

Announcement of the NTAE Innovation Project Funding Opportunity

The Extension Foundation (EXF) is pleased to announce a funding opportunity for Incubation and Accelerated projects across the Cooperative Extension System (CES). This funding opportunity is made available through NTAE (New Technologies for Ag Extension), a grant from USDA-NIFA (United States Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture) to fund new and high impact potential projects within CES. Projects should have focus areas that lead to local impact and align with [USDA Research Priorities](#). Project leaders can apply for one of the two types of projects this grant will support: Incubation and Acceleration

Project levels and details:

Applicants may apply under one of two project levels based on the current stage of development of their proposed work: Incubation or Acceleration.

- **Incubation projects** are in the idea, concept development, or early pre-planning phase. These projects have not yet been fully implemented and may still be refining their goals, intended audience, delivery approach, partnerships, or evaluation strategy. Incubation funding is intended to help teams move a promising idea toward implementation by strengthening the project concept, building partnerships, developing a clear plan of action, identifying appropriate technologies or delivery strategies, and establishing a foundation for future impact and sustainability. Incubation projects will receive funding up to \$10,000.00.
- **Acceleration projects** have been recently implemented or piloted and demonstrate promising early results or strong potential for broader impact. These projects have moved beyond the idea stage and have some initial experience, data, feedback, or lessons learned that can inform their next phase of development. Acceleration funding is intended to help teams strengthen, refine, expand, or scale their work; deepen evaluation and documentation of outcomes; strengthen partnerships and communications; and position the project for greater reach, sustainability, and replication. Acceleration projects will receive funding up to \$20,000.00

Which Project Level Is Right for You?

Use the comparison below to determine which project level best reflects the current stage of your proposed project.

	Incubation	Acceleration
Current Stage	Idea, concept development,	Recently implemented,

	or pre-planning.	piloted, or in early delivery.
Best Fit If...	You have identified a need or promising idea but have not yet fully implemented the project.	You have tested or launched the project and have early evidence that the approach is promising.
What You May Already Have	An identified issue or opportunity; potential audience; initial project concept; possible partners or collaborators.	A completed or ongoing pilot; participant or stakeholder feedback; preliminary outcomes or evaluation data; lessons learned from implementation.
What You Need Next	Project planning; partnership development; program or educational design; technology selection; evaluation planning; communication or implementation strategy.	Refinement or expansion; stronger evaluation; increased reach; partnership development; improved communications or marketing; strategies for sustainability, replication or scaling.
Example	A team has identified a need for a new technology-supported Extension program and has a strong concept but needs support developing the program model, partnerships, evaluation plan, and implementation strategy.	A team recently piloted a technology-supported Extension program with a small audience. Initial participation, feedback or outcomes are encouraging, and the team now wants to refine the model and expand its reach and impact.
Not Yet a Fit If...	The idea is not sufficiently developed to identify a clear issue, audience, or potential Extension response.	The project has not yet been implemented or tested. In this case, Incubation is likely the more appropriate project level.

Applicants should select the project level that most closely represents the current stage of the proposed project at the time of application, rather than where they anticipate the project will be by the end of the funding period.

Eligibility

All land-grant universities are welcome to apply regardless of membership status in the EXF. Depending on the type of project, teams may receive subawards of up to \$20K, and all projects receive support from EXF Key Informants. Key Informants have subject matter expertise across areas such as publishing, evaluation, partner development, leadership and team development, marketing, communications, education design, technology, and more. Through NTAE, the EXF provides a set of services most projects rarely have access to, creating a deeper impact and greater sustainability for the project.

Funding Period

The anticipated funding period for this subaward will be January 1, 2027 - September 21, 2027.

Key Dates:

Application Opens: October 5, 2026

Application Due Date: November 11, 2026

Funding Amount Available: \$10K - 20K depending on the type of project.

Eligibility: All land-grant universities are welcome to apply regardless of membership status in the EXF

Award Period: January 1, 2027 - September 21, 2027

Live Application Trainings:

- October 8, 2026 at 1 - 2 pm eastern
- October 14, 2026 at 3 - 4 pm eastern
- Please use this [Zoom link](#) for all training sessions

Office Hours all times eastern:

- October 7, 2026 at 11 am - 2:30 pm
- October 8, 2026 at 10 am - 12 pm
- October 14, 2026 at 11 am - 1:30 pm
- Please use this [Zoom link](#) for all dates and times:
- Office hours will be held in order for applicants to “drop in” to ask any questions they may have about the application, grant process, budget, project expectations, etc.

Application Review Process:

EXF will use a multi-step approach in the receiving and review of applications for this program. Each application will be reviewed by EXF personnel for programmatic and budget compliance and completeness. After initial EXF review, applications will then be reviewed by an outside panel with relevant experience and expertise. Reviewers will use the criteria outlined in this funding opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations that will help guide funding decisions.

Application Submission

Applications for this funding opportunity can be accessed via an [online portal](#). The application will go live on October 5, 2026 at 12 pm eastern.

Live Application System Trainings:

Potential applicants are invited to attend an optional training through Zoom for the online application system. During the training, the EXF Program Manager will provide a step-by-step walkthrough of the application site, the application, and submission. If you cannot attend a training session, it will be recorded and made available after the second training on the Extension Foundation's website. Additional training sessions can be scheduled on an as needed basis or via special request. Open office hours will also be held in order for applicants to drop in with application questions at their convenience. Please see above for a schedule of training sessions and open office hours.

If you have any application or process questions, please contact Tira Adelman at tiraadelman@extension.org. If you have specific budget questions, please contact Brenna Kotar at brennakotar@extension.org.

About Extension Foundation

The Extension Foundation was formed in 2006 by Extension Directors and Administrators. Today, the Foundation partners with Cooperative Extension through liaison roles and a formal plan of work with the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) to increase system capacity while providing programmatic services and helping Extension programs scale and investigate new methods and models for implementing programs.

The Foundation also provides professional development to Cooperative Extension professionals and offers exclusive services to its members. Its purpose is in its mission statement: *Our mission is to empower a national network of community-based educators, volunteers, and partners to turn knowledge into real-world solutions for stronger communities and people.*