

this program. To demonstrate eligibility, applicants must submit documentation that the applicant is an MDO as defined in § 4280.302, as follows:

(i) If a nonprofit entity, evidence that the applicant organization meets the citizenship requirements;

(ii) If a nonprofit entity, a copy of the applicant's bylaws and articles of incorporation, which include evidence that the applicant is legally considered a non-profit organization;

(iii) If an Indian tribe, evidence that the applicant is a Federally-recognized Indian tribe, and that the tribe neither operates nor is served by an existing MDO;

(iv) If a public institution of higher education, evidence that the applicant is a public institution of higher education; and

(v) For nonprofit applicants only, a Certificate of Good Standing, not more than 6 months old, from the Office of the Secretary of State in the State in which the applicant is located. If the applicant has offices in more than one state, then the state in which the applicant is organized and licensed will be considered the home location.

(9) Certification by the applicant that it cannot obtain sufficient credit elsewhere to fund the activities called for under this program with similar rates and terms.

(10) Form RD 400-4, "Assurance Agreement."

(d) *Type of application specific information.* In addition to the information required under paragraph (c) of this section, the following information is also required, as applicable:

(1) The information specified in § 4280.316(a).

(2) An applicant for status as a microlender with more than 3 years of experience as an MDO seeking to participate as a microlender must provide the additional information specified in § 4280.316(b). Such an applicant will be applying for a loan to capitalize an RMRF, which, unless otherwise requested by the applicant, will be accompanied by a microlending TA grant.

(3) An applicant for status as a microlender with 3 years or less experience as an MDO seeking to participate as a microlender must provide the ad-

ditional information specified in § 4280.316(c). Such an applicant will be applying for a loan to capitalize an RMRF, which, unless otherwise requested by the applicant, will be accompanied by a microlending TA grant.

(4) All applicants seeking status as a microlender must identify in their application which cost share option(s) the applicant will utilize, as described in § 4280.311(d), to meet the Federal cost share requirement. If the applicant will utilize the RMRF-level option, the applicant shall identify the amount(s) and source(s) of the non-Federal share.

(5) An applicant seeking TA-only grant funding must provide the additional information specified in § 4280.316(d).

(e) *Application limits.* Paragraph (d) of this section sets out three types of funding under which applications may be submitted. MDOs may only submit and have pending for consideration, at any given time, one application, regardless of funding category.

(f) *Completed applications.* Applications that fulfill the requirements specified in paragraphs (a) through (e) of this section will be fully reviewed, scored, and ranked by the Agency in accordance with the provisions of § 4280.316.

[75 FR 30145, May 28, 2010, as amended at 75 FR 41696, July 19, 2010]

§ 4280.316 Application scoring.

Applications will be scored based on the criteria specified in this section using only the information submitted in the application. The total available points per application are 100. Points will be awarded as shown in paragraphs (a) through (e) of this section. Awards will be based on the ranking, with the highest ranking applications being funded first, subject to available funding.

(a) *Application requirements for all applicants.* All applicants must submit the eligibility information described in § 4280.315. Only those applicants deemed eligible will be scored for qualification. Qualification information provides the

complete forms and information necessary to determine a baseline of capacity. Additional information is specified depending on the level of experience or type of funding being applied for. The maximum points available in this part of the application are 45. In addition to the eligibility information, all applicants will submit:

(1) An organizational chart clearly showing the positions and naming the individuals in those positions. Of particular interest to the Agency are management positions and those positions essential to the operation of micro-lending and TA programming. Up to 5 points will be awarded.

(2) Resumes for each of the individuals shown on the organizational chart and indicated as key to the operation of the activities to be funded under this program. There should be a corresponding resume for each of the key individuals noted and named on the organizational chart. Points will be awarded based on the quality of the resumes and on the ability (based on the resumes) of the key personnel to administer the program. Up to 5 points will be awarded.

(3) A succession plan to be followed in the event of the departure of personnel key to the operation of the applicant's RMAP activities. Up to 5 points will be awarded.

(4) Information indicating an understanding of microenterprise development concepts. Provide those parts of your policy and procedures manual that deal with the provision of loans, management of loan funds, and provision of technical assistance. Up to 5 points will be awarded.

