Flexible Funding Model; RRT Maintenance Funding Option: Annual Expected Goals (All Years)

1. RRT Maintenance and Continuous Program Improvement (All Sub-Parts Required for all RRTs)

1.A. Operate within Phase 3 of the RRT Capacity Building Process & Mentorship Framework. Please describe activities/special projects undertaken by the RRT to support meeting the key areas of Phase 3. Several other annual goals address key areas of Phase 3, as such, please scope your activities under this goal to the following key areas of Phase 3:

- Maintain a Written Framework: Describe updates to existing SOPs/creation of new SOPs, efforts to coordinate SOPs among RRT member agencies/partners; efforts to pursue and complete necessary documents, SOPs and agreements to support Unified Command; efforts to update/create an operational RRT Data Management System (e.g., FoodSHIELD) for use by all RRT member agencies, as needed/appropriate. There will be at least an annual review/update of most SOPs (see the RRT CAT, Metrics/Demonstrated Preparedness, 6.a.-6.h.).
- Execute the Training Plan: Describe efforts to provide/procure training opportunities for the RRT according to the RRT training plan, particularly trainings where attendance (or the course itself) was funded using RRT grant funds. There will be at least an annual review of the RRT training plan, (see the RRT CAT, Metrics/Demonstrated Preparedness, 7-8).
- Maintain and Coordinate the Team: Demonstrate routine engagement of core RRT member agencies/partners (state food regulatory program, FDA District Office, state feed regulatory program, epi and laboratory) and auxiliary RRT member agencies/partners. These may be routine teleconferences of the core RRT team, RRT steering committee or equivalent; as well as scheduled face to face meetings with all RRT members (and may include training components). (See RRT CAT, RRT Characterization Data, 15-16 and 'Agencies/Partners that are part of your RRT'.)
- Equip the team: Describe efforts to procure the equipment and supplies necessary to support the RRT during investigations; or efforts to identify/procure/evaluate new equipment to determine if it has a positive impact on RRT performance. There will be at least an annual evaluation of key response equipment/supplies (see the RRT CAT, Metrics/Demonstrated Preparedness, 9).
- RRT Exercises: The state food regulatory program (RRT grantee) and relevant RRT member agencies/partners (at a minimum the FDA District Office) complete at least one exercise or response to a real time event to test/implement RRT procedures under ICS/Unified Command System (UCS) (including use of Incident Action Plans) every grant year (see the RRT CAT, Metrics/Effective RRT Responses, 10). Additionally, at least one exercise must be conducted during this award (5 project period) involving an intentional food or feed contamination incident, involving relevant RRT member agencies/partners and other stakeholders as appropriate (e.g., emergency managers, law enforcement, etc.).
- RRT Improvement plan: Provide examples of accomplishment of past RRT CAT Improvement Plan (goal 1.C) and RRT exercise/response/activation AAR/Improvement plan (goal 1.B) items. Note that the RRT may want to maintain a single improvement plan, inclusive of AAR and CAT improvement items; RRT improvement plan items may also be integrated with a MFRPS improvement plan, if desired by the RRT.

1.B. Conduct an after action review and complete subsequent documentation requirements for all RRT exercises, responses and activations as per RRT SOPs (i.e. creation of incident/event summary and documentation of recommendations/tracking of follow up action [Improvement Plan]) and share a copy of the after action report (AAR) and improvement plan in the secure RRT Program Workgroup in FoodSHIELD or the AAR Module (under development as of Jan2017).

- Key issues/items identified during after action reviews related to team performance should be incorporated into an improvement plan or into future trainings, as applicable (see RRT CAT, Metrics/Process Improvement, 13).
- After action reviews/reports should include a calculation and assessment of the time intervals between key response activities to identify opportunities for improvement (most importantly, assessing the interval between FDA and state food/feed regulatory program notification and implementation of effective control measures; but ideally inclusive of lab and epi activities as well, where applicable). Note: An annual exercise is required in the absence of a RRT activation during a given grant year (see goal 1.A, above).

