

Gaolach, Brad

From: Gaolach, Brad
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 8:54 AM
To: 'Christine Baker-Smith'
Subject: RE: NLC/NUREC MOU

I agree with this and am ready to move forward.

Thanks

Brad

I do not expect you to respond to this email outside of your work hours. My general work hours are 9-6 T-F (Pacific Time)



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[Book time to meet with me](#)

From: Christine Baker-Smith <baker-smith@nlc.org>
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2025 5:55 AM
To: Gaolach, Brad <gaolach@wsu.edu>
Subject: NLC/NUREC MOU

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Brad,

So I ran into an interesting change in our org policy – they would rather we move forward with our agenda in the MOU based on a formal email agreement than the MOU format.

To that end, I'm putting our game plan into this email and with your responding email we can continue to move forward on our agenda below!

We agree that:

Both Parties share the common goal of building and strengthening the relationship between NLC members and their Extension resources so that municipal leaders understand and have access to the skills and scholarship provided by NUREC and NUREC has opportunities to share its innovations directly with municipal leaders.

Both Parties are interested in pursuing partnerships with networks, organizations, and other institutions that share the same mission to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of their respective efforts and commit to cooperate as follows:

To this end we have a systematic approach to engaging NLC members, they are laid out in the approach both parties agree is most effective:

1. **Synthesis and acceleration:** Catalyze rigorous understanding of innovative programs. NLC has dozens of cohorts active in municipalities across the country. These cohorts encourage and support municipal leaders in promising, transformative and innovative practices across a wide

range of subject areas. Cohorts range from 4 cities exploring how to better connect their workforce and education institutions to supporting 50 cities in economic mobility programming and 10 cities in implementing smart surface policies for their infrastructure needs.

Many of these practices expand on existing theory where there is little scientific evidence of their impact or return-on-investment (ROI). There is so little research on many of these practices due to three key factors a) the academic/scientific field is often unaware of projects in incubation, b) even with awareness trust between researchers and practitioners is key to successful evaluations of promising practices – something difficult to build for a single project and c) scholarly research often relies on funding to execute.

By capitalizing on already existing relationships with funders who invest in technical assistance at NLC, from start-to-finish, an evaluation process by which we provide added value to all involved, from municipalities, to funders, to the scholarly field can easily be integrated into NLC's work. NLC is uniquely trusted by municipal leaders allowing it access to the implementation of these practices so as to capture the necessary evidence to understand their potential for scale. Despite this status, NLC has limited capacity to be deeply embedded in its work as an R&D arm. However, NUREC provides unique opportunities to engage scholars in relevant fields early in the cohorts to ensure rigorous evaluation of these new and innovative practices as well as to inform them with scientific guidance throughout the implementation. This work would allow us to expand beyond "innovative" into "best" practices leading to the next phase.

2. **Best Practices and Expansion:** NLC has a unique position from which it can inform the broader fields of municipal research, policy and practice. NLC is often leading the scaling of these innovative practices making it well-aware of innovations in the field before many others are. NLC members trust NLC to provide evidence on promising practices and will be eager for support in learning when, how and for whom promising practices provide impact or return-on-investment. Extension can partner with NLC to take best practices and support expansion of programming beyond the initial cohort (innovators) through the waves of adoption diffusion theory (early adopters, early majority, late majority) while also supporting both local adaption and data and impact collection for common metrics of change and impact.

To achieve these goals we aim to do the below:

1. **Durable Educational materials** targeted to audiences of both parties, co-produced and branded by both parties (e.g., fact sheets, research reports, policy briefs, etc).
2. **Learning opportunities** to connect the audiences from both parties to each other (e.g., webinars, podcasts, professional / workforce development trainings and micro-credentialling) including, but not limited to, NLCU Executive Education course sequences and free learning opportunities. To facilitate this engagement and its potential continuation both Parties agree to discuss a potential master services agreement for NLC from Washington State University (organizational home of NUREC), revenue share on NLCU courses and badging and credentialing from these courses.
3. **Technical Assistance cohorts and Scaled Models of Practice.** Pursue opportunities to leverage each party's expertise and audience/members to co-create, support, and scale the development and / or translation of knowledge into practice.
 - a. In the long-term we will use these cohorts to explore a program evaluation component that includes evaluation of baseline and outcome metrics as well as collection of core program data to identify key outcomes of innovative programming. Capitalizing on the unique network of academics and scholars present in NUREC we will be able to provide municipal

governments with the capacity to rigorously understand these programs and their impacts. This allows for opportunities to scale rigorous programs through dissemination of effective programs through new TA cohorts as well as through informing the field of scholarship on these programs in collaboration with scholars engaged in the work throughout the programming of the cohort.

Best,
Christy

Christine Baker-Smith, PhD

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REGISTER NOW!