

National Extension Climate Initiative

Operating Guidelines

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MISSION

The National Extension Climate Initiative (NECI) promotes climate change-related education and research across the United States' Cooperative Extension System and supports an engaged, transparent, inclusive, and ethical culture. The Initiative is open to all professionals representing Land and Sea Grant Universities and their related associations, and organizations and partnerships. NECI works to address the following goals:

- Connect Extension professionals to discuss climate change issues, needs, and opportunities.
- Promote climate change education, research, and outreach throughout the Extension system.
- Encourage cooperation among states and regions, agencies, associations, organizations, and businesses on climate change education and outreach programs, and promote the value of Extension as a premier climate programming delivery model.
- Strengthen communication related to climate change with Extension Administrators
- Advance climate change education for Extension professionals
- Develop, sponsor, collaborate, and promote evidence-based education and training that advances climate change education and outreach.
- Enhance Extension's capacity for community engaged education on a full range of climate mitigation and adaptation issues.

MEMBERSHIP and OPPORTUNITIES

NECI is an alliance of individuals associated with or concerned about land-grant Extension services representing 1862, 1890, 1994, and Hispanic Serving Institutions, and NOAA Sea Grant Programs. Membership is open to any individual who has interest or background in working to grow the role of Extension as a trusted intermediary between the climate change research and members of the public impacted by climate change.

All NECI members within a state are encouraged to collaborate with one another to enhance communication internally and externally to maximize effectiveness of Extension climate change education programs in their respective states. No member, retiree, or affiliate may access NECI resources for commercial purposes.

Individual Membership

All individuals are welcomed as NECI members who are current or past employees of Cooperative Extension as well as individuals who have interest or background in working to

expand the role of Extension in evidence-based climate change education, research, and/or extension. Individuals become NECI members simply by subscribing to NECI's official communications platforms: the listserv and/or Connect Extension blog.

Individual Membership Benefits

- Monthly Member Engagement Meetings that provide opportunities to connect and reflect with and learn from colleagues from throughout the Cooperative Extension System, associations, federal agency partners, and other partnering organizations.
- Monthly Professional Development Meetings that provide educational opportunities to hear and learn from fellow Extension colleagues, researchers, and practitioners; and other partners representing associations, agencies, organizations working on evidence-based climate change education, research, and outreach.
- Access to resources and opportunities shared through the NECI Listserv and Connect Extension Subgroup

Opportunities and Service Roles for NECI Members

- Participation on NECI Working Groups that provide an opportunity for members to deepen their professional engagement and involvement by developing, executing, and advancing NECI's goals and mission. Members may choose to serve on one of the following working groups with an anticipated individual time commitment of four hours per month:
 1. Communications
 2. Curriculum Development
 3. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice
 4. Evaluations and Surveys
 5. Extension Policy
 6. Professional Development
- Informal and formal avenues for helping inform and guide NECI's annual focus area(s) and projects are made available to Members through attendance and participation at the NECI meetings: Working Groups, Member Engagement, Professional Development, and Executive Committee
 - NECI Members have a standing invitation to attend any of the Initiative's meetings including the Executive Committee, Working Groups, Professional Development, and Member Engagement unless specifically identified as a "closed session" to discuss issues of a sensitive nature.

- NECI Members have the opportunity to provide their skills to NECI Leadership, when openings are available, by serving on the Executive Committee, as Chair, Secretary, or Chair of a Working Group.

MEMBERSHIP COMMUNICATION

All NECI Members are included on the NECI Member email listserv and/or as a member of the NECI Connect Extension Subgroup and related communication channels to facilitate communication. All Members may communicate with the entire membership list via email and blog communication opportunities in an unmoderated manner to ensure the free flow of information and ideas. This access may be altered and/or updated based on member feedback.

STRUCTURE

NECI is coordinated by an Executive Committee with nine voting members and up to seven ex-officio members (non-voting) representing Extension and agency/organization partners.

