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## Request for Applications

### **National Project Coordinator: Task Force on Educational Materials Related to Pesticide Applications Using Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs)**

*April 15, 2024 – Davis, California* – [The Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative \(PERC\)](http://www.pesticideresources.org) invites applications for a National Project Coordinator to assemble and facilitate a limited-duration **task force** to identify nationally-applicable regulations, risks-of-concern, and best practices related to the application of pesticides using Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), and/or drone technologies. The task force will determine what type of educational material(s) would be most widely adopted by states/tribes/territories with certification authority, and the essential content/training points that should be included. The National Project Coordinator will recruit and facilitate the task force, work with PERC staff to develop the prioritized educational material(s), collect and incorporate feedback from key stakeholders, and complete a final report.

**Background:** Pesticide applications using UAS are taking place across the United States, but there are no standard training materials available to inform applicators of the regulations, risks, and best practices. Some states/tribes are lumping UAV operators into the certification category for aerial applicators, who traditionally use fixed wing aircraft or helicopters, even though the study material(s) do not include UAV technologies. Some states/tribes are placing UAV operators in a separate certification category, and considering inclusion of other autonomous application devices such as ground rigs and/or watercraft that are operated remotely.

**The Project:** This project is broken into two parts (Phase 1 – scoping the need and resource(s) recommendation; and Phase 2 – creation/distribution of resources). The purpose of Phase 1 of this project is to 1) collect the widely recognized requirements, risks-of-concern, and best practices related to UAV-applied pesticides, and 2) determine the type/format of educational materials that would be most widely adopted, which may include one or more of the following approaches, or something else to be created in Phase 2:

- 1) A document describing data gaps, rapidly evolving methods, and/or other factors that make it difficult to define/describe nationally applicable best practices, and/or

- 2) A revised national aerial pesticide application manual and exam that includes UAV technologies, and/or
- 3) A new national manual/exam focused on UAV technologies.

The purpose of Phase 2 is to create Advisory Board-approved resources to add to a body of widely adopted educational materials and to make those materials available. Phase 2 will commence at the conclusion of Phase 1. The National Project Coordinator is a paid position and will serve both phases of the project. Experts and practitioners for the task force are presumed to be volunteers. Pending the recommendation of the task force for resources needed, PERC will recruit production professionals for Phase 2 in a separate solicitation and compensation will be available for some roles. No travel is anticipated in Phase 1 or 2, and teams will convene via phone or other forms of remote meeting technology.

In Phase 1, the National Project Coordinator will work with PERC staff to recruit experts and practitioners to serve on the task force. Members will be asked to share their experiences, expertise, publications, and/or training materials, allowing the National Project Coordinator to evaluate the training points/concepts, seeking consensus through stakeholder engagement. He or she will facilitate task force meetings and activities in a way that gathers diverse input, ensures regulatory compliance, and leverages the best science available to reduce pesticide-related risks to human health and the environment. After assembling a collection of regulations, risks-of-concern, and best practices for pesticide applicators using UAV technologies, the National Project Coordinator will collaborate with the task force to generate a final report of recommended resources. To enhance the capability of others to educate pesticide applicators about UAV technologies, the final report will include a summary of well-supported training points, a list of data gaps/needs, and any recommendations from the task force about future efforts related to education and/or risk-mitigation.

In the event a manual/exam are created in Phase 2, and in keeping with [PERC's policy](#) about the sharing of manuals associated with exams, no copies of the new material(s) will be made available digitally by PERC or adopters. However, downloadable copies of all other resource types will be made available for free on the PERC website.

The level of effort for the National Project Coordinator in Phase 1 will depend on the number of experts recruited into the task force, the complexity of training points, the team's availability (hours/week), and skill level. PERC predicts the peak effort for Phase 1 to occur between July and October, 2024, and could include 5-20 hours per week. It is expected that a report will be completed by November 2024. The National Project Coordinator will be available a bit longer to respond to user feedback and then will participate in Phase 2. The timeline for Phase 2 is dependent on what's recommended and approved in Phase 1. But all outputs must be created and shared by Spring 2026.

