

NEED and NERA Food Systems Planning Grants Program

The Northeastern Cooperative Extension Directors (NEED) and Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA) announce regional competitive planning grants program in the area of food systems. These grants are to be used to organize Northeast Extension educators and researchers around teams to develop new mission-oriented, cross-disciplinary, multistate programs that build on the competitive advantage of the Northeast states. The programs are to be needs driven and combine strengths in local food systems, ethnic and other niche markets, Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs), global food security, food safety, sustainability, and human nutrition.

In preparing proposals, the team should also consider supply chain issues, agro-tourism possibilities, rural development, network science, demographic shifts, food deserts, and urban-rural connections. They must focus on new and promising integrated research and extension activities that bring together specialists in diverse fields to apply complementary approaches to work on an important well-defined problem. Proposals in support of programs that are forward looking/anticipatory are especially encouraged.

Proposals (not to exceed **three** single spaced pages) will be due on **February 8, 2013**. Final decisions will be made by March 1, 2013. Funding up to \$4,000 will be available to support transportation and meeting expenses to bring the team together. The funds come from the NEED and NERA operational budgets so they cannot be used to pay indirect costs, and we reimburse **only** the actual expenses. The funding will be available to the teams for a maximum of one year from the date of the award notification.

Proposals for planning grants should include:

- Mission and goals of the proposed program
- Justification for the program relative to stakeholder needs and potential for sustained external funding
- Activities to be engaged in by team members towards a more complete definition of the program
- Timetable for completion of the planning activities and preparation of a competitive proposal
- Team members from two or more Northeastern States and an explanation of their roles on the team
- Team leader with a demonstrated track record of leading cross-disciplinary and/or multi-institutional collaborations
- Budget for planning activities not to exceed \$4,000

A required outcome of a planning grant will be a proposal submitted to the National Institute for Food and Agriculture in response to the FY2013 or 2014 RFA's or other appropriate funding sources. Grant recipients will be expected to provide a written report at the end of the grant period and subsequent periodic reports on the status of resulting proposals.

The specific criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals are:

- Addresses an important need in the region
- Stakeholder supported justification
- Consistent with goals of competitive funding programs.
- Potential for sustained funding
- Clearly defined activities
- Integrated research and Extension activities; where appropriate resident education
- A strong component on the human dimensions associated with adoption of local food systems
- Realistic timetable
- Team members appropriate to proposed activities
- Team leaders with demonstrated track record
- Leveraged support
- Overall quality of proposal

Please submit planning grant proposals by c.o.b. on **February 8, 2013** to Rubie Mize at rgmize@aesop.rutgers.edu.

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