

2017-18 Planning Grants Program

Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA)

The Northeastern Regional Association of State Agricultural Experiment Station Directors (NERA) announces the 9th round of its competitive planning grants program. These grants will be awarded to organize agricultural experiment station scientists and research and outreach partners in the region into teams to address high priority research needs and facilitate the transfer of new research-based knowledge to appropriate audiences. To be considered, proposed programs must be 1) in experiment station mission areas, 2) cross-disciplinary, 3) multistate, and 4) address important needs of the northeast region. Proposed programs must have a clearly defined, strong core of research activities. Programs that also contain well-developed outreach or educational components or other appropriate forms of research implementation will be most competitive. Ideally, teams will focus on new and promising research collaborations or integrated research and outreach/educational activities that bring together specialists in diverse fields to apply complementary approaches to work on an important well-defined problem. The team should include scientists from a minimum of three experiment stations in the northeast. Proposals in support of programs that are forward looking or anticipatory are especially encouraged.

NERA invites applications to support teams in the major mission areas of agricultural experiment stations in the region. Applicants should consider current priorities of potential funding agencies in station mission areas (e.g., USDA-AFRI, NSF, NIH, and others) when developing proposals. For questions on whether topics are appropriate, prospective applicants can contact station directors or the NERA Executive Director (Rick Rhodes; see <http://www.nerasaes.org/>).

Proposals will be due on **August 31, 2017**. Proposals are not to exceed **three** single-spaced pages (Times Roman 12 point and one inch margins) not including the cover page and appendices.

A planning grant committee comprised of NERA directors will review proposals and make recommendations to the full NERA membership for funding approval. Final decisions will be made by **October 1, 2017**. Applicants may apply for a maximum of **\$7,000** of support and NERA expects to make **3 awards**. Funding awards will be available for a maximum of one year from the date of award notification. The funds will be administered by the Office of the NERA Executive Director and will only be used to reimburse actual expenses. Unused funds will be retained by NERA. Funds may only be used to support transportation and meeting expenses to bring teams together for planning and organizational purposes. Funds cannot be used to pay indirect costs and in general will not be awarded for salaries or wages. Planning grant funds cannot be used to support initial research or outreach activities of the proposed program.

Proposals for planning grants should include:

- Cover page (example included)
- Mission and goals of the proposed program
- Justification for the program with a focus on stakeholder needs and the potential for sustained external funding
- Activities to be engaged in by team members towards a more complete definition of the program
- Explanation of roles of team members
- Timetable for completion of the planning activities and preparation of a competitive

proposal

- Budget for planning activities (travel, meeting expenses, etc.) not to exceed \$7,000
- A statement on whether NERA funding will provide opportunities to leveraging additional resources
- CV of Team Leader – as an appendix (two page maximum) demonstrating track record of leading cross-disciplinary and/or multi-institutional collaborations

The specific criteria that will be used to evaluate proposals are:

(* = required element. Other elements are preferred only.)

- Addresses an important need in the region*
- Justification demonstrates stakeholder support for the project
- Program has a strong research core*
- Substantial participation by researchers from three experiment station (minimum = 3)*
- Consistent with goals of competitive funding programs*
- Potential for sustained funding*
- Clearly defined planning activities*
- Well-developed outreach or educational components or other research implementation
- Realistic timetable*
- Team members appropriate to proposed activities*
- Team leaders with demonstrated track record*
- Potential support (funding or other) from other entities
- Well written and organized proposal that addresses all the required criteria satisfactorily*

NERA expects that an outcome of a planning grant will be a proposal submitted to a major funding agency specified in the proposal. Grant recipients will be asked to provide a written report at the end of the grant period and subsequent periodic reports on the status of resulting proposals.

In order to provide guidance and feedback from the previous rounds of grant proposals, the following are reflect reviewer comments on those proposals:

- Goals not well defined
- Not clear what specific, major, or compelling issues will be addressed
- Priority not well established
- Needs not clearly justified; does this project have a clear stakeholder need or clear stakeholder support; what specific clientele will be served
- Not a strong team of AES scientists or a strong research program
- No specifics on what activities are being planned – what are the key approaches to be used
- Strategy of individual proposal development and then consolidation not clear
- Proposed collaboration not well described
- Deliverables not clear
- Potential for sustainable funding not clear

Please submit planning grant proposals by close of business on **August 31, 2017** to David Leibovitz at david_leibovitz@uri.edu.

2017-2018 NERA Planning Grants Program

Project Title: _____

Team Leader Contact Information:

Name:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Fax:	
E-mail:	

Team Leader Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Station Director Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Team Members

Name	Discipline	Institution/Agency/Other

(Attach an additional sheet if more space is needed.)