(5) Copies of the applicant's most recent, and two years previous, financial statements. Points will be awarded based on the demonstrated ability of the applicant to maintain or grow its bottom line fund balance, its ability to manage one or more federal programs, and its capacity to manage multiple funding sources, restricted and non-restricted funding sources, income, earnings, and expenditures. Up to 10 points will be awarded.

(6) A copy of the applicant's organizational mission statement. The mission statement will be rated based on its relative connectivity to microenter-

prise development and general economic development. The mission statement may or may not be a part of a larger statement. For example, if the mission statement is included in the by-laws or other organizational documents, please so note, direct the reviewer to the proper document, and do not submit these documents twice. Up to 5 points will be awarded.

(7) Information regarding the geographic service area to be served. Describe the service area, which must be rural as defined. State the number of counties or other jurisdictions to be served. Describe the demographics of the service area and whether or not the population is a diverse population. Note that the applicant will not be scored on the size of the service area, but on its ability to fully cover the service area as described. Up to 10 points will be awarded.

(b) *Program loan application requirements for MDOs seeking to participate as RMAP microlenders with more than 3 years of experience.* In addition to the information required under paragraph (a) of this section, applicants with more than 3 years of experience as a microlender also must provide the information specified in paragraphs (b)(1) through (5) of this section. The total number of points available under this paragraph, in addition to the up to 45 points available in paragraph (a) of this section, is 55, for a total of 100.

(1) *History of provision of microloans.* The applicant must provide data regarding its history of making microloans for the three years previous to this application by answering the questions in paragraphs (b)(1)(i) through (vi) of this section. This information should be provided clearly and concisely in numerical format as the data will be used to calculate points as noted. Figure 1 presents an example of the format and data required. The maximum number of points under this criterion is 20.

FIGURE 1. EXAMPLE OF FORMAT AND DATA REQUIREMENTS

RBS and RUS, USDA

§ 4280.316

Data item	Federal FY			
	Last fiscal year	Year before last fiscal year	2nd year before last fiscal year	Total
Total # of Microloans Made
Total \$ Amount of Microloans Made
of Microloans Made in Rural Areas
Total \$ Amount of Microloans Made in Rural Areas
of Microloans Made to Racial and Ethnic Minorities
of Microloans Made to women
of Microloans Made to the Disabled

(i) Number and amount of microloans made during each of the three previous Federal FYs. Do not include current year information. A narrative may be included as a separate attachment, not in the body of the suggested table.

(ii) Number and amount of microloans made in rural areas in each of the three years prior to the year in which the application is submitted. If the history of providing microloans in rural areas shows:

(A) More than the three consecutive years immediately prior to this application, 5 points will be awarded;

(B) At least two of the years but not more than the three consecutive years immediately prior to this application, 3 points will be awarded;

(C) At least 6 months, but not more than one year immediately prior to this application, 1 point will be awarded.

(iii) Percentage of number of loans made in rural areas. Calculate and enter the total number of microloans made in rural areas as a percentage of the total number of all microloans made for each of the past three Federal FYs. If the percentage of the total number of microloans made in rural areas is:

(A) 75 percent or more, 5 points will be awarded;

(B) At least 50 percent but less than 75 percent, 3 points will be awarded;

(C) At least 25 but less than 50 percent, 1 point will be awarded.

(iv) The percentage of dollar amount of loans made in rural areas. Enter the dollar amount of microloans made in rural areas as a percentage of the dollar amount of the total portfolio (rural and non-rural) of microloans made for each of the previous three Federal FYs. If percentage of the dollar amount of the microloans made in rural areas is:

(A) 75 percent or more of the total amount, 5 points will be awarded;

(B) At least 50 percent but less than 75 percent, 3 points will be awarded;

(C) At least 25 percent but less than 50 percent, 1 point will be awarded.

(v) Each applicant shall compare the diversity of its entire microloan portfolio to the demographic makeup of its service area (as determined by the latest applicable decennial census for the State) based on the number of microloans made during the three years preceding the subject application. Demographic groups shall include gender, racial and ethnic minority status, and disability (as defined in The Americans with Disabilities Act). Points will be awarded on the basis of how close the MDO's microloan portfolio matches the demographic makeup of its service area. A maximum of 5 points will be awarded.

(A) If at least one loan has been made to each demographic group and if the percentage of loans made to each demographic group is each within 5 or less percent of the demographic makeup, 5 points will be awarded.

