



Request for Proposals (RFP)

FY27-28 (July 1, 2027, to June 30, 2028)

Enhancing Demand & Adding Value • Ensuring Sustainability • Supporting Education

The Nebraska Corn Board (NCB) works to increase the value and sustainability of Nebraska corn through promotion, market development and research

Preview of Contents

1. Program Area Priorities (page 1 – 2)
2. Proposal Submission & Contact (page 3)
3. Eligibility (page 4)
4. Award Duration (page 4)
5. Content and Form of Application Submission (page 4 – 7)
6. The Review Process (page 7 – 9)
7. Conditions of Funding Acceptance (page 9-10)

Appendix 1. Request for Proposals Timeline (page 11)

Appendix 2. Budget Template Example (page 12)

Appendix 3. Annual Project Reporting (page 13)

1. Program Area Priorities

Proposals will be assigned and reviewed according to at least one of the three program area priorities.

1.1 Enhancing Demand and Adding Value

Nebraska's corn farmers have the ability to grow more corn than U.S. consumers can currently utilize as food, fuel or feed. In order to sustain the economic viability of corn

farmers, it is critical that we discover new uses and markets for Nebraska's corn crop that meet the needs of a growing and evolving world.

The NCB seeks to support research that will give the highest return to Nebraska corn farmers through:

- Innovative research to find new uses for corn and corn products
- Identify value-added uses of the chemicals/components of corn
- Corn focused projects that result in commercialization of corn-based products or technology
- Expanding/developing commercially significant markets for corn utilization

1.2 Ensuring Sustainability

Nebraska corn farmers are faced with the challenge of producing crops necessary to meet local, national, and international demands while maintaining the quality and quantity of resources for future generations. The purpose of this solicitation is to request proposals for developing research-based technologies and practices that will help farmers increase production efficiency and profitability while safeguarding and improving the natural resources needed for agriculture. The NCB will support research that will lead toward a regionally integrated system of plant and animal production practices designed to produce long-term results such as:

- Sustained economic viability of corn production in Nebraska
- Improved efficiency of inputs (examples include irrigation, fertilizer, etc.)
- Enhanced carbon sequestration and improved measurement, reporting, and verification
- Monitoring and minimizing threats from pests and diseases
- Improved quality of surface water and groundwater resources
- Improved soil health
- Increased resilience to changing climate conditions and weather extremes

Special note: Intentional dissemination mechanisms of educational content and research findings to farmers is required and must represent at least 10% of the requested funds (unless the fundamental proposal is direct one-on-one farmer engagement). Proposed research projects with strongly developed outreach/education deliverables (radio advertising, video production, podcast, social media content, etc.) throughout the award period are encouraged. To maximize education/outreach, also consider including an **off-ramp year** where no additional research is conducted, but research is completed translated into comprehensive outreach and education deliverables.

1.3 Supporting Agriculture and STEM Education

The future of farming in Nebraska depends not only on continuing to advance research-based technologies and production practices, but also on improving consumer appreciation of the importance of food, fuel, and feed production to human and animal health and sustainability. NCB seeks proposals that include education and outreach as the major component of the project. Education and outreach components might include:

- Intentional dissemination mechanisms of educational content and/or research findings to farmers
- Promoting linkages among pre-K through 12th in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) disciplines related to food and agricultural sciences
- Teacher preparation and professional development programs
- Communicating agriculture research to non-ag audiences

2. Proposal Submission and Contact

Rachael Whitehair
Director of Innovation & Stewardship
Nebraska Corn Board
rachael.whitehair@nebraska.gov
(402) 471-2676 (office) / (402)-310-6938 (cell)

The deadline for submitting proposals to NCB is 5:00 p.m. Central Standard Time (CST) on Wednesday, December 16, 2026. **Special note:** For proposals from University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the deadline to be fully routed through NuRamp is by 5:00 pm, December 7, 2026.

Final awards will be announced by June 30, 2027 (*see Appendix 1 – Request for Proposals Timeline*). If you are questioning the fit of a research or program idea with Nebraska Corn's priority area, we will be offering Technical Assistance Webinars during October. After the webinars, you may reach out to the above contact for a 30-minute one-on-one consultation meeting. Please check the NCB website page at <https://nebraskacorn.gov/research/> for more information on the webinars and consultations. Additionally, review the [2025 Nebraska Corn Research Report](#) to learn more about recently funded projects.