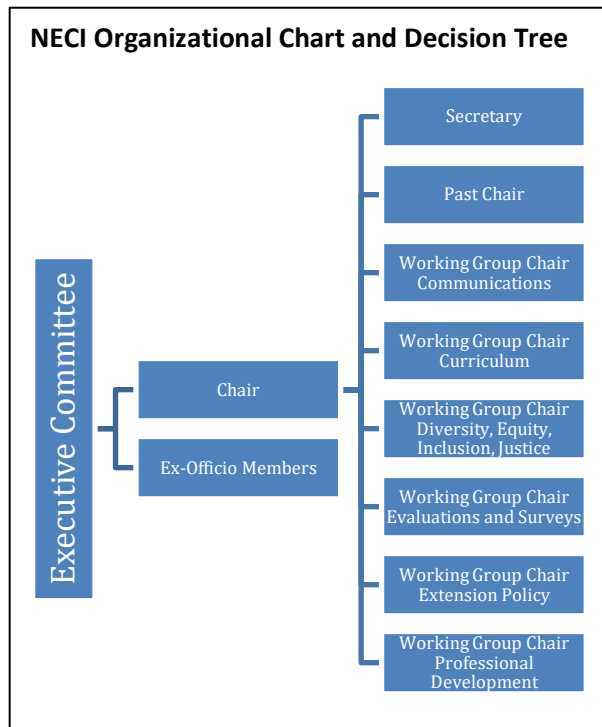
The Executive Committee is comprised of the following who are voting members of the Executive Committee:

- Chair
- Past Chair
- Secretary
- Working Group Chairs

The Executive Committee serves to set the strategic direction of NECI as well as coordinate the planning and management of annual objectives and goals of NECI along with leading each Working Group.

The Extension and Partnering Agencies/Organizations may include:

1. ECOP Climate Program Action Team
2. USDA-NIFA
3. NOAA Sea Grant
4. WRDC/Regional Rural Development Centers
5. Extension Foundation
6. USDA Climate Hubs



7. Climate Adaptation Science Centers

These seven Extension and Partnering Agencies/Organizations are encouraged to appoint one liaison per entity to serve on the NECI Executive Committee as ex-officio members to provide advice, guidance, and coordination, and to help maintain communications between the parties. They are encouraged to attend the NECI annual meeting held virtually in the late autumn.

Executive Committee, Ex-Officio, and Working Group Chairs and their Members serve as volunteers and are not compensated with NECI funds for fulfilling their responsibilities. However, Executive Committee Members and Working Group Chairs may be reimbursed for approved expenses and may be under contract to complete specific NECI work. If any Executive Committee Member or Working Group Chair is unable or failing to fulfill his/her/their duties, the Executive Committee may address the role of that member.

Executive Committee

NECI is led by up to a nine-member Executive Committee with decision-making authority for the Initiative. The Executive Committee identifies NECI's focus area(s), projects, and spending priorities, and works collaboratively to develop NECI's annual budget. The Executive Committee's decision making is informed through communications with NECI Members with their input at meetings, partaking in surveys, and other forms of communications. Additionally, all members are welcome to attend Executive Committee meetings.

- The Executive Committee is comprised of up to nine voting members and up to seven non-voting (ex-officio members) members.
- The Executive Committee is comprised of a Chair, Past Chair, and Secretary, and the Chair(s) of each Working Group.

Executive Committee Terms of Service and Time Commitments

- Terms of service begin on January 1 and end on December 31. Example of a two-year term beginning in 2023: terms would begin on January 1, 2023, and conclude on December 31, 2024.
 - Beyond 2023, efforts may be made to have at least two of the Executive Committee members' terms begin in different years to ensure consistency and continuity in leadership.
- The Executive Committee may grant a term extension up to one additional term for any of the current Executive Committee members.
- Executive Committee Members agree to uphold NECI's Mission and conduct themselves professionally.

Chair

Two-year term as Chair plus two years as Past-Chair for a total commitment of four years.

During Years One and Two the anticipated time commitment is 15 hours per month. During Years Three and Four, when serving as Past Chair, the anticipated time commitment is three hours per month.

Past Chair

Two-year term with an anticipated time commitment of three hours per month.

Secretary

Three-year term with an anticipated time commitment of 10 hours per month.

Working Group Chairs

Two-year term with an anticipated time commitment of 10 hours per month.

- The NECI-ECOP Climate Liaison will also serve as the Chair of the Extension Policy Working Group.
 - *The NECI-ECOP Climate Liaison's term of service may vary depending on the dates of their service with the ECOP Climate Program Action Team.*

Working Group Members

Ideally, members of working groups will commit to serving for a minimum of 12 months with an anticipated time commitment of two-five hours per month.

Ex-Officio Members

The Executive Committee may include up to seven non-voting members (ex-officio) from the entities listed below to help inform NECI on partnerships and collaborations, funding opportunities, policies, needs and gaps within the Cooperative Extension System, and climate-related education, research, and extension. The ex-officio members provide advice, guidance, and coordination, and help maintain communications between the parties. The ex-officio members represent:

1. ECOP Climate Program Action Team
2. Extension Foundation
3. NOAA Sea Grant
4. Regional Rural Development Centers (represented by the WRDC)
5. USDA Climate Hubs
6. USDA-NIFA
7. Climate Adaptation Science Centers

A Special or Closed Session of the Executive Committee may be called at any time by any one of the Executive Committee Members to address NECI-related personnel or privacy concerns. Otherwise, all Executive Committee meetings are open to the Membership.