(B) If at least one loan has been made to each demographic group and if the percentage of loans made to each demographic group is each within 10 or less percent of the demographic makeup, 3 points will be awarded.

(C) If at least one loan has been made to each demographic group and if the percentage of loans made to one or more of the demographic groups is greater than 10 percent of the demographic makeup or if no loans have been made to one of the demographic groups and if the percentage of loans made to each of the other demographic groups is each within 10 or less percent of the demographic makeup, 1 point will be awarded.

§ 4280.316

7 CFR Ch. XLII (1-1-11 Edition)

(D) If no loans have been made to two or more demographic groups, no points will be awarded.

(2) *Portfolio management.* Each applicant's ability to manage its portfolio will be determined based on the data provided in response to paragraphs (b)(2)(i) and (ii) of this section and scored accordingly. The maximum number of points under this criterion is 10.

(i) Enter the total number of your microloans paying on time for the three previous Federal FYs. If the total number of microloans paying on time at the end of each year over the prior three Federal FYs is:

(A) 95 percent or more, 5 points will be awarded;

(B) At least 85 percent but less than 95 percent, 3 points will be awarded;

(C) Less than 85 percent, 0 points will be awarded.

(ii) Enter the total number of microloans 30 to 90 days in arrears or that have been written off at year end for the three previous Federal FYs. If the total number of these microloans is:

(A) 5 percent or less of the total portfolio, 5 points will be awarded;

(B) More than 5 percent, 0 points will be awarded.

(3) *History of provision of technical assistance.* Each applicant's history of provision of technical assistance to microentrepreneurs and microenterprises, and their ability to reach diverse communities, will be scored based on the data specified in paragraphs (b)(3)(i) through (iv) of this section. Applicants may use a chart such as that suggested in Figure 1 as they deem appropriate. The maximum number of points under this criterion is 15.

(i) Provide the total number of rural and non-rural microentrepreneurs and microenterprises that received both microloans and TA services for each of the previous three Federal FYs.

(ii) Provide the percentage of the total number of only rural microentrepreneurs and rural microenterprises that received both microloans and TA services for each of the previous three Federal FYs (calculate this as the total number of rural microloans made each year divided by the total number of loans made during the past three Fed-

eral FYs). If provision of both microloans and technical assistance to rural microentrepreneurs and rural microenterprises is demonstrated at a rate of:

(A) 75 percent or more, 5 points will be awarded;

(B) At least 50 percent but less than 75 percent, 3 points will be awarded;

(C) At least 25 percent but less than 50 percent, 1 point will be awarded.

(iii) Provide the percentage of the total number of rural microentrepreneurs and rural microenterprises by racial and ethnic minority, disabled, and/or gender that received both microloans and TA services for each of the previous three Federal FYs. If the demonstrated provision of microloans and technical assistance to these rural microentrepreneurs and rural microenterprises is at a rate of:

(A) 75 percent or more, 5 points will be awarded;

(B) At least 50 percent but less than 75 percent, 3 points will be awarded;

(C) At least 25 percent but less than 50 percent, 1 point will be awarded.

(iv) Provide the ratio of TA clients that also received microloans during each of the previous three Federal FYs. If the ratio of clients receiving technical assistance to clients receiving microloans is:

(A) Between 1:1 and 1:5, 5 points will be awarded.

(B) Between 1:6 and 1:8, 3 points will be awarded.

(C) Either 1:9 or 1:10, 1 point will be awarded.

(4) *Ability to provide technical assistance.* In addition to providing a statistical history of their provision of technical assistance to microentrepreneurs, microenterprises, and microborrowers, applicants must provide a narrative of not more than five pages describing the teaching and training methods used by the applicant organization to provide such technical assistance and discussing the outcomes of their endeavors. Technical assistance is defined in § 4280.302. The narrative will be scored as specified in paragraphs (b)(4)(i) through (iv) of this section. The maximum number of points under this criterion is 5.

(i) Applicants that have used more than one method of training and technical assistance (*e.g.*, classroom training, peer-to-peer discussion groups, individual assistance, distance learning) will be awarded 2 points.

(ii) Applicants that provide success stories to demonstrate the effects of technical assistance on their clients will be awarded 1 point.

