

“Excellence in Extension” Award Nomination Best Practices

The strongest award nominations weave together a full picture of who the nominee is, the scope of their work, and the impacts realized. They elevate programs and projects that are grounded in a needs assessment and use numbers, examples, and testimony whenever possible.

The most competitive **projects** are...

- Cross-disciplinary, unbound by the edges of an academic silo.
- Collaborative/co-creative.
- Innovative in problem solving and delivery methods.
- Responsive to diverse populations and are culturally sensitive/competent.
- Meeting a demonstrated need.

The most competitive **nominees** are...

- Adaptable.
- Effective.
- Active across the full cross-section of what is possible for an extension educator – from the field to classroom to the regulatory environment.
- Leaders beyond the project’s scope.
- Those with a history of success.

Award Nomination Checklist

All packages must maintain the original formatting of the request for nominations and should include

- Attention to **every element and subsection of the scoring rubric** provided by ECOP. Competitive nominations adhere fully to the nomination guidelines.
- A compelling story** arc that communicates “why this project”, “why here”, why now”, and “why in this way”.
- Evidence of programmatic responsiveness** to associated industry and/or community needs from development through delivery. Whenever possible, show how the program is grounded in a formal **needs assessment** and fills a gap that would otherwise be left unfilled.
- Clear and detailed **program information**, including:
 - breadth
 - delivery methods
 - self-assessments and resulting growth or change, and
 - efficacy as evidenced by industry partnerships/support, strong/repeated resourcing of programs from state agencies or other partners, and/or other awards received.
- Specific, strong, and enumerated examples of **program impact and metrics**.
- Evidence of nominee engagement** with students and with stakeholders
- Evidence of external dollars generated** and nominee grantsmanship — include names and dollar amounts whenever possible
- Conventional **academic and scholarship metrics and peer recognition**¹, including:

¹ NEED knows that the required publication and research accolade criteria is hard for non-academic and non-faculty extension personnel to fulfill. All nominees should at minimum have presented to or been acknowledged by their professional group in some way and have scholarship in the Journal of Extension.

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- **recognitions of excellence** at the local, state, regional or national level;
 - the number of **associated publications and presentations** at professional meetings;
 - information on **resources created**, authored or published, including factsheets, videos and curriculum, etc.
- Examples of **innovation** — consider all or any of the following questions:
- How was innovation used in programs?
 - How was innovation engaged as a methodology?
 - What new effective delivery methods resulted from the work?
 - What are the nominee’s ideas for future innovations to build on the project?
 - How did the program innovate in funding and partnership building and to what end?
- Demonstration of outreach and consideration of **diverse** communities and audiences.

The least competitive nominations will:

1. **Lack conventional metrics of extension/scholarly productivity** (e.g., scholarly articles, fact sheets, professional meeting presentations).
2. **Emphasize only one program example.**
3. **Lack hard evidence** (e.g., names, numbers, dollars) of impact, connection to stakeholders or proof of efficacy
4. **Lack evidence of project *outcomes including behavioral and environmental change***. *E.g.* A project develops and delivers recommendations to growers. The nomination details the number of growers who adopted the recommendations but does not include information on the *results realized* as a result of those recommendations being delivered or adopted.

The above best practices are tailored for the ECOP Excellence in Extension Award, but the general recommendations may be applied to many state, regional, and national award opportunities.

ECOP administers an annual Excellence in Extension award process through which extension professionals are recognized at the regional and national level.

In support of the Northeast submitting the most competitive nominations possible, NEED has implemented an endorsement and feedback process. Members are asked to send nominations for the ECOP Excellence in Extension Award to amitchell@northeastextension.org by 11:59pm ET on March 1st. The NEED Award Review Committee will select two nominations for detailed feedback and a request to improve before submittal to ECOP on May 1st.