Executive Committee Positions and Responsibilities

The Executive Committee has responsibility for the Operating Guidelines and will review them annually making any needed updates and/or changes and then posting the updated version to the NECI website. They may also invite comments and suggested changes in advance from the NECI Membership.

The Executive Committee has responsibility for hosting the monthly Member Engagement Meetings and the Professional Development Meetings, and the Executive Committee meetings that may be held monthly or quarterly as agreed upon by the Executive Committee.

- Member Engagement Meetings are hosted by the Executive Committee Past Chair and/or an alternate host.
- Professional Development Meetings are hosted by the Professional Development Working Group Chair, one of its Working Group members, or a member of the Executive Committee as designated by the Working Group's Chair.
 - The Professional Development Working Group Chair or their designee is responsible for performing the roles and responsibilities outlined in these guidelines Appendix One 'Standing Meetings-Professional Development Meetings Coordination and Workflow.'

Chair

The Executive Committee will elect their Chair biennially from one of the existing committee members or the membership at wide. The Chair is expected to serve one, two-year term of service with an anticipated time commitment of 15 hours per month and followed by one, two-year term serving as Past Chair with an anticipated time commitment of three hours a month.

The Executive Committee Chair will have responsibility for:

- Scheduling the monthly/quarterly Executive Committee meetings
- Preparing the agenda for each monthly/quarterly Executive Committee meeting and coordinating with the Secretary on any new or ongoing agenda and/or action items.
- Finalizing the agenda with the Secretary at least five working days prior to the meeting.
 - The Secretary will send the agenda and meeting reminder to the Executive Committee at least three working days prior to the meeting.
- Hosting the Executive Committee meetings using the NECI Zoom account.
 - The use of the NECI Zoom account is to ensure that, in the absence of the Chair, the meeting may continue as scheduled and the same Zoom link may be used each month thus alleviating confusion and the last minute need to create and communicate a new Zoom meeting link to the Committee and NECI members.
- Facilitating each monthly/quarterly Executive Committee meeting to ensure they begin and end at the scheduled times.

- Securing an alternate host: In the case of a scheduling conflict, the Chair will secure an alternate host to lead that month's/quarter's Committee meeting and may call upon other Executive Committee members for assistance.
 - Securing an alternate host should be completed with as much advance notice as possible and be communicated with the Secretary who will make note of that month's meeting host in the agenda that is shared in advance of the meeting.
- Hosting the annual meeting held virtually in late autumn and in place of that month's Member Engagement Meeting.
- Providing a written, annual summary along with a bullet list of the Working Groups' achievements – provided by each Working Group Chair – to be posted to the website.
- Reporting on the Executive Committee's achievements at the annual meeting held virtually in late autumn (in place of that month's Member Engagement Meeting) and introducing each Working Group Chair to share their Group's achievements.
- Competently and efficiently assisting the incoming Chair with the transition and then serving one, two-year term as Past Chair with responsibility for hosting the monthly Member Engagement Meetings.

Past Chair

The Executive Committee elects a new Chair biennially and thus the previous Chair then becomes the Past Chair serving one, two-year term of service with an anticipated time commitment of three hours per month.

The Executive Committee Past Chair will have responsibility for:

- Onboarding the incoming Chair and assisting in the smooth and timely transition of responsibilities.
- Being available throughout their two-year term to provide guidance and assistance to the Chair and Executive Committee as requested.
- Continuing to attend the Executive Committee meetings.
- Hosting, or planning for an alternate to host, the monthly Member Engagement Meetings using the NECI Zoom account.

Secretary

The Secretary serves one, three-year term of service with an anticipated time commitment of 10 hours per month.

The Executive Committee Secretary has responsibility for:

- Working with Executive Committee Chair to draft agendas.
- Sending meeting reminders to Executive Committee members at least three business days prior to the monthly/quarterly meeting(s) and include the Zoom link.

