

BLC Work Plan | May–September 2026

BLC discussion and approval to move forward 5-26-2026

Background

The Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC) would like to develop a collaborative work plan and coordinated approach for the upcoming summer and early fall. A primary responsibility of the committee is development of the annual appropriations request, including strategy development and justification for the FY2028 agricultural research funding request.

In addition, BLC is exploring a broader leadership role within agInnovation related to stakeholder engagement and coordination. This emerging effort would focus on strengthening relationships with key external partners, improving communication consistency, and helping elevate the value and priorities of agricultural research. Input from the agInnovation Chair will be important as this role is discussed and refined.

Draft Discussion Topics, Activities, and Desired Outcomes

May–September 2026

1. Potential New Stakeholder Engagement Role for BLC

Overall Goal:

Provide leadership and recommendations to the agInnovation Chair regarding priority stakeholder organizations and strategic engagement opportunities to strengthen relationships, broaden outreach, and improve coordinated communication about the value and priorities of agricultural research.

Proposed Discussion Topics and Activities

- Invite agInnovation chair, Chandra Reddy, to provide input during the May or June BLC meeting regarding the potential role of BLC in stakeholder engagement coordination.
- Explore development of a coordinated stakeholder engagement strategy, potentially in collaboration with the Science and Technology Committee (STC).
- Consider how BLC can help inform or coordinate shared messaging resources such as talking points, stakeholder “leave-behind” materials, impact summaries, and other communication tools used in meetings with stakeholders, policymakers, commodity groups, coalitions, and partners.
- Discuss a distributed leadership approach in which agInnovation directors and Executive Directors volunteers engage with stakeholder organizations aligned with their expertise, interests, or regional priorities.
- Consider whether agInnovation should provide travel support for directors or Executive Directors who are willing and able to participate in strategic stakeholder engagement activities.

Desired Outcomes

- Clarify whether stakeholder engagement coordination should become a formal BLC responsibility.

- Identify potential partner organizations, priority audiences, and coordination needs.
 - Develop initial recommendations for an agInnovation stakeholder engagement framework and support structure.
 - If acceptable, implement stakeholder engagement plan by Fall 2026.
-

2. Development of the FY2028 Appropriations Request

Timeline:

Begin discussions in June and no later than July 2026.

Proposed Discussion Topics and Activities

- Invite:
 - Julie McClure (VP, Torrey Advisory Group; AFRI Coalition; Friends of ARS),
 - Keith Coble (Chair, Board on Agriculture Assembly Budget and Advocacy Committee),
 - Matt Hammons (BLC CGA representative, CGA Agriculture Appropriations, Issue Team Leader, UNL Asst. VP for External Relations and Director of Federal Relations),
 - and Elizabeth Stulberg (Principal, LBA)

to help initiate discussions regarding FY2028 strategy development for both competitive and capacity funding requests.

- Discuss the broader federal funding landscape, including anticipated pressure on discretionary spending and potential reductions across federal research agencies.
- Identify strategic messaging, data points, and justification themes that will strengthen the FY2028 request and broader advocacy efforts.
- Coordinate timing and messaging with agInnovation, APLU, BAA, CGA, and partner organizations where appropriate.

Desired Outcomes

- Develop a framework and strategy for the FY2028 appropriations request by late Fall 2026 reflective of agInnovation needs and priorities.
-

3. Continued Engagement in the LGU Call to Action (formerly the Roadmap)

Proposed Discussion Topics and Activities

- Continue monitoring and engaging in discussions related to the Land-grant University Call to Action.
 - Provide feedback and recommendations where appropriate.

Desired Outcomes

- Ensure BLC perspectives and priorities are represented in ongoing discussions.
-

4. Continued Federal and DC Policy Updates

Proposed Discussion Topics and Activities

- Continue regular federal policy and appropriations updates during monthly BLC meetings.
- Continue the broader agInnovation DC Update meetings that include participation from all agInnovation directors and leadership.
- Monitor and discuss emerging federal issues, appropriations developments, USDA policies, Farm Bill discussions, and agency updates relevant to LGUs and agricultural research.

Desired Outcomes

- Maintain timely awareness of federal developments impacting agricultural research to better inform FY2028 and future funding requests and other initiatives.
- Support coordinated communication and informed advocacy efforts across agInnovation leadership and member institutions.