The NCB does have a small amount of funds for ad-hoc proposal consideration outside of the timeline explained in this request. Please contact the Director of Innovation and Stewardship to set up a consultation meeting prior to submitting any ad-hoc proposal. Ad-hoc proposals are less preferred and are less likely to be funded.

3. Eligibility

The NCB will accept all proposals that adhere to the application guidelines below.

4. Award Duration

Awarded funding for research projects has a duration of one (1) year beginning July 1st and concluding June 30th of the following year. **The NCB will consider funding multi-year (3 to 4 years is common) projects.** However, funds will be dispersed for only one fiscal year, with projects reviewed for subsequent funding on an annual basis. Requests for a variance in the project fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) timeline can be requested in your proposal but is not preferred. Please contact the Director of Innovation and Stewardship to set up a consultation meeting prior to proposal submission if requesting a timeline variance in the proposal.

No Cost Extensions (NCE)

Requests for no-cost extensions (NCE) will not be regarded favorably by the Board and will be granted only under extenuating circumstances. NCE will require prior approval by NCB staff and will be contingent on a satisfactory merit review conducted by NCB. Please see *section 7.4* for additional information related to NCE.

5. Content and Form of Application Submission

Proper preparation will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each submission in a systematic, consistent fashion. The proposal should contain the following information.

Access proposal template form [HERE](#).

5.1 Executive Summary/Cover Page

Research projects first and foremost must support NCB's vision of enhancing demand, adding value, and ensuring sustainability of Nebraska corn farmers and the corn industry as a whole. The executive summary is limited to 350 words. The executive summary should not include names of Project Investigators or budget details. The only identifier should be a simple project title, what program area priority is the proposal addressing, and project number (if assigned by the submitting institution). The executive summary must adhere to the formatting guidelines detailed in *section 5.6*. The executive summary should not include proprietary information as it may be published on the NCB website in the case project funding is granted.

Succinctly describe the project and explicitly communicate the value of the project toward supporting NCB's vision. The executive summary should clearly describe how return on investment (ROI) may be measured within the context of the project and the anticipated timeline of that ROI whether expected in the short (within 1-2 years of project completion), medium (within 3-5 years of project completion), or long (within 6+ years of project completion) term.

It is highly encouraged to write the executive summary in such a way that NCB board members could effectively describe the project and justify the use of checkoff dollars to other corn farmers.

5.2 Project Narrative

The project narrative is **limited to four (4) pages** and must include the following sections:

Investigator Names & Affiliations – Include the full names, roles, and affiliations of all major investigators.

Introduction – Include a clear statement of a goal(s) and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Clearly state which priority area the project is addressing (*section 1*). Clearly state how the project is novel or duplicative, and if so, provide reasoning for duplication of previously completed research.

Summarize the body of knowledge or past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed activities significant to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed project. All cited literature should be referenced.

Rationale and Significance – Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project. The potential benefit of the work to both the corn industry and consumer audiences should be clearly stated.

Approach – The activities proposed, or problems being addressed must be clearly stated and the approaches applied are to be clearly described. Specifically, this section must include:

- A description of the activities proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed
- Methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project, including the feasibility of the methods
- Means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted
- Pitfalls that may be encountered or limitations to proposed procedures

- A timeline for attainment of objectives and for production of deliverables that includes milestones with specific, measurable outcomes
- A dissemination plan describing the methods that will be used to manage data, communicate findings and project accomplishments

5.3 References Cited in the Proposal

References should adhere to the following guidelines:

- References used in a proposal should follow APA (American Psychological Association) style to the extent possible
- For in-text citations, the author-year system is required; please do not use numbered references
- Arrange the list of citations alphabetically by the surnames of the first authors and then by the second and third authors
- Only literature that is available through libraries or other readily accessible public media can be cited. Material that does not meet this standard should be cited as personal communication or unpublished data.
- Any previous work related to the proposal should be referenced

5.4 Reviewers

Please provide the names and contact information of up to three suitable reviewers from your expertise area outside of Nebraska or your organization that would not have a conflict of interest related to your proposal. These individuals will be invited to be part of the potential review process. There is no guarantee that those indicated will be assigned to your proposal. Also, please identify anyone who you would prefer not to review your proposal. This information is confidential and visible only to the NCB staff and the Research & Stewardship Committee. All proposals will undergo a blind (single-blind) peer review in that author names and affiliations will be known by the reviewers. All reviewers are required to sign a non-disclosure agreement to maintain confidentiality.