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1.C. Complete/submit the Capability Assessment Tool via FoodSHIELD; and 2) develop/submit an improvement plan based on the results of the assessment.
1.D. Participate in a workgroup to revise the Capability Assessment Tool according to the goals outlined in the 2018-2022 RRT Program 5 Year Plan (as applicable; the workgroup may not be active all years of the cooperative agreement).
1.E. Submit a Sustainability Assessment, which describes the following: 1) Resources critical to RRT operations and program maintenance; 2) Current funding source for each resource (State, Federal, etc.); 3) Approximate dollar value of each resource; 4) Contingency plans and impact on each resource should Federal RRT funds cease. Ideally, the RRT budget should demonstrate that support for RRT operations/maintenance is diversified (split across state and grant funds), and in particular, key RRT personnel salaries should be on partial state funds and O&M costs for IT systems and other technologies should be on state, not federal, funds.
2. RRT Innovation, Integration, and National Capacity/Capability Development (Level 3 RRTs: Must Have 2 Distinct Projects Per Year; Level 2 RRTs: Must Have 1 Project Per Year; Level 1 RRTs: No Requirement) *Several national groups, including the Partnership for Food Protection (PFP), the Council to Improve Foodborne Outbreak Response (CIFOR), and CDC Integrated Food Safety Centers of Excellence (CoEs) have on-going initiatives aligned with the below project areas. RRT participation and collaboration with PFP, CIFOR and CoEs in these areas is encouraged*
2.A. Mentor a voluntary RRT (must be assigned by FDA Office of Partnerships (OP)) in RRT development as per the RRT Capacity Building Process and Mentorship Framework.
2.B. Develop and execute an inter-RRT project/collaboration, aimed at any RRT-related topic of mutual interest. Examples include: Regional RRT meetings, District-wide RRT collaboration, multi-RRT AARs/improvement plans, identifying and proposing solutions to regional/national needs/gaps (surveillance, response or prevention; training; exercise; data sharing), and working with relevant partners to propose outreach, education, legislative and other activities to prevent incident/contamination recurrence.
2.C. Develop and execute a specific project aimed at enhancing/improving collaboration with local health departments during RRT responses and activations, or with another RRT partner that has historically not been involved in your RRT (e.g., FSIS, a new food/feed commodity area, law enforcement, emergency management; which partners meet this criterion will largely depend on how your RRT is structured). Suggested activities include: joint trainings, outreach meetings, joint exercises, increased information sharing, promoting long term food/feed single signature 20.88s, and improving communication/collaboration structures and processes for inclusion in RRT SOPs.
2.D. Develop and execute a training-related project, such as: • Developing/hosting/sponsoring trainings, such as a seminar series, webinar or classroom-based trainings (especially those to address just in time training needs, commodity specific or high risk product investigations). Collaborations with academic institutions to develop/host courses are encouraged. • Hosting a training for your own RRT and opening it up to other RRTs (encouraged courses are: ER220, ICS305 and other food/feed specific ICS courses). • Utilizing a train-the-trainer approach to bring training to under-reached groups (e.g., aseptic sampling, tracebacks, environmental sampling, etc.). This includes hosting your own train-the-trainer course, or holding a series of trainings after attending a formal train-the-trainer course. • Providing trainings (as described above) to non-RRT states by advertising availability of personnel who can travel (especially non-RRT states) and provide training for public health and regulatory partners.

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2.E. Participate in individual, multi-state or national initiatives to undertake innovative approaches to response and/or create and provide tools and resources to help others enhance their ability to effectively respond to food/feed contamination incidents. Examples include:

- Use of emerging/new technology or use of existing technology in a new way, piloting a new process or innovative elements to an existing activity/process. At its conclusion, innovative projects should undergo a cost/benefit analysis, which should include an assessment of its impact on the period of time between agency notification of an incident and implementation of effective control measures.
- On-site evaluation of a "high risk" (as identified under MFRPS Standard #3) food, commodity, or specific type of producer, manufacturer or processor (such as LACF/Acidified Foods, and including high-risk animal feed and produce/farms as well), or participation in a special study and assessment to provide additional insights into how food may become contaminated within the farm to fork continuum (non-retail point of service focus). The evaluation/exercise/study should be done in collaboration with the FDA District Office and other relevant RRT member agencies/partners, and RRTs are encouraged to use a HACCP and/or CARVER + Shock approach. Results should be documented in the form of a final report, programmatic paper, and/or technical document to identify specific hazards and critical control points, strengths of the response team efforts, recommendations and needed improvements.
- Creation of coordinated District-State surveillance (sampling) assignments for products and contaminants of concern. Assignments should involve coordination of District-State sampling and laboratory testing capacity, and incorporate appropriate measures so as to ensure District and/or State regulatory or compliance action throughout all components of the assignment. Assignments should be targeted (e.g., risk-based; aimed at identifying points of contamination for a product within the farm to fork continuum or to address other strategic needs; and innovative approaches are encouraged). These projects may complement or augment, but not be duplicative of, other cooperative agreement requirements held by the laboratory (e.g., ISO, FERN).
- Establishing functional SME resources, accessible remotely and in real-time to provide SME input for specific types of investigations (commodity specific, especially high risk commodities) or investigation activities (e.g., tracebacks and data analysis), and could also serve as a surge capacity resource to others.