- Using the NECI Executive Committee shared document, take minutes for each meeting; manage access to/for the Executive Committee shared folder and maintaining an organized shared folder.
- Emailing the Executive Committee with the meeting minutes within five working days of the meeting and including action items and their respective due dates.
- Revising and finalizing the minutes. Committee Members have five working days upon receipt of the minutes to submit revisions to the Secretary. After which time the minutes will be finalized.
- Creating shared folders for NECI’s Executive Committee and Working Groups and grant individuals serving on the Committee/Group(s) access to the appropriate committee/working group folders.
 - It is the responsibility of Executive Committee and Working Group Chairs to email a list of names and email addresses of their respective committee/working group members to the Executive Committee Secretary requesting access be granted and allowing up to five business days for completion.
 - Changes to members of the Executive Committee and Working Group: It is the responsibility of the Executive Committee and Working Group Chairs to inform the Executive Committee Secretary of any changes in committee and working group membership. The Secretary will then either add or remove access based on the Executive Committee’s/Working Group’s Chair request.
- Completing an annual offline backup of the NECI Google Drive.
- Competently and efficiently assisting the incoming Secretary with the transition of responsibilities and access to shared documents/portals.

Working Group Chair(s)

Working Group Chairs serve one, two-year term of service with an anticipated time commitment of 10 hours per month.

- Serving as a Working Group Chair provides opportunities for deepening connections with peers from across the country as you work collaboratively to advance climate change education, research, and extension.
- NECI members are invited to put their name forward to chair a working group and thus serve on the Executive Committee. The solicitation of Working Group Chair(s) will be conducted via membership-wide solicitation by the Executive Committee.
- The NECI Working Groups are (as of November 2022):
 - Communications
 - Curriculum
 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice
 - Evaluations and Surveys
 - Extension Policy
 - Professional Development

- By serving as a Working Group Chair, and in addition to their responsibilities outlined below, they agree to serve to inform on Cooperative Extension’s climate-related education gaps and needs to serve on the Executive Committee providing strategic planning and identify and select NECI’s annual projects and area(s) of focus.

*The Working Group Chair(s) have responsibility for:

- Serving on the Executive Committee
- Recruiting working group members
- Scheduling and hosting their respective working group meetings via their own university/institution Zoom account, or seeking assistance from working group members to schedule and host the virtual meetings, or requesting log-in access to the NECI Zoom account.
- Providing or requesting access for them and their working group members to their working group’s shared folder on the NECI Drive
- Recording minutes from the working group meetings
 - It is suggested that the Chair ask a working group member to volunteer to write and share meeting minutes.
 - Minutes will be saved in the Work Group(s) shared document that is stored in the shared NECI Drive.
 - Revising and finalizing the minutes. Working Group Members have five working days upon receipt of the minutes to submit revisions to the Chair and/or designated person. After which time they will be finalized and saved in the shared drive.
- Coordinating the working group’s actions and projects
- Collaborating with the other Working Groups as appropriate
- Representing the working group and reporting on the working group’s activities at the Executive Committee meetings and coordinating requests for assistance from the Executive Committee and Membership
 - Five (5) minutes per working group will be made available at each Executive Committee Meeting for working group reports/updates.
 - If a Working Group Chair is unable to attend these meetings to share their working group’s updates, they may:
 - Submit a brief email update to the Executive Committee Chair to be shared at the Executive Committee meeting.
 - Ask one of their working group members to represent the working group in their absence. If possible, the Working Group Chair will notify the Executive Committee if there will be a different representative reporting for their working group at one of these meetings.
- Providing a written, annual summary with a bullet list of the Working Group’s achievements to be posted to the website and Connect Extension blog.

- Reporting on the Working Group’s achievements at the annual meeting held virtually in late autumn.
- Assisting the incoming Working Group Chair with the timely transition of responsibilities

*NOTE: The Professional Development Working Group Chair and Communications Working Group Chair have additional responsibilities that are outlined in these guideline’s Appendix One ‘Standing Meetings-Professional Development Meetings Coordination and Workflow.’

As of November 2022, some Working Groups already have a Chair, and those individuals will have the opportunity to continue in their role with their two-year term of service beginning effective January 1, 2023 and ending December 31, 2024, or they may decline to continue serving as Chair and inform the Executive Committee via email. The Executive Committee will seek replacements via 1) an invitation to other current members of that working group; or 2) a membership-wide call for their replacement.

Resignations

In the event of resignation, all Working Group Chairs, the Secretary, the Chair, and Past Chair are expected to provide the Executive Committee with notice via email a minimum of 30 days in advance if they need to resign from their leadership role. They are asked to ensure a smooth transition of duties working in collaboration with their replacement. The Executive Committee will then proceed to replace the vacancy for the following positions as outlined below.

