

The Administrative Advisor's Challenge in Multistate Research
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Administrative Advisors (AA's) for multistate projects and committees face interesting challenges in guiding and advising regional committees authorized under the Multistate Research Fund (MRF). There are a number of tasks that AA's assume in their leadership roles, including authorizing the meetings, and seeing that the annual reports are completed on time and properly submitted, in addition to providing overall guidance to the project activity. However, in my view there are any number of other far more important challenges that require the attention of the committee or project administrative advisor.

First, we have to always remember that our regional committees and projects serve as catalysts for expanding the multistate, multi-institution, and multi-disciplinary research and outreach agenda that focuses on the food and agricultural system of the US.

At the present time, and as the USDA – NIFA National Research Initiative (NRI) expand its efforts to fund Coordinated Agricultural Project (CAP) and integrated awards at a higher level, multistate research and coordination becomes increasingly important and critical to this process. USDA- NIFA has the authority to move as much as 20% of the NRI portfolio into CAP and integrated accounts. As this change in funding philosophy develops, one could expect that regional multistate research stands at the forefront in developing competitive, integrated multistate, multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional proposals. As AA it is important that you bring to the table a non-biased viewpoint, an ability to objectively evaluate the progress of the regional effort, and focus the committee toward identification and development of meaningful impacts.

In addition, as AA you have a unique opportunity and perspective to encourage development of competitive proposals coming from the project area of expertise. Clearly, as we continue to justify the impacts of regional multistate research under the MRF, we need to encouraging scientists who participate in regional research activities to give consideration to seeking and developing competitive CAP and integrated proposals. As regional research effectiveness is evaluated, it seems clear that leverage of these activities toward seeking other competitive sources of funding is an indication of success of the regional research system. If our regional research portfolios are unresponsive to the development, submission, and winning of integrated and CAP awards, then we have only ourselves to blame when the value of the RMF portfolio is questioned. It's clear that there are many roles for the Administrative Advisor in support of regional research activities, however two are truly critical - ***The identification and development of meaningful impact statements***, and ***The facilitation of efforts to leverage the committee and / or project's efforts to compete for the ever increasing pool of funds that are targeted toward integrated and CAP awards***.