

# The Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA) Onboarding<sup>1</sup>

Welcome to the Northeast. We appreciate that as a new academic research leader, you're developing your activities portfolio and coordinating with organizations that will help you with your position and professional expectations. The Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA) is poised to assist you.

*Where we are:* NERA is located in Kingston, Rhode Island and is hosted by the University of Rhode Island. We're on line at: <https://www.nerasaes.org/>.

*Who we are:* NERA's Executive Director is Dr. Rick Rhodes ([rchrhodes@uri.edu](mailto:rchrhodes@uri.edu)) and NERA's Coordinator and Regional System Administrator is Mr. David Leibovitz ([David\\_leibovitz@uri.edu](mailto:David_leibovitz@uri.edu).) Rick is a professor of Animal and Veterinary Science, a former department chair, and former agricultural experiment station director. David is a University of Rhode Island graduate with a background in business administration and supply chain management. We are funded by assessments to our regional institutions based as a percentage of a station's Hatch Multistate Research Fund allocation in comparison to the total regional allocation.

*What do we do:* NERA serves the agricultural experiment stations in the Northeast through the promotion of collaboration. We are one of five regional associations<sup>2</sup> that support the state agricultural experiment stations. We help in the management of the Hatch Multistate Research Fund, which has an annual Federal regional allocation of approximately \$11 million. (This is also matched by non-Federal funds 1:1.) Beyond these capacity funds, NERA extends planning grants (up to \$7,000) to faculty who need assistance for submission of large, multi-institutional, competitively funded, grant opportunities. We also serve as the connecting organization for the 14 state agricultural experiment stations scattered primarily among the region's thirteen Land-grant Universities. NERA provides regional members with opportunities to work on issues of mutual interest. We do that through quarterly meetings: a spring face-to-face meeting (providing we're not in the middle of a pandemic), a summer face-to-face meeting (in conjunction with the Association of Northeast Extension Directors, NEED), a fall face-to-face meeting (in conjunction with the annual Experiment Station Section Meeting), and a winter teleconference. Additionally, we use a biweekly newsletter to keep the Association informed. NERA gives the region a voice on national issues through the Association of Public and Land-

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<sup>1</sup> Updated August 4, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> The other regional associations include: Association of 1890 Research Directors (ARD), North Central Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NCRA), Southern Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (SAAESD) and Western Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (WAAESD).

grant Universities ([APLU](#)) and its associated centers of agricultural leadership, the Board on Agricultural Assembly ([BAA](#)) and the Experiment Station Committee on Organization and Policy ([ESCOP](#)), the governing body of the Experiment Station Section (ESS). We also serve as your liaison with the National Institute of Food and Agriculture ([NIFA](#).)

*What do you need to know:*

We use the [NERA website](#) as the Association's archive. That's where you'll find the NERA directory, the list of officers, announcements (regional and national), meeting agendas and minutes, reports, and a list of resources. We also include a [list of acronyms](#) for the alphabet soup of organizations with which you will work. Last, we value your capabilities and encourage you to participate in regional and national activities.

#### *Regional activities*

- [NERA Executive Committee](#). The NERA Executive Committee is composed of the NERA chair, past chair, incoming chair, and officer-at-large. This is the Association's senior leadership team.
- [NERA Multistate Activities Committee \(MAC\)](#). This is the most important committee of NERA and is responsible for the disposition of multistate research projects (NE series projects), coordinating committees (CC-series projects) and education/extension and research activity projects (ERA-series projects.) The committee is guided by the [Northeastern Supplement to the Guidelines for Multistate Research Activities](#).
- [Administrative Advisors \(AA\)](#). NERA members serve as AAs of multistate projects and are the key persons in the development and management of multistate research projects. Importantly, an AA does not need to be a discipline expert for a given project. NERA has archived [tips for AAs](#).

#### *National Activities*

- [National Information Management and Support System \(NIMSS\)](#). This site provides one-stop shopping for management of projects funded through the Multistate Research Fund (also called Hatch Regional or Hatch Multistate.) NERA is your Regional System Administrator, and can assist you with requests to write multistate research project proposals, processing proposals, peer reviews, adding participants using the Appendix E, annual reports, meeting authorizations, etc. Any aid that you might need as a director or Administrative Advisor, we can help.
- [ESCOP committees](#). These are opportunities for NERA members to participate and assist the national [Experiment Station Section \(ESS\)](#).
  - [Budget and Legislative \(BLC or Bud and Leg\)](#). This committee assists in the annual justification of federal budgets and focuses primarily on the NIFA budget lines.
  - [National Research Support Project Review Committee \(NRSP RC\)](#). The NRSP RC evaluates all NRSP proposals and reviews. NRSPs are funded by off-the-top allocations from the Multistate Research Fund.

- [Diversity Catalyst Committee](#) (DCC). This committee champions a long-term diversity and inclusion agenda for the ESS.
- [Science and Technology](#) (STC or Sci and Tech). The committee assists ESCOP to identify future directions and anticipate and respond to research needs and opportunities for funding.
- BAA Committees
  - [Budget and Advocacy](#) (BAC). The BAC is responsible for the preparation of the annual budget recommendation.
  - [Committee on Legislation and Policy](#) (CLP or Farm Bill Committee). The CLP is responsible for coordinating the activities of the BAA related to Farm Bill legislation.
  - [Communications and Marketing Committee](#) (CMC). The CMC oversees and guides the Communications and Marketing Project (CMP) which is a coordinated and targeted educational effort to increase awareness of the Land-grant University agricultural and related programs, Agricultural Experiment Stations and Cooperative Extension Services.