3. Gathering and Sharing Data to Support Prevention (3.C. is Required for all RRTs; Level 3 RRTs: Must Have 1 Project Per Year Selected From Other Sub-Parts; Level 1 & 2 RRTs: No Requirement)

3.A. Address gaps in procedures or training necessary to support conducting environmental assessments (assessments geared at identifying contributing factors and environmental antecedents that led to a food or feed contamination event).

3.B. Share investigation findings with industry, or work with relevant partners to propose recommendations for industry or other preventive measures based on findings from environmental assessments. Examples include: organizing/hosting workshop or trainings for industry, developing and providing written guidelines/best practices or other resources to industry, publishing articles in trade journals, leveraging State Food Protection Task Force events, and speaking at industry events.

3.C. Work with RRT member agencies/partners to capture and report environmental assessment data to national reporting systems, such as: FDA's Farm Investigation Questionnaire for on-farm/produce related microbiological contamination events, and CDC's National Outbreak Reporting System for any human foodborne illness outbreak. Use of the FDA Environmental Assessment Process Overview in conducting environmental assessments is encouraged.

3.D. Work with RRT member agencies/partners to capture and report environmental assessment data to CDC's National Environmental Assessment Reporting System (NEARS) for outbreaks linked to food service establishments.

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3.E. Collaborate with regulatory partners to suggest and implement prevention-focused improvements in routine inspection and sampling activities based on lessons learned and findings from past environmental assessments and investigations. Examples include: revision of inspection/investigation questionnaires or protocols, implementation of or changes to surveillance sampling schedules, revision of sampling protocols, and changes in risk classification of firm inventory.
4. Communicating RRT Impact (All Sub-Parts Required for all RRTs)
4.A. Conduct at least two presentations per year (oral or poster) documenting a specific RRT investigation or other activity and share a copy of the presentation within the RRT Program Workgroup in FoodSHIELD. At least one of these two presentations must be at a regional or national meeting (a RRT F2F Meeting presentation cannot count as your regional/national meeting presentation).
4.B. Present at least once per year on the national RRT monthly teleconference and present a poster at the national RRT face to face meeting to share investigation or project outcomes, as well as emerging or nascent stage lessons learned and best practices with other RRTs.
4.C. Prepare and post at least one report per year of a significant investigation, successful prevention effort, or other RRT action taken to protect public health on a Food Protection Task Force webpage, a state agency webpage or other public webpage and notify RRT Program Coordinators to allow cross-linking from the FDA RRT webpage. RRT authorship on a peer reviewed journal article is acceptable for this goal.
4.D. For each revision cycle of the RRT Manual, participate in at least one aspect of RRT Manual revision. Options include: review chapters to verify content or identify content requiring revision (at least 3 chapters), participate in the national review (review at least 3 chapters), and participate in a chapter committee (at least 1 committee). This goal may not be applicable during each year of the cooperative agreement (i.e. RRT Manual revision may span 2 years, only one activity is required, and can occur in either year).
Annual Requirement: In addition to meeting the yearly goals, grantees must participate in initiatives supporting the RRT Program, including sending at least 2 key RRT personnel to an annual face-to-face meeting (as determined by FDA/OP) and at least 1 person representing the RRT to the biennial Integrated Foodborne Outbreak Response Management (InFORM) Conference (held in odd number years) and the Regional PulseNet/OutbreakNet meetings (held in non-InFORM years), participating in FoodSHIELD workgroups, participating in RRT monthly conference calls, sharing best practices, and other RRT Program activities identified by OP.