

Northern New England Collaborative Research Funding Program

Request for Proposals

October 25, 2014

Submission Deadline: February 6, 2015, 4:00 PM

The Northern New England Collaborative Research Funding Program is a partnership of the Maine Agricultural and Forest Experiment Station, New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station, and Vermont Agricultural Experiment Station. The goal of the program is to catalyze coordinated regional research on high priority needs for the northern New England region in experiment station mission areas.

The program awards seed grants to regional research teams through an annual competition. It is the intent of the program to provide one two-year seed grant annually contingent on available funding. Program priority areas may change annually. The stations seek to invest in research teams that have the interest and potential to serve the northern New England area for an extended period. The stations encourage development of U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) multistate projects and have structured the proposal format for the Northern New England program to align with USDA multistate project requirements.

Program Priority Area for 2015

The stations invite applications for research projects in the areas of agriculture and foods important to northern New England within respective experiment station mission areas. The proposed research may address specific agricultural and food issues, needs, or opportunities important to all three of the participating states. As a regional project, the proposed research must be more effective and efficient in meeting objectives than could independent state projects.

Project Types

Projects may be fundamental, applied, and/or multidisciplinary research. For research initiatives where all three stations do not have expertise in the focal discipline, a

multidisciplinary approach may be the best option for meeting program requirements. Awards are seed grants for advancing new initiatives. These awards are not for project planning.

The program uses the USDA Agriculture and Food Research Institute’s definition of seed grants, slightly generalized for this application: Seed grants are to provide funds to enable investigators to collect preliminary data or perform other preliminary activities in preparation for applying for future grants. Seed grants are not intended to fund stand-alone projects, but rather projects that will lead to further work applicable to this program priority area. Proposals need to justify how this seed grant will allow the applicant to become competitive for future funding.

Eligibility

All faculty members with active experiment station appointments at the University of Maine, University of New Hampshire, and University of Vermont are eligible to apply as co-principal investigators. Projects may include collaborating scientists external to the station, but use of seed grant funds is restricted to station personnel.

Other Requirements

- There must be at least one co-principal investigator from each of the three participating experiment stations.
- The project must address research objectives important to all three states.
- Clear justification for the work from stakeholder perspectives is required in the proposal. Letters of support from stakeholders are not required.
- Matching funds are not required.
- Funds will not be expended for indirect costs. Funds cannot be used for faculty salaries. Proposal and budget approval by University Research and Sponsored Program offices is not required because funds are awarded and expended within each state and will be linked to approved experiment station projects. Local university and station financial policies apply for funds expended at each station.

Awards

One award will be made in 2015. Awards will be for a two-year period with the maximum total award of \$120,000, divided equally between years. Each station will administer its individual funding contribution (\$40,000 max. over two years). Unexpended funds at the end of the project period will revert to the stations. The goal for releasing funds is April 2, 2015, but funds distribution will be influenced by local station processes.

Expected Outcomes

- Research-based information that helps agricultural and food producers and systems in all three northern New England states successfully adapt to new challenges and exploit new opportunities.
- New partnerships that leverage the strengths of each of the participating stations to more efficiently and effectively address needs in northern New England.
- New scientific resources to develop competitive proposals to external funding agencies.
- Publication of new research-based information for the northern New England region.

Reporting

Annual and final reports are required from project teams. As with other station-supported activities, outcomes will be reported in REEport or the National Information Management and Support System (NIMSS).

Time Line

Letter-of-intent deadline	December 15, 2014, 4:00 PM
Notice of invitation to submit proposal	December 22, 2014
Proposal submission deadline	February 6, 2015, 4:00 PM
Award notice	February 27, 2015
Year 1 funds available	Approximately April 1, 2015. Depends on local station processes.
Year 1 annual report	March 4, 2016
Year 2 funds available	Approximately April 2, 2016. Depends on local station processes.
Final report	September 30, 2016

Letter of Intent

A letter of intent to submit a proposal will be required and used for an initial assessment of the proposed topic and the core team. Teams with a record of productivity or potential and proposing research on high priority issues, needs, or opportunities for the three-state region will be invited to submit proposals. The letter of intent must identify the team

contact and at least one co-principal investigator from each station and provide a summary of the topic and its importance to northern New England. The letter of intent is limited to one page.

Proposal Review

1. Selection Criteria
 - a. The proposal meets all requirements described above in this RFP.
 - b. The project team has a record of productivity or high potential.
 - c. The proposed project addresses important research needs and opportunities in the program priority area.
 - d. Project deliverables are clearly described and can be produced within the project period.
 - e. Research outputs from the project will be applicable to all three states.
 - f. The proposed project leverages strengths of all three experiment stations and as a regionally coordinated project is potentially more effective and efficient for achieving research objectives than independent state-level efforts.
 - g. Outputs and outcomes from the project will make the research team more competitive for future funding.
 - h. There is strong potential the research team will have opportunities to compete for extramural funding after project completion.
 - i. There are indicators the research team intends to continue research in the program area for an extended period beyond the term of the grant.
2. Submitted proposals will be evaluated by station directors and associate directors with respect to the above criteria. Project approval will require a consensus decision of the three station directors.

Proposal Content and Format

1. Required Proposal Sections
 - a. Title Page (see form)
 - b. Research Team
 - c. Issues and Justification for Research
 - d. Seed Grant Justification and Strategy
 - e. Related, Current, and Previous Work
 - f. Objectives
 - g. Approach
 - h. Measurement of Progress and Results: Outputs, Outcomes, and Milestones
 - i. Organization/Governance
 - j. Budget Narrative
 - k. Budget Table (see form)
 - l. Literature Cited
 - m. Two-page vitae for each co-PI and major research collaborators.

2. Other Format and Content Information

- a. Proposals must adhere to the following formatting requirements: Font size must be at least 12 point (excludes vitas). All margins must be at least 1 inch. The proposal is limited to 12 pages excluding the title page, literature cited section, and vitas. Number pages of the proposal sequentially beginning after the title page. Vitas should not be numbered.
- b. The research team section should briefly describe the roles of participants.
- c. The issues and justification section should include, but is not limited to, (i) the need including stakeholder priorities; (ii) importance of the research and what the consequences are if it is not done; (iii) technical feasibility of the research; (iv) the advantages for doing the research as a coordinated regional effort; and (v) the likely impacts on agriculture of successfully completing the research.
- d. The seed grant justification and strategy section should clearly explain how the project activities and accomplishments will position the research team to be competitive for future funding.
- e. The budget table and budget narrative should describe annual expenses and clearly indicate the division of annual expenses among the three participating stations.
- f. In addition to biographical information, each vitae must include lists of recent publications and major external funding for the last five years.
- g. Forms for the title page and budget table are available at local station websites:
www.umaine.edu/mafes/
www.colsa.unh.edu/aes/
www.uvm.edu/vtaes/

Submissions

The deadline for submission of the letter-of-intent is 4:00 PM on December 15, 2014. The deadline for submission of completed proposals is 4:00 PM on February 6, 2015. Proposals, including the title page and budget forms, must be submitted electronically as a single PDF document. Submit proposals by email to Charlene Herrick at cherrick@maine.edu.

Assistance

Questions on the program requirements can be directed to the following individuals. Also, feel free to contact station directors for assistance in identifying faculty who might have an interest in collaborating on specific topics or project teams.

Frederick A. Servello, Associate Dean and Associate Director
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Questions on submission processes should be directed to

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