

ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC): <http://escop.info/committee/blc/>  
August 2024 Agenda - **Members Only**  
Tuesday, August 27, 2024 3pm (CT)/4pm (ET)

**Committee Members:**

<p><b>Chair:</b> Anton Bekkerman (NERA) <b>Past Chair:</b> Glenda Humiston (WAAESD) <b>Incoming Chair:</b> Steve Lommel (SAAESD)</p> <p><b>Members:</b> Alton Thompson (ARD) Vernon Jones (ARD) Gary Pierzynski (NCRA) Derek McLean (NCRA) Wendie Cohick (NERA) Steve Lommel (SAAESD) Scott Senseman (SAAESD) Sreekala Bajwa (WAAESD) Shawn Donkin (WAAESD)</p>	<p><b>Liaisons:</b> Jason Henderson (ECOP) Katie Frazier (CARET) Elizabeth Stulberg (Lewis-Burke, Advocacy) Paula Geiger (NIFA) Laura Jolly (BHHS)</p> <p><b>Executive Vice-Chair</b> Gary Thompson (SAAESD ED) Cindy Morley (SAAESD)</p>
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**Attendees:** Anton Bekkerman, Gary Thompson, Jeanette Thurston, Wendie Cohick, Doug Steele, Glenda Humiston, Vernon Jones, Scott Senseman, Chris Hamilton, Alton Thompson

**Meeting Agenda:**

- Welcome
- Approval of the July 23 meeting notes
  - **Approved by acclimation**
- Approval of today's agenda
  - **Approved by acclimation**
- RFA subcommittee report
  - RFA subcommittee has focused on assisting LBA in a conversation with NIFA about developing strategies for implementing RFA should significant funding occur.
    - Formulating a set of questions
    - Developing recommendations to accompany the questions
    - Subcommittee has been meeting bi-monthly and recommendations will be shared with LBA.
  - Discussion
    - "Only institutions that receive capacity funds will be eligible for RFA funds" was in the wording in the last competition. Will that be the case this time? Who will be determining eligibility, NIFA or Congress?
    - No reference to capacity funds currently in the RFA.

- The act was intentionally written to be vague to provide implementation flexibility. RFA funding will run through NIFA. They will have an impact in developing the guidelines, and we want to give them our thoughts.
- FY26 budget priorities
  - BAA Recommendations from last year are being recommended by the BAC.
    - Big changes in appropriations are unlikely. Our ask last year is aspirational above what we receive and appear to be in a holding pattern for this year.
    - Recommendation: review the slide deck that we put together and reshare the justifications and funding levels.
    - During our December (post-election) call we will have to make some tough decisions and make them quickly. We need to have a goal but also fallback positions.
  - The roadmap will not be completed by the mid-September deadline.
    - Recommendation: reconsider how the BLC and agInnovation justify their asks relevant to the roadmap next year.
  - **Will communicate to the BAC that we are keeping the same trajectory and depending on what happens in November we can pivot as needed. We will provide a more long-term justification for our asks once we finish the roadmap.**
- Engaging NIFA: Aligning with agency priorities – Jeanette Thurston
  - Background on the agInnovation Research Roadmap
    - One-pagers developed on the overall strategy and each of the three pillar areas.
    - Aspirational investment strategy includes 1% of total Federal R&D budget
    - Started in March 2024 and will be implemented in January 2025 incorporating stakeholder feedback.
    - Positive reactions from the BAA Sections (ECOP/ICOP/ACOP/AHS)
    - USDA meetings with REE and NIFA leadership.
      - Meetings positive all around. Chevonda Jacobs Young acknowledged “we have to be aspirational” in our investment strategy.
      - 100% supportive as these pillars align with USDA and NIFA priorities (USDA Strategic Plan 2022-2026 and USDA Science and Research Strategy 2023-2026)
    - Rollout at NCFAR Lunch-n-Learn September 17.
  - **Timeline for FY 27, this fall is the time to be engaging NIFA.**
  - BLC Role in the implementation of the roadmap.
    - Develop funding strategies and justifications in alignment with the roadmap. To include input on securing appropriations and legislative support, justifying increases in funding, targeting budget lines, aligning with agency priorities and liaising with LBA, BAC and CLP.
    - Actions steps needed to fulfil this role
      - Develop funding strategies including research funding priorities and justifications in alignment with the roadmap
      - Identify key stakeholders for leadership to be new agInnovation champions
      - Assist with determining investment strategy for each pillar topic area?
      - Work across agInnovation standing committees especially STC to develop funding priorities and strategies.
      - Engage with other BAA sections where appropriate on aligning funding strategies and priorities.
      - Develop elevator pitches, impacts realized and risk of inaction: provide input to communications strategies and products.
      - Evaluate funding needs in consideration of progress towards goals.

- Other business
  - Doug- Capacity Building Task Force met recently.
    - Will send a survey out in the middle of September.
    - Plan to present the initial findings at the agInnovation meeting.
    - Ready by the 3rd week in February for the CARET meeting.
      - Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> FANR Focus will have save the dates for the February meeting. CARET Executive Meeting will be in October.
    - George Smith, Bev Durgan, Moses Kairo, Robin Shephard and Dennis Becker are members of the Capacity Building Task Force working with Tate-Umbach.