Executive Committee Chair, Secretary, and Ex-Officio Members

- In the event the Executive Committee Chair must resign prior the end of their two-year term, the Executive Committee will elect one of the current Executive Committee members to fill the vacancy or solicit a replacement from NECI members.
- In the event the Secretary must resign prior to the end of their three-year term, the Executive Committee will solicit names via a membership-wide call for a new Secretary.
- In the event an Executive Committee Ex-Officio Member must resign the Executive Committee will work with the partnering agency/organization to identify a replacement.
- The Executive Committee Secretary will make any necessary updates to the shared folder access/privileges of the departing/incoming Executive Committee Member(s) in a timely manner.

Working Group Chair(s)

- In the event a Working Group Chair must resign prior the end of their two-year term, the Executive Committee will first seek their replacement from within the respective Working Group

- If none of the current Working Group Members are able or willing to finish out the newly vacated position, then the Executive Committee will solicit names via a membership-wide call for a new Working Group Chair.
- In the event a Working Group Member and/or Working Group Secretary (if applicable) chooses to leave the Working Group, the Working Group Chair and remaining Working Group Members will determine how best to proceed with respect to the Working Group’s current needs.
- The Working Group Chair will notify the Executive Committee via email of the change in Working Group Members.
- The Executive Committee Secretary will make any necessary updates to the shared folder access/privileges of the outgoing/incoming Working Group Member(s).

Table 1. Executive Committee Terms of Service by Year(s) 2023 – 2031.

	2 Year Term	2 Year Term	3 Year Term	Ongoing	2 Year Terms Working Group Chair(s)				
	Past Chair	Chair	Secretary	Ex-Officio Members	Communications	Curriculum	Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice	Extension Policy	Professional Development
2023									
2024									
2025									
2026									
2027									
2028									
2029									
2030									
2031									

ANNUAL MEETING

The Executive Committee hosts an annual meeting held virtually in late autumn and in place of that month’s Member Engagement Meeting. The meeting is hosted by the Chair of the Executive Committee and is intended as a formal platform to showcase NECI’s annual achievements including brief presentations by each of the Working Groups’ Chairs. The meeting is open to anyone with an interest in NECI’s work.

STANDING MEETINGS

Executive Committee Meetings

Executive Committee Meetings are open to all NECI members unless otherwise noted. These meetings are used to discuss and share NECI activities. As of 2023, the Executive Committee meets the second Wednesday of each month. The Executive Committee will, at a minimum, meet quarterly - four times each year - and may choose to meet more frequently.

Professional Development Meetings

The Professional Development Meetings feature a speaker(s) sharing about climate change science, research, and/or communication for Extension professionals, and a facilitated question/answer and discussion session.

- The Professional Development Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month.
- The Professional Development Working Group will oversee the selection, invitation, and coordination of speaker(s), and the drafting, approval, and distribution of the email announcement and blog post(s).
 - *See Appendix One 'Professional Development Meetings Coordination and Workflow' for suggested details on preparing for, communicating about, and conducting these meetings.*

Member Engagement Meetings

The Member Engagement Meeting is intended to serve as a safe space to share ideas, obstacles, and solutions to advance climate change outreach in Extension through casual, facilitated discussion.

- The Member Engagement Meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month.
- These meetings will be Chaired/Hosted by the Executive Committee Past Chair or an alternate host.
- Minutes are not taken or kept for these meetings.
- These meetings are NOT recorded.
- The meeting announcement/reminder is sent to the listserv by the Communications Chair, or a designee, and a suggested timeline is:
 - Two weeks prior each meeting
 - Three days prior to each meeting

Special Member Engagement Meetings

This meeting may be used when the Executive Committee or Working Group(s) have an expressed interest in engaging with the Membership in a more interactive way. For example, this meeting may be used to solicit input from the Membership on NECI's Plan of Work, or to

encourage discussion on a topic of timely interest such as funding opportunities. These meetings are not recorded. The use of feedback provided via online tools, polls, chat, and the final discussion session may be noted and used to inform the work of Executive Committee's and/or Working Group(s).

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

Official records and meeting minutes for the Executive Committee and Working Groups are maintained on the NECI Shared Drive. As of December 2022, NECI uses Google for its shared drive.

Once approved and finalized by the Executive Committee and Working Group(s), the minutes from the meeting(s) may be posted to the Connect Extension Subgroup where NECI members may access them.

Minutes from Special or Closed Sessions of the Executive Committee may not be shared publicly.

- A Special or Closed Session of the Executive Committee may be called at any time by any one of the Executive Committee Members to address NECI-related staffing or other confidential concerns.

