2027 Northeast Extension Planning and Project Initiation Awards

Request for Proposals

The Association of Northeast Extension Directors (NEED) announces an opportunity for multistate teams to apply for a planning and project initiation award.

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

As such, NEED is soliciting multi-institutional proposals 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 highlight the key challenges and opportunities facing the Northeastern United States and the role Land-grant universities play in responding to them. Proposals for NEED planning and project initiation awards should advance collaborations, programs, projects, or resources related to one or more of the Northeast Agenda's core priorities:

- Develop resilient and sustainable food systems.
- Lead innovation and collaboration to enhance long-term resilience across the Northeast.
- 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 grant or project proposal.

Award details and how it can be used:

NEED is making $20,000 available for the 2027-2028 awards cycle. Individual proposals may request up to $10,000 to be expended within one year of the proposal start date.

The award 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). Indirect costs are not allowed. Proposals that bring together specialists in diverse fields to work on an important problem are especially encouraged.

Timeline:

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

- **March 2, 2027**: Letters of intent (2-page max) are due to NEED via email.
- **March 16, 2027**: Those invited to submit full proposals will be notified.
- **April 9, 2027**: Full proposals are due to NEED via email.
- **May 5, 2027**: Award announcements will be made.
- **July, 2027**: Funds will be distributed.

Letter of intent requirements:

Letters of intent may be up to 2-pages in length and must include:

- An early proposal narrative that clearly outlines the issue being addressed and why a multi-institutional Extension response is necessary.
- A timeline including proposed start and end dates (1 year max).
- Key milestones.
- Team plan that demonstrates interest or engagement with Extension from at least three northeast LGUs. No budget is required.

Full proposal requirements:

Full proposals must demonstrate commitment from a minimum of three 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.**
- **List of committed 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's 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 could the project's outcomes result in broader regional efforts or impacts?
- **Potential for leverage** – If the proposal is for grant writing and/or fund development support, the proposal must include the funding opportunity (e.g., agency and title of the funding opportunity, 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 as a well as any leveraged resources.

Reporting and Communication Requirements

The ability to create and share strong impact stories is critical for the long-term health of Extension. As such, award recipients will be required to have pre- and post-activity

meetings with the Northeast Communicators Network. In the pre-meeting, recipients will consider what reporting, and impact considerations must be present at the start of the project for there to be a strong impact story at the end. The post-meeting will focus on helping the project team write and/or refine that impact story. The goal for this engagement is for the project team to end with a clear and powerful impact story that can be published on the NEED website, submitted to the National Impacts Database, and used to support next steps.

After the project concludes, recipients of a NEED planning and project initiation award 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 any secondary submitted funding proposal.