5.5 Budget

Funding is based on a reimbursement of expenses as outlined in the proposal (documentation of all expenses must be submitted to receive reimbursement). Therefore, detailed budget information is required for each line item. A sample budget template is appended to this document (*See Appendix 2 – Budget Template Example*). Project funding is granted on a year-by-year basis even for multi-year projects.

Budget Limitations

The NCB does not pay for overhead expenses, indirect costs, or non-expendable capital equipment.

Matching Funds

While matching funds are not required for funding, NCB funds are not intended to solely replace other sources of funding; rather NCB “seed money” should generate other sources of funds to enlarge and expand research efforts or to initiate new research efforts.

Collaborative efforts among researchers, departments, institutions, organizations, and private industry are strongly encouraged.

5.6 Proposal Document Format

The NCB mandates that all proposals be presented in electronic PDF (Portable Document Format) form. Submitted documents must adhere to the following formatting guidelines.

- Font size must be at least 11 point
- Margins must be at least 1 inch in all directions
- Follow the page limitations for each attachment – proposals longer than allowed are subject to rejection and resubmission.
- Order of attachments must follow the same order as outlined in the RFP
- Number pages sequentially for each attachment
- The document header should include the project title

6. The Review Process

6.1 Process

- Proposals will be screened by NCB staff and the NCB Research & Stewardship Committee for relevance to the priority research areas and adherence to requirements stated in this RFP
- Proposals to be considered will be sent to at least two external/ad hoc reviewers selected based on their expertise related to the proposed research
- The NCB Research Committee will meet to rank proposals and, in some cases, request a written response or a verbal presentation of proposals to the NCB Board of Directors. *An invitation to provide a verbal presentation is not indicative of favor to receive funding, but rather to clarify aspects of the proposal*
- In some cases, we may request to work with applicants to reach an agreement on modifications to the proposal (scope, funding request, etc.)
- Recommendations from the NCB Research & Stewardship Committee will be considered and finalized at the NCB annual budget meeting in June

6.2 Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will consider the following factors:

Project Relevance

- Proposal is relevant to one of the three RFP program area priorities (i.e. enhancing demand/adding value, ensuring sustainability, or supporting Ag/STEM education).
- Nebraska Corn Board is uniquely positioned to fund this proposal compared to another funding entity.
- Shows strong potential to result in the logical transition to sources of funding other than the Nebraska Corn checkoff.
- Collaboration with other groups, organizations, or industry.
- Utilizes an integrated systems approach.
- Human dimension aspect (needs assessments, behavior changes/adoptions, market analysis, etc.) of project proposal evident.

Scientific and Education/Outreach Merit

- Fills knowledge gaps that are critical to development of practices and programs to address the stated problem or issue.
- Project objectives are clearly described, adequate, and appropriate.
- Proposed approaches, procedures, or methodologies are innovative, original, clearly described, suitable, and feasible.
- Expected results or outcomes are clearly stated, measurable, and achievable within the allotted time frame.
- Outreach and education deliverables are described and feasible

Qualifications of Project Personnel, Adequacy of Facilities, and Project Management

- Roles of key personnel are clearly defined.
- Appropriate inclusion of all the disciplines needed to address the problem.
- Support personnel, facilities, and instrumentation are sufficient.
- Clear and appropriate plans and timeline for project management; evaluation; communicating findings; managing data.
- The budget clearly allocates sufficient resources to carry out activities that will lead to desired outcomes.

6.3 Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. Names of submitting

institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential permanently. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

7. Conditions of Funding Acceptance

7.1 Progress Reporting

The NCB requires that financial reports be submitted quarterly (explained in contracts) and a final financial accounting report be submitted within approximately 30 calendar days of project completion. A final written progress report is due approximately 45 calendar days after completion (*see Appendix 1 & 3*).

The NCB is a farmer-funded organization, and it is essential that NCB is recognized as a funding source when research information is orally presented or distributed in written form. For slide presentations, contact us to get permission/access to the NCB logo. Add the following language to any written publications: “Funded by the Nebraska Corn Board and farmers through the Nebraska corn checkoff”

7.2 Award Administration

Funding will be provided to those responsible, eligible, applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth herein. The project need not be initiated on the effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period.

7.3 Application Disposition

Once the review process has been completed, the NCB Research Committee will recommend to the full board that the project: (1) Be approved for support from currently available funds or (2) be declined due to insufficient funds or unfavorable review.

