



Faculty Grants Collaboration Initiative
Request for Applications (RFA): FY2026 Nebraska Research Initiative (NRI) Funds

Introduction: The primary purpose of the **Collaboration Initiative** is to enhance the competitiveness of University of Nebraska (NU) faculty for federal extramural funding by fully leveraging the intellectual capacity and research resources across the NU campuses. The **Fiscal Year 2026** request for applications focuses on a single, flexible grant type:

- Single-year seed grants designed to facilitate research collaborations among faculty in *any discipline*

or UNL.^{2,3,4} If a proposal's PI has not received extramural research funding in the last three years (as either a PI or Co-PI), they must identify at least one Co-PI who is both grant-active and willing to serve as a research mentor to the team. The research mentor need not be actively involved in the research itself, but a description of their role and activities associated with the mentoring process must be included in the project narrative (one short paragraph).

General Eligibility: Assistant, Associate, or Full Professors and equivalent-rank faculty with formal research appointments/apportionments employed by any NU campus are eligible to submit funding applications as the PI and participate as Co-PIs. Other faculty are eligible to participate and contribute towards a project's goals, but the primary focus of the program is to strengthen the federally fundable research competitiveness of faculty who are likely to maintain a longer-term employment relationship with NU. Faculty may serve as the lead PI on *one* grant associated with this year's RFA; there is no limit on participation as Co-PIs. Collaboration Initiative-funded PIs/Co-PIs are not restricted from seeking new funding for federally fundable topics not previously researched with prior-year Collaboration Initiative support.

Collaboration Requirements: Proposals will not be considered for funding unless *meaningful*⁵ **multi-campus** and appropriate disciplinary collaborations are documented. Faculty employed by one NU campus (UNK, UNL, UNMC, and UNO) must identify at least one collaborator affiliated with another campus; if appropriate, because of unique expertise/resource availability, additional collaborations with researchers at other institutions are allowed. Funding for collaborators outside the University of Nebraska system will not typically be permitted unless they provide a billable service to the project. Collaborations are to be driven by mutual interest and disciplinary/expertise needs. Investigators seeking funding for projects without multi-campus participation are not eligible for this program; they should contact their campus research office to explore campus-specific internal funding opportunities.

Annual Meeting: An annual meeting to facilitate multi-campus collaborations, gain perspectives from past NRI funding recipients, and review the RFA will be held on Friday, November 1, 2024 (in-person). Potential PIs/team leaders wishing to be eligible for funding must participate unless a special waiver/dispensation is granted. Potential team members (Co-PIs), former and current Collaboration Initiative grantees, and others looking to participate on

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research teams are **strongly** encouraged to attend. Participants will be expected to informally discuss their potential research projects with other attendees within a small group and be

Complete the Online Budget Form and Upload a Budget Justification

Enter proposed expenditures using only the Year 1 fields, enter the amounts to be provided to each researcher (PI/Co-PI), and upload a budget justification as a PDF file.

- F&A costs are not allowed.
- Allowable expenses include support for technicians, postdocs, undergraduate students,

Review Process

Applications will first be screened to determine if all RFA guidelines have been met, including (but not limited to) retreat participation, general eligibility, formatting, collaboration requirements, and budget amounts. Proposals will be reviewed by either NU research faculty, research administrators, or external reviewers. The primary evaluation criteria will be reviewers' evaluative summaries.⁸ Reviewers will also use a scoring rubric to assist them with providing the evaluative summary: [- a n t e E) 9

- a) Justification/description of significance, innovation, and impact (25 points);
- a) b) Evidence of research's alignment to priorities of the identified federal funding agency and identified program (25 points); novati001 T