
2026 Northeast Extension Planning Grants and Seed Funding

Request for Proposals

The Association of Northeast Extension Directors (NEED) announces an opportunity for planning grant and/or seed funding.

Through this funding, NEED seeks to promote coordination and collaboration between Land-grant universities, to support Extension research and program development in alignment with the Land-grant mission, and to leverage modest investment for larger fundraising efforts.

As such, NEED is soliciting multi-institutional proposals for funding that will support the creation of new meaningful collaborations, programs, projects, or resources.

Focus areas:

The Northeast Agenda was created by the Association of Northeast Extension Directors and AgInnovation Northeast to inspire research, education, and Extension collaborations that create vibrant communities and resilient food systems and working lands. Proposals for NEED planning grants should advance collaborations, programs, projects, or resources related to one or more of the Northeast Agenda's core priorities:

1. Develop resilient and sustainable food systems.
2. Lead innovation and collaboration to enhance long-term resilience across the Northeast.
3. Promote environmental, human, animal, and community health and well-being.

Proposals may lead to the development of one or more of the following:

- Collaborations, projects, programs, or resources that address issues noted in the Northeast Agenda.
- New multi-state programming methods.
- Improvement or development of a new collaborative system or idea.
- Development, writing, and submission of a large multistate fundraising proposal.

Available funding and how it can be used:

NEED is making \$20,000 available for the 2026-2027 awards cycle. Individual proposals may request up to \$10,000 to be expended within one year of the proposal start date.

Funds can be used to initiate Extension or integrated research and Extension collaborations, projects, programs, or resources that address a demonstrable northeast need and are aligned with one or more of the Northeast Agenda's core priorities. Eligible expenses include salary and fringe, travel expenses, meeting provisions, venue expenses, contractual services (e.g. facilitation, grant writing), and indirect expenses up to 10% of total direct costs. Proposals that bring together specialists in diverse fields to work on an important problem are especially encouraged.

Timeline:

Pre-proposals and full proposals should be submitted in PDF form to Ali Dunigan, NEED's Executive Director, at adunigan@northeastextension.org.

- **March 2, 2026:** Letters of intent (2-page max) including an early proposal narrative, timeline including a proposed start and end date (1 year max), key milestones, and team plan (but not budget) are due to NEED.
- **March 16, 2026:** Those invited to submit full proposals will be notified.
- **April 9, 2026:** Full proposals are due to NEED via email.
- **May 1, 2026:** Award announcements will be made.

Full proposal requirements:

Full proposals must demonstrate commitment from a minimum of two 1890 and/or 1862 Land-Grant universities in the Northeast. Proposal packages must be written in 11 pt Times New Roman font, single-spaced with 1" margins. Proposals should be submitted in PDF form to Ali Dunigan, NEED's Executive Director, at adunigan@northeastextension.org.

The proposal must include:

Cover Page:

- Proposal title.
- Involved Land-grant Universities.

Proposal Narrative (3-page limit):

- **STATEMENT OF NEED** – The problem, issue, or question the proposed collaboration, project, program, or resource will address. (i.e.: Why is this work important?)

- **PROPOSED SOLUTION** – How will the proposed activity advance one or more of the Northeast Agenda core priorities? What Extension or integrated research and Extension questions will be answered? (i.e.: What do you plan to do?)
- **OUTCOMES AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS** – Anticipated immediate-, mid-, and long-term outcomes and how they will be measured. How will the project outcomes support potential regional impact?
- **POTENTIAL FOR LEVERAGE** – If the proposal is for grant writing and/or funding development support, the proposal must include the funding opportunity (e.g., agency and title of the funding opportunity announcement, philanthropic sources) and the estimated intended request from the source (direct cost only).

Timeline (1-page limit):

- **START AND END DATE OF THE PROJECT.**
- **KEY MILESTONES.**

Team Plan (1-page limit):

- **TEAM MEMBERS** – Who is the team leader and who are the team members? What are their roles and what expertise do they bring to the effort?)
- **STATEMENT OF TEAM QUALIFICATIONS** – This statement should clearly demonstrate the capacity of the team to deliver on the proposal.

Budget (2-page limit):

- **BUDGET NARRATIVE** – What will you do with the funds and what's the timetable for spenddown?
- **BUDGET TABLE** – Table that describes expected expenses not to exceed \$10,000 from NEED and any leveraged resources.

Reporting and Communication Requirements

Strong impact stories are critical for the long-term health of Extension. As such, recipients of funding will be required to have pre- and post-activity meetings with the Northeast Communicators Network. In the pre-meeting, recipients consider what reporting and impact considerations must be present at the start for there to be a strong success story at the end. The post-meeting will focus on helping the team write and/or refine a success or impact story. The goal for this engagement is for the team to have a clear and powerful story for publication on the NEED website that can also be used to support next steps.

Recipients of a NEED planning grant will also be asked to provide NEED with a short-written report on how the funds were spent, any short-term impacts, and, as appropriate, the success of a submitted grant proposal.