(iii) Applicants that provide evidence that they require evaluations by the clients of their training programs and indicate that the average level of evaluation scores is “good” or higher will be awarded 1 point.

(iv) Applicants that present their narrative information clearly and concisely (five pages or less) and at a level expected by trainers and teachers will be awarded 1 point.

(5) *Proposed administrative expenses to be spent from TA grant funds.* The maximum number of points under this criterion is 5. If the percentage of grant funds to be used for administrative purposes is:

(i) Less than 5 percent of the TA grant funding, 5 points will be awarded;

(ii) Between 5 percent and 8 percent, but not including 8 percent, 3 points will be awarded; and

(iii) Between 8 percent up to and including 10 percent, 0 point will be awarded.

(c) *Application requirements for MDOs seeking to participate as RMAP micro-lenders with 3 years or less experience.* In addition to the information required under paragraph (a) of this section, an applicant MDO with 3 years or less experience that is applying to be a micro-lender must submit the information specified in paragraphs (c)(1) through (8) of this section. The total number of points available under this paragraph, in addition to the up to 45 points available in paragraph (a) of this section, is 55, for a total of 100.

(1) The applicant must provide a narrative work plan that clearly indicates its intention for the use of loan and grant funding. Provide goals and milestones for planned microlending and technical assistance activities. In relation to the information requested in paragraph (a) of this section, the applicant must describe how it will incorporate its mission statement, utilize

its employees, and maximize its human and capital assets to meet the goals of this program. The applicant must provide its strategic plan and organizational development goals and clearly indicate its lending goals for the five years after the date of application. The narrative work plan should be not more than five pages in length. Up to 10 points will be awarded.

(2) The applicant will provide the date that it began business as an MDO or other provider of business education and/or facilitator of capital. This date will reflect when the applicant became licensed to do business, in good standing with the Secretary of State in which it is registered to do business, and regularly paid staff to conduct business on a daily basis. If the applicant has been in business for:

(i) More than 2 years but less than 3 years, 5 points will be awarded;

(ii) At least 1 year, but not more than 2 years, 3 points will be awarded;

(iii) At least 6 months, but not more than 1 year, 1 point will be awarded;

(iv) Less than 6 months, or more than 3 full years, 0 points will be awarded. (If more than 3 full years, the applicant must apply under the provisions for MDOs with more than 3 years experience as specified in § 4280.315.)

(3) The applicant must describe in detail any microenterprise development training received by it as a whole, or its employees as individuals, to date. The narrative may refer reviewers to already submitted resumes to save space. The training received will be rated on its topical variety, the quality of the description, and its relevance to the organization’s strategic plan. The applicant should not submit training brochures or conference announcements. Up to 10 points will be awarded.

(4) The applicant must indicate its current number of employees, those that concentrate on rural microentrepreneurial development, and the current average caseload for each. Indicate how the caseload ratio does or does not optimize the applicant’s ability to perform the services described in the work plan. Discuss how Agency grant funding will be used to assist with TA program delivery and how loan funding will affect the portfolio. Up to 5 points will be awarded.

(5) The applicant must indicate any training organizations with which it has a working relationship. Provide contact information for references regarding the applicant's capacity to perform the work plan provided. If the recommendations received from references are:

(i) Generally excellent, 5 points will be awarded;

(ii) Generally above average, 3 points will be awarded;

(iii) Generally average, 1 point will be awarded;

(iv) Generally less than average, 0 points will be awarded.

(6) Describe any plans for continuing training relationship(s), including ongoing or future training plans and goals, and the timeline for same. Up to 5 points will be awarded.

(7) The applicant will describe its internal benchmarking system for determining client success, reporting on client success, and following client success for up to 5 years after completion of a training relationship. Up to 10 points will be awarded.

(8) The applicant will identify its proposed administrative expenses to be spent from TA grant funds. The maximum total number of points under this criterion is 5. If the percentage of grant funds to be used for administrative purposes is:

(i) Less than 5 percent of the TA grant funding, 5 points will be awarded;

(ii) Between 5 percent and 8 percent, but not including 8 percent, 3 points will be awarded; and

(iii) Between 8 percent up to and including 10 percent, 0 points will be awarded.