The NCB reserves the right to negotiate with the proposer and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

7.4 Changes in Project Plans

Modifying Proposal Content

The permissible changes by the grantee or other key project personnel in the approved project proposal shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project’s approved goals. If the

grantee or PI(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to NCB staff for a final determination. Other changes, (including approved goals or objectives; project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel; budget allocation) shall be requested by the grantee and approved in writing by NCB staff prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

Additional Funding and Duration

Awards will not be considered for additional funding beyond that approved in an original award. Multi-year projects must resubmit a renewed proposal annually for consideration.

No-cost extensions will be granted only under extenuating circumstances, will require prior approval by NCB staff, and will be contingent on a satisfactory merit review conducted by NCB.

7.5 Award Contract

The award contract will provide pertinent instructions and information, and shall include:

- Legal name of performing organizations or institution to which NCB has issued an award under
- The terms of this RFP
- Title of project
- Name(s) of principal investigator
- Identifying award number
- Project period, specifying the amount of time NCB intends to support the project
- Total amount of financial assistance approved by NCB during the project period

Appendix 1 – Request for Proposals Timeline

Date	Action
September 15, 2026	Request for proposals made available for application
October 2026	Technical assistance webinars offered (For more details, visit https://nebraskacorn.gov/research/)
December 16, 2026	Research proposals due to the Nebraska Corn Board (NCB). <i>See special note on page 3 for UNL proposals – NuRamp due Dec. 7</i>
December - February 2027	Proposals screened by the NCB Staff, Research & Stewardship Committee and two peer reviewers Research Committee meets to rank proposals and request any written clarification or verbal presentation of proposals requiring further inquiry
February/March 2027	Written clarification or verbal presentation of requested proposals due to Board of Directors and Research Committee
April 1, 2027	Notification of either: 1) Removal from funding consideration 2) Research Committee recommends proposal for funding to Board of Directors or 3) Recommended with requested changes to the proposal
April 30, 2027	Changes due to those proposals with requested changes/modifications
June 2027	Recommended proposals considered and finalized by Board of Directors at annual budget meeting
June 30, 2027	Final notification of award funded
July 1, 2027	Beginning of FY 2027-2028 projects
July 30, 2027	During the month of July, we will work on signing of agreements
June 30, 2028	Conclusion of FY 2027-2028 projects
August 1, 2028	Final financial report and invoice due
August 15, 2028	Two written reports (1-page corn grower-facing summary and full expanded annual reports) due

Appendix 2 – Budget Template Example

Access fillable proposal template form [HERE](#).

Effective Dates	PROPOSAL BUDGET		
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(S):			
PROJECT TITLE:			
PROPOSED BUDGET SUMMARY		FUNDS REQUESTED FOR FY	
<i>See Narrative Below</i>		Year 1	Year 2
A. SALARIES AND WAGES <i>Commodity Board usually does not pay the cost for Project Investigators</i>			
1. Senior Associates			
2. Research Associates – Post doctorate			
3. Other Professionals			
4. Pre-baccalaureate Students			
5. Secretarial – Clerical			
6. Technical, Shop, Other			
7. Graduate Students			
B. FRINGE BENEFITS			
1. Faculty & Staff @ XX%			
2. Grad Student: \$XX /Credit Hour Plus Health Ins. (\$X,XXX)			
C. NON-EXPENDABLE CAPITAL EQUIPMENT (\$5,000 or more; more than 2 years use)			
D. TRAVEL	Domestic		
	Foreign		
E. ALL OTHER DIRECT COSTS - Materials & Supplies, Subcontracts, Publication Costs, etc. (Budget Narrative should list these individual items and dollar amount separately)			
F. TOTAL AMOUNT OF THIS REQUEST			

Appendix 3 – Annual Project Reporting

Due August 15, 2028

The annual reports will be collected through a google form that will be sent out to project investigators on July 1, 2028. Preview of the reporting form is below.

SECTION 1 OF 2 – Annual Report for Farmers/Customer

Please complete this form fully for each project conducted in partnership with the Nebraska Corn Board. This does not replace the written annual report required at the conclusion of each funding cycle. Form responses will be utilized to develop the annual research report publication. This magazine-style publication is mailed directly to over 2,500 Nebraska corn farmers and industry stakeholders. The research summary should be concisely written and in Layman's terms.

Each summary will include the following four sections: Research or Program Conducted, Findings/ Recommendations or Outcomes, Impact, and Future Objectives.

