



October 11, 2024

MEMORANDUM:

To: Whom it may concern

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katherine Williams", is written over the printed name.

From: Katherine R. Williams, Chair, National Urban Extension Leaders,  
NC State Extension, Wake County Extension Director

The National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) are excited to provide a letter of support for the National Research Support Project (NRSP) *Building Collaborative Research and Extension Networks to Advance the Research & Application of Science with Urban Communities*, administered by the National Urban Research & Extension Center (NUREC) and its director, Dr. Brad Gaolach.

NUEL provides Program Leadership nationally to advance the strategic importance and long-term value of Cooperative Extension in urban communities. Our reach is broad, includes all regions of the country and more than 1600 professionals through our Connect Extension Urban Network. NUEL hosts annual professional development conferences promoting scholarship at the National or Regional level. NUREC is an important strategic partner, working specifically to advance external partnerships and to leverage LGU expertise through integrated research initiatives.

As Extension leaders in urban communities, we understand and value the research capabilities that our land grant institutions offer to drive positive transformation across our 5 focus areas: Feeding our Future, Enriching Our Youth, Improving our Health, Protecting our Environment and Strengthening our Communities. As Extension professionals we work very closely with municipal, county and state leaders in our urban centers to deploy community-led, data-driven and research informed solutions. We often serve as convenors, who are trusted by grassroots leaders and community partners to drive policy change. We are charged with the mission of offering critical services and research-based educational programs that are relevant to the needs of our people and communities. We understand that urban

residents, organizations and policy makers are often overwhelmed with many voices and demands they encounter; making cross sector collaboration important, complex and difficult to sustain.

Urban Extension leaders are positioned with extensive networks in communities, with relationships to emerging grassroots leadership, established business & industry leaders as well as with allied organizations. Moreover, we are challenged, as an Extension system to evaluate programs and collect data establishing the impact of our efforts; resources that are inherently more accessible through research integrated initiatives. Our Land Grant Universities, leveraging an intentionally integrated Extension & Research capability, has an unparalleled opportunity to partner with local communities for enhanced impact.

NUEL is proud to support this proposal to help us build new pathways to connect with faculty and specialists in more meaningful and more intentional ways. We will provide a member of our Executive Leadership Team to serve as an Advisory Committee member for this project and are willing to work with NUREC leadership to host a dedicated track during or adjacent to our National Urban Extension Conference to highlight research, outcomes and integrated efforts underway for the 450+ professionals who attend.

We look forward to the opportunity to work together on a shared agenda that integrates both the research and extension capabilities in our Land Grant universities to enhance the future of all.