## National Project Coordinator, Phases 1 & 2 (P1 and P2)

**Job Description:** Responsibilities may include some or all of the following:

- Recruit experts with knowledge and/or experience related to UAV-applied pesticides to serve on a national task force. (P1)
- Gather nationally applicable information about regulations, risks-of-concern, and best practices to reduce pesticide risks when using UAV technologies. (P1)
- Communicate with task force members, PERC staff, and EPA about project status. (P1/P2)
- Evaluate sample training materials and/or training concepts; identify points of consensus and points of disagreement. (P1)
- Facilitate task force meetings and activities in a way that gathers diverse input, ensures regulatory compliance, and leverages the best science available to reduce pesticide-related risks to human health and the environment. (P1)
- Coordinate task force activities to achieve stated goals: 1) Collect the widely recognized requirements, risks-of-concern, and best practices related to UAV-applied pesticides, and 2) to determine the type/format of educational materials that would be most widely adopted. (P1)
- Work with PERC staff to assemble/deliver the Advisory Board-approved educational material(s) by supervising production activities, for example, the assembly of a manual/guide and/or exam questions/answers. (P2)
- When appropriate, incorporate feedback from the PERC Advisory Board. (P1/P2)
- Represent the project in one or more stakeholder gatherings to describe the new educational material and/or its development process. (P1/P2)

### **Qualifications:**

- **Required:** Experience coordinating a project and leading a team of others for desired, timely results within budget.
- **Required:** Experience collecting/collating information from a variety of diverse sources with proper citations/references, batching information by topic.
- **Required:** Familiarity with pesticide regulations, labels, and application methods.
- **Required:** Demonstrated excellence in written/oral communication skills and professionalism.
- **Required (in the event a manual/exam are recommended and approved):** Experience creating a manual and exam bank for commercial pesticide applicator certification exams.
- **Recommended:** Experience using/administering coordination tools such as shared calendars, scheduling polls, conference/video calls, and screen-sharing technologies.

- *Recommended:* Familiarity with UAVs, leaders in the field, and/or applicable regulations when applying pesticides with UAV technology.

**Eligibility:** State and tribal regulators, academic/private/non-profit educators, and experienced project coordinators are encouraged to apply. Funding is available to compensate the National Project Coordinator for their time, pending the applicant's eligibility to accept payment under the rules governing this cooperative agreement.

**Application procedure and selection:** Complete a letter of interest describing your qualifications (see above), availability, compensation requirements, and your interest in the project. Submit your letter by email to [PERCsupport@ucdavis.edu](mailto:PERCsupport@ucdavis.edu). PERC administrators from the University of California Continuing & Professional Education (UC CPE) and Oregon State University (OSU) will make the final selections using a score sheet, based on listed qualifications. Applicants will be notified by May 30, 2024.

**Application receipt deadline:** Monday, May 6, 2024; Earliest start date: July 1, 2024

Please direct your questions to [PERCsupport@ucdavis.edu](mailto:PERCsupport@ucdavis.edu). Feel free to share with colleagues and peers by forwarding this message. Also, check us out on social media for updates!

**All the best from our team,**

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About [PERC: The Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative](https://pesticideresources.org) is led by University of California of Davis Continuing and Professional Education and Oregon State University, and is funded by a 5-year cooperative agreement (#X8-84019401) from the U.S. EPA. PERC aims to protect the public and the environment by minimizing the misuse of pesticides, increasing access to high-quality education for applicators, and managing projects in support of safe pesticide use, thereby ensuring the safety of chemicals in the marketplace, and advancing the safe use of pesticides. This is complementary to the Environmental Protection Agency's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, Goal 7 – Ensure Safety of Chemicals for People and the Environment, Objective 7.1: Ensure Chemical and Pesticide Safety". See <https://pesticideresources.org>.