Recordings from the Professional Development Meetings will be posted to the NECI website and links posted to Connect Extension to ensure all NECI members will have access to view them.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

The Executive Committee has responsibility for managing and granting access to the shared NECI Drive and its respective Executive Committee and Working Groups folders. As of December 2022, NECI uses Google Drive for its shared workplace.

The Executive Committee Secretary may create shared folders and grant access to the appropriate members upon request from the Executive Committee and/or Working Group Chair(s).

The shared NECI Drive may be used to:

- Serve as a repository for the meeting minutes of the Executive Committee and Working Groups' meetings.

- Provide a shared workspace for Executive Committee and Working Group members to collaborate on documents.
- Serve as a repository for all final documents and materials developed by NECI and may include operating guidelines, plans of work, brochures, promotional materials, research papers, policy briefs, etc.
- Executive Committee and each Working Group may have a designated shared folder and access will be granted only to its members.
 - The Executive Committee Secretary will have access to all the NECI shared folders as they are the individual creating the folders and granting/managing access to them.
 - The RRDC Representative will also have access to all the NECI shared folders serving as a backup to the Secretary regarding access and to help ensure smooth transitions of committee members.
- Executive Committee and Working Group Chairs are responsible for organizing their Committee's/Working Group's folder and subfolders.
- Executive Committee and Working Group Chairs are responsible for saving final versions of documents and materials to a common calendar-year folder that may be accessed by any current members of the Executive Committee and Working Groups.
 - For example, when the Communications Working Group finalizes a brochure, exhibit, or research brief, the final, approved version is saved in this calendar-year folder to:
 - 1) avoid the possibility of another Working Group Member retrieving an outdated version.
 - 2) to make it easier to compile their achievements for inclusion in NECI's annual report and sharing, if applicable, at the annual November meeting.

WEBSITE MANAGEMENT

The NECI website is used to inform, educate, and serve as an archive for NECI's Initiatives, Professional Development Meetings, Research (if applicable), quarterly newsletter (if applicable), Events, Operating Guidelines, and History. When appropriate, Connect Extension blog posts and calendar will also be used to inform and drive traffic to the NECI website.

- Once established, the Communications Working Group Chair and/or their designee will have sole responsibility for designing, maintaining, posting to, editing, and updating the website.
 - The Communications Working Group leads the content development and graphic design by providing their expert contributions on content, organization, design, features, and accessibility.

- The RRDC Representative also has access to the website for continuity and financial administration of website and plug-in fees.

PLAN OF WORK

Objectives, Projects, Initiatives, Research, and Area(s) of Focus

The Executive Committee has the responsibility to draft, finalize, adopt, and publish the Plan of Work that may include NECI's objectives, projects, initiatives, research, and areas of focus for the upcoming year(s). This may include input from each Working Group Chair to provide its working group's plans and goals for the upcoming year(s) for inclusion in the Plan of Work. The information provided by the Executive Committee and each Working Group does not have to go into depth but may include an outline of projects/goals and their respective timelines. The Plan of Work will be presented at the annual meeting held in late autumn.

- The Executive Committee takes into consideration the information pertaining to evidence-based climate change related education, research, and extension it has been hearing/receiving from the Membership throughout the year to develop the draft Plan of Work. The Committee also relies upon their own research and activities to inform the Plan of Work.
- It is recommended the Plan of Work span a minimum of three years and it may span up to five years. It is understood that amendments may be made as opportunities or other factors are presented.
 - Amendments to the Plan of Work are made in writing and approved by the Executive Committee prior to final adoption and inclusion in the revised Plan of Work.
 - The Plan of Work may span up to five years to accommodate multi-year funding opportunities and/or awards.
 - The Plan of Work is reviewed annually by the Executive Committee to determine whether any updates or amendments are needed.
- The Executive Committee finalizes the Plan of Work and then shares it with the Membership in four ways: 1) at the annual meeting held in late autumn, 2) by publishing it to the NECI website, 3) posting it to Connect Extension, and 4) including the web link in an email sent to the Membership.

USE OF NECI NAME AND LOGO

NECI members and institutions may use the NECI name, logo, and other branded materials in a way that reflects membership in the network and in conjunction with their institution or state name. Members are requested to share any materials using the NECI name and logo with the Executive Committee. Use of the NECI name and logo that indicates NECI's

endorsement or support of a program/activity/event requires prior approval of the NECI Executive Committee.

Non-NECI organizations may use the NECI name, logo, and/or other branded materials only with the endorsement of the Executive Committee and this endorsement shall be given in writing and sent via email with the written documentation saved to the appropriate folder within the NECI Shared Drive.