(d) *Application requirements for MDOs seeking technical assistance-only grants.* TA-only grants may be provided to MDOs that are not RMAP microlenders seeking to provide training and technical assistance to rural microentrepreneurs and rural microenterprises. An applicant seeking a TA-only grant must submit the information specified in paragraphs (d)(1) through (4) of this section. The total number of points available under this section, in addition to the 45 points available in paragraph (a) of this section, is 55, for a total of 100 points.

(1) *History of provision of technical assistance.* Each applicant's history of provision of technical assistance to microentrepreneurs and microenterprises, and their ability to reach diverse communities, will be scored based on the data specified in paragraphs (d)(1)(i) through (iv) of this section. Applicants may use a chart such as that suggested in Figure 1 as they deem appropriate. The maximum number of points under this criterion is 20.

(i) Provide the total number of rural and non-rural microentrepreneurs and microenterprises that received both microloans and TA services for each of the previous three Federal FYs.

(ii) Provide the percentage of the total number of rural microentrepreneurs and rural microenterprises that received both microloans and TA services for each of the previous three Federal FYs (calculate this as the total number of rural microloans made each year divided by the total number of rural and non-rural microloans made during the past three Federal FYs). If provision of both technical assistance and resultant microloans to rural microentrepreneurs and rural microenterprises is demonstrated at a rate of:

(A) 75 percent or more, 5 points will be awarded;

(B) At least 50 percent but less than 75 percent, 3 points will be awarded;

(C) At least 25 percent but less than 50 percent, 1 point will be awarded.

(iii) Provide the percentage of the total number of rural microentrepreneurs by racial and ethnic minority, disabled, and/or gender that received both microloans and TA services for each of the previous three Federal FYs. If the demonstrated provision of technical assistance and resultant microloans to these rural microentrepreneurs when compared to the total number of microentrepreneurs assisted, is at a rate of:

(A) 75 percent or more, 10 points will be awarded;

(B) At least 50 percent but less than 75 percent, 7 points will be awarded;

(C) At least 25 percent but less than 50 percent, 5 point will be awarded.

(iv) Provide the ratio of TA clients that also received microloans during each of the last three years. If the ratio

RBS and RUS, USDA

§ 4280.316

of clients receiving technical assistance to clients receiving microloans is:

(A) Between 1:1 and 1:5, 5 points will be awarded.

(B) Between 1:6 and 1:8, 3 points will be awarded.

(C) Either 1:9 or 1:10, 1 point will be awarded.

(2) *Ability to provide technical assistance.* In addition to providing a statistical history of their provision of technical assistance to microentrepreneurs, microenterprises, and microborrowers, applicants must provide a narrative of not more than five pages describing the teaching and training method(s) used by the applicant organization to provide technical assistance and discussing the outcomes of their endeavors. The narrative will be scored as specified in paragraphs (d)(2)(i) through (iv) of this section. The maximum number of points under this criterion is 20.

(i) Applicants that have used more than one method of training and technical assistance (*e.g.*, classroom training, peer-to-peer discussion groups, individual assistance, distance learning) will be awarded 5 points.

(ii) Applicants that provide success stories to demonstrate the effects of technical assistance on their clients will be awarded points under either of the following paragraphs, but not both.

(A) News stories that highlight businesses made successful as a result of technical assistance, 5 points will be awarded.

(B) Internal stories that highlight businesses made successful as a result of technical assistance, 3 points.

(iii) Applicants that provide evidence that they require evaluations by the clients of their training programs and indicate that the evaluation scores are generally:

(A) Excellent, 5 points will be awarded.

(B) Good, 3 points will be awarded.

(C) Less than good, 0 points will be awarded.

(iv) Applicants that present well-written narrative information that is clearly and concisely written and is five pages or less will be awarded 5 points.

(3) *Technical assistance plan.* Submit a plan for the provision of technical as-

sistance explaining how the funding will benefit the current program and how it will allow the applicant to expand its non-program microlending activities. Up to 10 points will be awarded

(4) *Proposed administrative expenses to be spent from TA grant funds.* The maximum number of points under this criterion is 5. If the percentage of grant funds to be used for administrative purposes is:

(i) Less than 5 percent of the TA grant funding, 5 points will be awarded;

(ii) Between 5 percent and 8 percent, but not including 8 percent, 3 points will be awarded; and

(iii) Between 8 percent up to and including 10 percent, 1 point will be awarded.