Multi-year projects are asked to submit a "What's new" update. This will take the form of a callout separate from the main text. This is a great opportunity to highlight new program findings or offerings, strong ROI or survey highlights.

You will be required to include a minimum of three pictures and/or charts/figures to accompany your summary (Ex. equipment in action, research team conducting or disseminating work, field days, appropriate figures, etc.). Additional photos, figures or links to resources are welcomed.

Past project summary examples can be found in the most recent Nebraska Corn Board Research Report. Any questions can be directed to Nathan Mueller at muelleragconsulting@gmail.com

1. Email:
2. Project Title:
3. Lead Project Investigator(s):
4. Lead University/Department or other Entity:
5. Additional Investigator(s)/Partnering Entities (Please include Dr. where appropriate):
6. Project Duration (month/year) to (month/year), for multi-year projects, please state beginning month/year:

7. **Research or Program Conducted (150 words/1,050 character maximum)** Briefly describe the issue or challenged being addressed, who was involved and what was done
8. **Findings and Recommendations OR Outcomes (200 words/1,400 character maximum)** Describe what was learned or produced as a result of the project
9. **Impact (150 words/1,050 character maximum)** Describe why program results and outputs are important to Nebraska's corn growers. What kind of impact? How big was the impact?
10. **Future Objectives (100 word/700 character maximum)** Describe next steps, plans or need for future research, and longer term goals
11. **What's New Callout (50 words/350 character maximum)** *For multi-year projects only. Please also include links to any resources.
12. Please share a minimum of **three** Picture(s) and/or Figure(s) Pictures and figures should be shared as a JPG or PNG file.
13. Please share captions for all pictures and/or figures. Captions should be shared as a word or PDF file.
14. Please share any links to publications, resources or tools developed as a result of the program. **A reminder that all manuscripts developed for publication must be submitted to Nebraska Corn Board prior to submission**
15. Please add your **author ID** number (such as ORCID) or put N/A if there is not one
16. Please add your LinkedIn handle! This will allow us to elevate programming, outreach and research accomplishments.
17. To support outreach throughout the year, please let us know opportune times (months) for visits/walk throughs of research facilities, prime photo/interview opportunities, etc. We recognize that each project follows a unique timeline.

SECTION 2 OF 2 – Return on Investment (ROI) Metrics Collection

Each year, the Nebraska Corn Board develops Return On Investment (ROI) summaries that result from funded programs across our main pillars of Research, Market Development, and Promotion. These summaries are shared with corn growers across the state in an effort to communicate the benefits that come from their check-off investment.

Please provide information for the categories below to the best of your ability. We understand each program is unique in its purpose and outcomes and the ROI does not always fit neatly within a single metric.

1. Project Reach (agricultural & non-agricultural). *Examples:*

- # of participants/attendees/contacts
- # of sessions/events/on farm trials or sites
- participant demographics
- estimated audience reach
- delivery methods/acres impacted
- job creation/youth interest/college and career planning

State "N/A" if not applicable

2. Knowledge Gained (agricultural & non-agricultural.) *Examples:*

- knowledge gained/improved understanding of topic
- increased confidence in decision-making/decision support resources identified
- learned practice or operational changes/adoption
- value of knowledge gained
- future career pathway awareness/startup employment
- value of knowledge gained per acre

State "N/A" if not applicable

3. Farm Economics. *Examples*

- estimated cost savings/operational efficiencies
- estimated profitability (per acre)
- increased demand (bushel)
- reduced inputs/soil loss/water use/GHG emissions
- # of acres/cattle managed

State "N/A" if not applicable

4. Industry Development (agricultural & non-agricultural). *Examples:*

- industry engagement
- co-sponsored research
- donations/grant funding/donated inputs or resources
- guest speakers

State "N/A" if not applicable

5. Any other important or interesting RIO metrics you would like to add

6. Success story for outreach/education projects (Provide a qualitative example of impact OR put N/A if there is not one)

SECTION 3 OF 3 – Full Annual Report Upload

Here, you can upload your expanded or full annual report.

Update: There is NO page/word limit to annual reports

Please expand from the google sections 1 and 2 on the following items as you see fit for NCB staff and Research & Stewardship Committee:

- Research or Program Conducted
- Findings and Recommendations OR Outcomes. Describe what was learned or produced because of the project
- Impact. Describe why program results and outputs are important to Nebraska's corn growers. What kind of impact? How big was the impact?
- Future Objectives. Describe next steps, plan or needs for future research, and longer-term goals.
- Other information that that is think is important to share.