sentence)	
b. Detailed:	
11. Types of Lands Involved?	
State/Private/Other lands involved? <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No	
Land Status:	
If Yes, specify:	

Fill in the estimated project accomplishment measures that apply. If certain measures do not apply, then leave them blank. This helps G&A calculate expenses.



<input type="checkbox"/> Fish Habitat Restoration	<input type="checkbox"/> Control of Noxious Weeds
<input type="checkbox"/> Reestablish Native Species	<input type="checkbox"/> Fuels Management/Fire Prevention
<input type="checkbox"/> Implement CWPP Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Other Project Type (specify):
b. Primary Purpose (select only 1 from above):	

14. Identify What the Project Will Accomplish
Miles of road maintained:
Miles of road decommissioned/obliterated:
Number of structures maintained/improved:
Acres of soil productivity improved:
Miles of stream/river restored/improved:
Miles of fish habitat restored/improved:
Acres of native species reestablished:
Acres of hazardous fuel treatment
Miles of trail maintained:
Miles of trail obliterated:
Acres of forest health improved (including fuels reduction):
Acres of rangeland improved:
Acres of wildlife habitat restored/improved:
Acres of noxious weeds controlled:
Timber volume generated (mbf):
Jobs generated in full time equivalents (FTE) to nearest tenth. One FTE is 52 forty hour weeks:
People reached (for environmental education projects/fire prevention):
Direct economic activity benefit:
Other:

15. Estimated Project Start Date:

Date format (MM/DD/YYYY)

16. Estimated Project Completion Date:

Date format (MM/DD/YYYY)

17. List known partnerships or collaborative opportunities.

18. Identify benefits to communities.

19. How does the project benefit federal lands/resources?

20. What is the Proposed Method(s) of Accomplishment? (Select at least 1)

<input type="checkbox"/> Contract	<input type="checkbox"/> Federal Workforce
<input type="checkbox"/> County Workforce	<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteers
<input type="checkbox"/> Grant	<input type="checkbox"/> Agreement
<input type="checkbox"/> Americorps	<input type="checkbox"/> YCC/CCC Crews
<input type="checkbox"/> Job Corps	<input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship Contract
<input type="checkbox"/> Merchantable Timber Pilot	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify):

21. Will the Project Generate Merchantable Timber? ☐ Yes ☐ No

22. Anticipated Project Costs

a. Title II Funds Requested:

b. Is this a multi-year funding request? ☐ Yes ☐ No

23. Identify Source(s) of Other Funding:

24. Monitoring Plan (provide as attachment)

- Provide a plan that describes your process for tracking and explaining the effects of this project on your environmental and community goals outlined above.
- Identify who will conduct the monitoring:
- Identify total funding needed to carry out specified monitoring tasks (Worksheet 1, Item k):

25. Identify remedies for failure to comply with the terms of the agreement.

If project cannot be completed under the terms of this agreement:

- ☐ Unused funds will be returned to the RAC account.
- ☐ Other, please explain:

1. Describe method of measurement for whether the project met or exceeded the desired ecological conditions.

2. How will the project be evaluated to determine if it created local employment or training opportunities, including summer youth job programs?

3. How will the project be evaluated to determine if the project improved the use of, or added value to, any products removed from the land consistent with the purposes of Title II?



Identify any other matching contributions provided from non-Forest Service or non-BLM appropriations for each cost item in *Column C* (e.g., funds secured through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board).



Project Cost Analysis Worksheet

Worksheet 1

Please submit this worksheet with your proposal

Item	Column A Fed. Agency Appropriated Contribution	Column B Requested Title II Contribution	Column C Other Contributions	Column D Total Available Funds
a. Field Work & Site Surveys				
b. NEPA/CEQA				
c. ESA Consultation				
d. Permit Acquisition				
e. Project Design & Engineering				
f. Contract/Grant Preparation				
g. Contract/Grant Administration				
h. Contract/Grant Cost				
i. Salaries				
j. Materials & Supplies				
k. Monitoring				
l. Other - ex Partner Indirect Cost				
m. Project Sub-Total				
n. FS Indirect Costs				

Provide an estimate for the actual Workforce Cost



Identify the costs to complete the required Monitoring components outlined in the Monitoring Plan.



DFO Approves Proposals & Obligate Funds

After a project gets approved, coordinate with a Grants and Agreements (G&A) specialist to determine any agreements that will need to be created and approved. Your local G&A Specialist will help with the following:

- Authorities and Agreement types.
- Mutual interest and mutual benefits.
- Volunteer Reimbursements.
- Identifying overall cost in a financial plan.

Annual Reporting

- The GSA Annual Comprehensive Review is due annually on August 1st. Reporting is overseen by FACA. Be sure to update the FACA database regularly to prevent delays as the deadline approaches.

Purpose of Report:

- These reports are due annually and collected on a quarterly basis to identify the number of memberships and vacancies for each advisory committee. By tracking member vacancies, committees can determine when it is necessary to begin the outreach and nomination process.

Quarterly Due Dates:

- Quarter 1 (Q-1) January-March: **Due April 30th**
- Quarter 2 (Q-2) April-June: **Due July 31st**
- Quarter 3 (Q-3) July-September: **Due October 31st**
- Quarter 4 (Q-4) October-December: **Due January 31st**



Any Questions?