FUNDING

As of 2023, NECI receives financial and in-kind support from the Western Rural Development Center (WRDC). This funding is not guaranteed and is made available on an annual basis dependent upon the WRDC's annual funding and priorities.

Obtaining Funds on Behalf of NECI

Member institutions may receive funds on behalf of NECI only with the advance approval of the Executive Committee.

Grant applications or organizations that list NECI as a partner or as a distribution channel are requested to have prior, written approval from the Executive Committee. Member institutions may not commit NECI to financial obligations, distribution of materials or information, or other responsibilities without approval of the Executive Committee.

Letters of support committing NECI to a project shall be written by the Executive Committee Chair, or Chair designee, and be requested at least 14 working days in advance of submission date. Requests for letters of support that do not include a funding request should be sent to the Executive Committee Chair for consideration.

- Proposals may be submitted by NECI's Executive Committee or Working Groups.
- When a NECI Member becomes aware of a funding opportunity that NECI and/or a Working Group might wish to pursue, the Member should inform the Executive Committee Chair.
- The Member should provide the Executive Committee Chair with a brief synopsis of the opportunity and the synopsis should include rationale for NECI's involvement. This should include:
 - The funding source/agency
 - Time period of the project
 - List of PIs/Co-PIs, and institutions involved in the project
 - List of any non-LGU Partners with links to their website(s) or other sources of information
 - How the project's progress will be shared with NECI

- If the Executive Committee decides funding should be pursued, the Chair shall appoint someone to lead the proposal development effort and will give first consideration to the Committee Member that introduced the funding opportunity.
- For proposals with a short turn-around time, the Chair may make the initial decision to proceed, then inform the Executive Committee, and with the advice of selected Executive Committee Members, appoint a Proposal Development Team.
- The Executive Committee Chair will notify NECI Members immediately when it is determined that a proposal will be prepared. The notice will include sufficient detail to allow participation by interested Members, if appropriate. Through this process, the Proposal Development Team Members will be identified.
- Proposal Development Teams should have three or more members.
 - The Proposal Development Team submits the proposal to the Executive Committee for approval prior to submission to the funding source and this should be done at least 21 working days prior to the proposal submission deadline.
 - Proposals must clearly define NECI's obligations as well as the relationship(s) between NECI and the funded institution(s) and between NECI and the individuals to be supported using the funds.
- Proposals must be reviewed by the host institution(s) providing core NECI communications and Internet services, and monies and in-kind support to ensure that the level of support required in the proposal does not exceed that available under current contract or to assure that funding for additional support by these institutions has been included.
 - This does not preclude proposing support for communications efforts at other member institutions or for web development work that will be done at other institutions for eventual deployment on NECI's website.
 - Reviews by these institutions **early in the proposal development process** are highly recommended.
 - Many institutions require a minimum of 10 working days to develop, review, and approve funding proposals. Please plan accordingly as these deadlines are determined by the host institutions and NECI members may need this time to submit and route materials to ensure their respective institutions have the required time to review and approve prior to submission.
 - As of February 2023, the host institutions providing core NECI support include Montana State University and the Western Rural Development Center-Utah State University. Other institutions/agencies are welcome to provide support to NECI.
- It is expected that the results and impacts of any funded work be shared via a NECI Professional Development meeting, if applicable, and materials made available for posting to the NECI website and Connect Extension blog.

HISTORY OF NECI

The National Extension Climate Initiative's first introductory meeting was held March 5, 2020. More details coming...eventually.

Appendix One

Workflow and Coordination of Professional Development Meetings

The Professional Development Meetings feature a speaker(s) sharing about climate change science, research, extension, and/or communications for Extension professionals, and a facilitated question/answer and discussion session.

- The Professional Development Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month.
- The Professional Development Working Group will oversee the selection, invitation, and coordination of speaker(s), and the drafting, approval, and distribution of the email announcement, website blurb, and blog post(s). These tasks include:
 - Determining annual goals for the meetings, such as a theme, and providing a mix of speakers, topics, and geographic representation.
 - Providing a list of suggested/recommended speakers to the Executive Committee prior to inviting and scheduling the speaker(s).
 - Ideally, the Professional Development Working Group will be working months in advance to identify and seek the Executive Committee's review of recommended speakers.
 - Securing the Executive Committee's approval of each suggested/recommended speaker prior to sending an invitation to the speaker(s).
 - Formally inviting and scheduling the speaker(s) via email invitation to include:
 - The meeting date and time.
 - The meeting is scheduled for 60 minutes and includes the presentation and Q&A.
 - Provide the presenter advance notice that NECI plans to record the meeting, post and share the recording via the website, blog, and listserv and request their permission to record and post.
 - Draft emails are available to use when requesting this information.
 - Once the speaker(s) accepts/confirms the invitation, the Professional Development Chair or designee will:
 - Request from the speaker(s) a web link to their bio and a brief paragraph about their presentation along with any related web links they want to share in the email announcement and blog post(s) that will be posted in Connect Extension and on the NECI website.
 - Using the draft email announcement, update the information provided by the speaker(s) along with the approved text for the meeting that includes the date, times, and Zoom meeting room link.

