

Association of Northeast Extension Directors

Meeting Notes and Action Items

January 8, 2026
8:00 AM – 9:30 AM ET

Attendance: Andy Turner, Amy Harder, Bill Miller, Lisa Townson, Jenn Volk, Erik Ervin, Nelson Escobar, Jinhee Kim, Jeff Hyde, James McKane, Jenn Volk, Lynne McLandsborough, Jorge Atilas, Amy Loader, Gulni Ozbay, Brian Schilling, Ali Mitchell Dunigan

| Agenda item | Action taken/To take |
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| <p><u>NEED Business</u> Accept past meeting summary and agenda</p> <p>Ask for any additions to the agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amy Harder asked over email that we take time to discuss this article and possible implications for Extension: https://apnews.com/article/snap-medicaid-hud-work-requirements-trump-big-beautiful-bill-05c560dc624acd69d9da5c5631721c29. This subject will be taken up during the February meeting. <p>Project Updates and Tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NEED Seed Grant Program: The program will be launched later in January. • 2026 Exceptional Local Educator Award: The program is live! Learn about the 2026 program at https://northeastextension.org/northeast-exceptional-local-educator-award/ • Follow up from North Central Region visit: Think about ongoing opportunities for collaboration. <p>NIFA update: This update was provided by Ali Dunigan as Dr. Kal Kalavacharla was unable to join us.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay special attention to Secretary's memos - Secretary's Memorandum 1078-003 Directive on Conservation and Natural Resources Priorities; Secretary's Memorandum 1078-004 Directive on Departmental Grant and Cooperative Agreement Priorities – and to the Executive Order “Improving Oversight of Federal Grantmaking” https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/08/improving-oversight-of-federal-grantmaking/ • Also of interest are the Secretary’s R&D priorities: https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/12/30/secretary-rollins-announces-new-priorities-research-and-development-2026 | <p>Motion: To accept the December 2025 meeting summary as presented. L. Townson/A. Harder/Carried</p> <p>Discussion of the implication of work requirements will be taken up in February or during the March Retreat.</p> |

- RREA reporting guidance was sent to the deans this year rather than the Extension Director.

ECOP & regional committee issues & updates

- ECOP: ECOP Chairs reviewed the secretary’s R&D memo. Great idea from NEED for ECOP to host a joint webinar with AgInnovation. ECOP Health Tiger Team is beginning the writing stage of its work.

Other updates:

- NIFA Civil Rights Reviews: UMass was contacted by the office of equal opportunity that it will be undertaking an Extension civil rights audit. The NIFA contact is Terrance Maynard. Penn State’s Ag Research side received a notice last week. DESU is in limbo as NIFA has requested that the university’s equal opportunity be changed before they submit.
- NIFA Financial Compliance Reviews - WVU Extension and Experiment Station are now going through a “financial compliance review” with NIFA. UMES went through it last year. For UMES they had issue with one document during the 9-month process.
- Amy Loader has resigned from the Northeast SARE administrative council. Other Extension professionals are on the Council – Ronnie Helmondollar (WVU), Naveen Kumar Dixit (UMES).

Discussion: How are states generating non-grant revenue (through sponsorships, contracts, program fees, etc.)?

This discussion was wide-ranging. It included the following items:

- Many members are considering what pricing for fee-based services should be given requirements from the university and the needs/preferences of constituents.
- Penn State has a robust set of online fee-based educational offerings. They use salesforce as an integrated CRM program. The system has capacity to host programming that can be charged for on demand, but professionals had to take time to figure out how they can create programming that can go up on the platform.
- Do any LGU’s have a 4-H enrollment fee? Bill Miller UMass -- \$40 base, \$20 for those on free and reduced lunch, or free with a waiver. Only for club programs, not for school-based programs. Penn State also has an enrollment fee.

Ali will work with Jorge Atilas to create a spreadsheet to easily collect information from each institution about Extension’s fee-based services and programs. The collection tool will be shared with NEED members. The goal is to have data to discuss during the March Retreat.

NEED’s Executive Committee will consider engaging NEED on how to best limit competition and increase collaboration around online Extension offerings.

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- UMass has been thinking about pricing to not undermine private entities that are doing similar work (ex. soil testing and plant pathologies).

As a result of this wide-ranging discussion, NEED decided to do a study of what we charge for different Extension services.

Member Roundtable: “Is anyone else working on...?”

This is open time for any other topics members want to bring up. The prompt “is anyone else working on...?” was pulled from our discussion with the North Central Region in December.

NEED began discussing ideas for NEED’s virtual March retreat.