(e) *Re-application requirements for participating microlenders with more than 5 years experience as a microlender under this program.*

(1) Microlender applicants with more than 5 years of experience as an MDO under this program may choose to submit a shortened loan/grant application that includes the following:

(i) A letter of request for funding stating the amount of loan and/or grant funds being requested;

(ii) An indication of the loan and/or grant amounts being requested accompanied by a completed SF 424 and any pertinent attachments;

(iii) An indication of the number and percent of program microentrepreneurs and microenterprises remaining in business for two years or more after microloan disbursement; and

(iv) A recent resolution of the applicant's Board of Directors approving the application for debt.

(2) The Agency, using this request, and data available in the reports submitted under previous fundings, will review the overall program performance of the applicant over the life of its participation in the program to determine its continued qualification for subsequent funding. Requirements include:

(i) A default rate of 5 percent or less;

(ii) A pattern of delinquencies during the period of participation in this program of 10 percent or less;

(iii) A pattern of use of TA dollars that indicates at least one in ten TA clients receive a microloan;

§ 4280.317

(iv) A statement discussing the need for more funding, accompanied by account documentation showing the amounts in each of the RMRF and LLRF accounts established to date; and

(v) A pattern of compliance with program reporting requirements.

(3) Shortened applications under this section will be rated on a pass or fail basis. Passing applications will be assigned a score of 90 points and will be ranked accordingly in the quarterly competitions. Failing applications will be scored 0.

§ 4280.317 Selection of applications for funding.

All applications received will be scored using the scoring criteria specified in § 4280.316. Because each set of applicants is scored on a 100 point scale, applications will be ranked together. Shortened applications can only receive 90 points. Within funding limitations, applications will be funded in descending order, from the highest ranking application down. If two or more applications score the same, the Administrator may prioritize such applications to help the program achieve overall geographic diversity.

(a) *Timing and submission of applications.*

(1) All applications must be submitted as a complete application, in one package. Packages must be bound in a three ring binder and evidence must be organized in the order of appearance in § 4280.315 of this document. Applications that are unbound, disorganized, or otherwise not ready for evaluation will be returned.

(2) Applications will be accepted on a quarterly basis using Federal fiscal quarters. Deadlines and specific application instructions will be published annually in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(3) Applications received will be reviewed, scored, and ranked quarterly. Unless withdrawn by the applicant, the Agency will retain unsuccessful applications that score 70 points or more, for consideration in subsequent reviews, through a total of four quarterly reviews. Applications unsuccessful after 4 quarters will be returned.

(b) *Availability of funds.* If an application is received, scored, and ranked,

7 CFR Ch. XLII (1–1–11 Edition)

but insufficient funds remain to fully fund it, the Agency may elect to fund an application requesting a smaller amount that has a lower score. Before this occurs, the Agency, as applicable, will provide the higher scoring applicant the opportunity to reduce the amount of its request to the amount of funds available. If the applicant agrees to lower its request, it must certify that the purposes of the project can be met, and the Agency must determine that the project is financially feasible at the lower amount.

(c) *Applicant notification.* The Agency will notify applicants regarding their selection or non-selection, provide appeal rights of unsuccessful applicants, and closing procedures for the loans and/or grants to awardees.

(d) *Closing.* Awardees unable to complete closing for obligation within 90 days will forfeit their funding. Such funding will revert back to the Agency for later use.

§§ 4280.318–4280.319 [Reserved]

§ 4280.320 Grant administration.

(a) *Oversight.* Any MDO receiving a grant under this program is subject to Agency oversight, with site visits and inspection of records occurring at the discretion of the Agency. In addition, MDOs receiving a grant under this subpart must submit reports, as specified in paragraphs (a)(1) through (3) of this section.

(1) On a quarterly basis, within 30 days after the end of each Federal fiscal quarter, the microlender will provide to the Agency an Agency-approved quarterly report containing such information as the Agency may require to ensure that funds provided are being used for the purposes for which the grant was made, including:

- (i) SF-PPR, “Performance Progress Report,” including narrative reporting information as required by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars and successor regulations. This report will include information on the microlender’s technical assistance, training, and/or enhancement activity, and grant expenses, milestones met, or unmet, explanation of difficulties, observations and other such information;
- (ii) As appropriate, SF-270; and