- The approved template used for announcing these meetings will be saved in a document in the PD Working Group folder on the shared NECI Drive.
 - Send the email announcement to the NECI listserv prior to the meeting.
 - Email subject line: NECI-month/day Professional Development Meeting
 - *Example:* NECI-NOV. 2 Professional Development Meeting
 - Forward the approved email to the Communications Chair requesting they post the information it to the NECI website and Connect Extension blog.
 - Once the Communications Chair has posted the information on the NECI website and Connect Extension blog, send the email to the listserv.
 - Send an email to the speaker(s) to include:
 - The meeting's date, times, and Zoom meeting room link.
 - Ask them to plan to join the meeting room 15 minutes prior to the meeting's start time for a pre-meeting technical check (this time will be used to confirm video, audio, and screen sharing)
 - Let them know who will be hosting the meeting whether it is you or someone else (if it is someone else, copy them on this email)
 - *A draft email with this information has been created and will be saved in the PD Working Group's shared NECI folder.*
 - Send an email reminder to the listserv on the Monday before the Wednesday meeting (three days prior to the meeting).
- On the day of the meeting, the Host will open the Zoom meeting room 15 minutes prior to the meeting and admit only the speaker(s) and Professional Development Working Group members.
 - The PD Working Group Chair is encouraged to seek assistance from its working group members to help with facilitating the meetings as it can be a lot for one person to manage/coordinate on their own.
 - Conduct a technical check with each speaker (audio, video, screen share)
 - Review the meeting's agenda.
 - Remind them the meeting will be recorded.
 - Inform them you will begin the meeting promptly at the top of the hour.
 - At the top of the hour, admit attendees (and continue this throughout the meeting)
- The agenda for the Professional Development Meetings is executed by the meeting's host, a designee, or in a collaborative manner with assistance from other PD Working

Group members, or others as identified. As of 2023, these meetings follow the agenda outlined below:

- Welcome and overview of meeting (5 minutes)
 - Closed Captioning has been enabled.
 - We will be recording the meeting and posting it to the NECI website.
 - Following the presentation, we will facilitate a Q&A and discussion. You may participate by either using the Zoom tool to 'raise your hand' and the host will call on you to ask your question; or place your question or comment in the 'Chat' and the host will read aloud your question.
- START RECORDING:
- Introduction(s) of Guest Speaker(s) – (5 minutes)
 - Done by either the Host or individual that invited the guest.
- Presentation – interactive when possible (~20 minutes)
- Facilitated Q&A and discussion (~20 minutes)
- Host thanks presenter(s) and attendees (1 minute)
- Host asks if anyone has an announcement to share (5 minutes)
- Host ends the meeting at the top of the hour.
- STOP RECORDING – save to the Zoom Cloud and NOT on your computer.
 - In case of computer failure or other mishap, saving the recording to NECI's Zoom account ensures its safety until it is uploaded to the NECI website.
- Following the meeting:
 - The Communications Chair or a designee will retrieve the recording file and Chat.txt file from Zoom for posting to the NECI website along with any other materials provided by the speaker(s).
 - Convert the Chat.txt file to a PDF prior to posting.
 - The Communications Chair or designee will post to the website along with any shared materials provided by the presenter.
 - The Communications Chair will post to Connect Extension blog that the recording/materials are now available on the NECI website and include appropriate links.
 - Then either the Communications Chair or the Professional Development Working Group Chair or their designee will send an email to the listserv announcing the recording is now available and providing the web page link.
 - Convert to PDF other materials shared by the speaker(s) prior to posting. These may include PowerPoint, Word documents, or others.
 - The Comms WG Chair and PD WG Chair will work together to determine how they would prefer to manage the communications with the listserv: emails written and sent by Comms Chair or PD Chair?

- If details are confirmed for next month's presenter(s) at the end of the email include a teaser about the next month's presenter(s).

--- End ---

NECI Operating Guidelines

March 2023

