

# 2014 RFI Competitive Awards

**TEACHING AND ENGAGEMENT** – There was an outstanding response to the call for proposals with 24 applications submitted. Proposals selected to receive funding include:

- **Rural Community Engagement and Leadership Program** – Gina Matkin (PI), University of Nebraska-Lincoln with co-PI from the Agricultural Leadership and Communications Department at UNL. Additional partners include Nebraskans for Civic Reform.  
*Undergraduate students will engage with rural high school students to identify issues in the students' community, leading to the creation of a service learning project to address those pre-identified issues. This project will build the leadership capacity of rural high school students and increase their ability to positively impact their respective communities while also filling a community need.*
- **Justice by Geography: Issues that Inequitably Impact Rural Youth** – Anne Hobbs (PI), UNO with partners from the Nebraska Juvenile Justice Association, the Nebraska State Bar Association, the Nebraska Association of County Officials, the Nebraska Juvenile Services Division, and the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.  
*This service learning project will educate University students interested in the juvenile justice field on the unique juvenile justice and legislative issues facing rural communities. Students will be placed with a rural juvenile justice professional or agency for two months to gain hands-on experience. The project will create greater interest for juvenile justice professionals to actively pursue careers in rural areas.*
- **Addressing the Rural Shortage of Mental Health Providers Through a Virtual Mentorship Network** – Howard Liu (PI), University of Nebraska Medical Center with co-PI UNMC College of Nursing. Additional partners include the Region III Behavioral Health Services.  
*This project will connect rural students and members of their communities with behavioral health professionals through a virtual network. Students and behavioral health mentors will discuss behavioral health topics of interest. Students will benefit from the mentor-mentee relationship and learn more about behavioral health professions with the hope of creating a greater connection between behavioral health providers and rural communities.*
- **Principles of Community Engagement in Public Health: Service Learning, Community-Based Participatory Research, and Civic Engagement** – Kyle Ryan (PI), Peru State College with co-PIs College of Public Health at UNMC and the Rural Health Education Network.  
*This project will create an online public health curriculum and course work for undergraduate students enrolled at rural Nebraska campuses. It will be offered as an option to those students who are interested in the health profession.*
- **The Great Question Challenge** – Shane Potter (PI), University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension and co-PIs from the Engler Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program at UNL and DuPont Pioneer.  
*This project will mobilize rural youth to take an issue of global importance, identify the affects it has on their rural community, and implement a solution. In 2014, the Great Question theme revolves around food insecurity. Student teams will attend a spring workshop to learn more about the issue on a global scale, identify what food insecurity issues exist in their community, and develop a project to address this issue. This project creates a culture of civic engagement led by rural youth.*
- **Community Gardens and Farmer's Market for Curtis, NE** – Brad Ramsdale (PI), Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (NCTA) and co-PIs from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension  
*Expanding upon an existing Farmer's Market course at NCTA, this project will include a community garden being developed to enhance student service learning by making the garden available for the community and 4-H members. Undergraduate students will be available to mentor 4-H members which will strengthen the relationship between NCTA and community members, and provide a model for rural communities to establish gardens that foster growth in citizen relationships and youth engagement.*

- **The Nebraska Hayseed Project** – Petra Wahlqvist (PI), University of Nebraska-Lincoln and co-PIs from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at UNL, Lied Center for Performing Arts, and College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources at UNL. Additional partners include the North Platte Concert Association, and the Midwest Theater.

*This project is designed to celebrate our state's rural communities through performing arts, a collection of oral histories and an exploration of Nebraska farm life. Undergraduate students will conduct oral history interviews in rural communities which will engage statewide conversation about agriculture through the arts. The Nebraska Hayseed project is constructed to create a platform where farm families can openly speak about their life experiences.*

**RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT** –There was an excellent response to the call for proposals with 35 pre-proposals submitted and 12 invited to submit a full proposal. Proposals selected to receive funding include:

- **Healthy Food, Healthy Choice** – Christopher Gustafson (PI) UNL Agricultural Economics with CO-PIs from the Child, Youth, and Environments Center for Community Engagement at the University of Colorado, and the Health and Nutritional Sciences Department at South Dakota State University. Additional partners include the Rosebud Economic Development Corporation (REDCO), Sinte Gleska University, and Blue Star Studio, Inc.
 

*This project will improve the health of Rosebud Sioux Tribe residents by changing food consumption patterns. This project will use quantitative and qualitative approaches to understand the current food environment, as well as food knowledge and preferences. It will introduce short- and long-term strategies to increase local residents' acceptance of and willingness to buy healthy foods.*
- **Bridging the Skills Gap: Workforce Development in Rural Communities in the Great Plains** – Carolyn Hatch (PI), North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NCRCRD) at Michigan State University, with co-PIs from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension, and South Dakota State University Extension.
 

*This project will implement a labor market assessment model to address skills gaps in rural communities to improve local workforces and enhance long-term economic growth. Project partners will work with up to ten counties in Nebraska and South Dakota and community stakeholders from the private and public sectors. Providing local decision makers with tools needed to address local workforce needs will also lead to increased confidence and capacity building.*
- **Nebraska Primary Care Practice-Based Research Network Project** – Christopher Kratochvil (PI), University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) collaborating with several UNMC colleagues, the Department of Health and Human Services, and rural Nebraska physicians.
 

*Project connects healthcare providers to improve strategies for management of complex chronic diseases or implement tools that will improve transitions of care from hospitals into the outpatient setting. Using a community based participatory research approach, these providers, with the help of UNMC faculty, will be brought together to finalize a project they feel will help them in the management of their patients. This project will provide data and models that improve the health care of rural patients and will prepare health professions students on rural rotations become better health providers.*
- **Catalyzing the Role of Micropolitan America in the Future of Rural America: Why Not Begin this New Frontier for Research and Engagement in Nebraska?** – Eric Thompson (PI), Bureau of Business Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with other UNL partners, and co-PIs from University of Nebraska-Omaha and the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI).
 

*This project will help micropolitan areas identify opportunities and formulate research-driven plans for their future success in order to support rural economies. It will develop a prototype in Nebraska with national applicability and actionability. As a result of this project, the University of Nebraska will lead the nation in articulating the role of micropolitan areas and helping them capitalize on their unique opportunities for regional innovation and rural development.*

**For questions or comments please contact:**  
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