



Affiliate Annual Report Form

Submit this form to your Regional Director and the
NEAFCS National Office, 325 John Knox Rd. Suite L103 Tallahassee, FL 32303
Fax: (850) 222-3019 Email: djessup@executiveoffice.org

Please return this form by December 31st of each year to your Regional Director (bwollan@iastate.edu) and a copy to the National Office. **This report should cover anything that has occurred between January 1 and December 31 of the current year.**

State/Territory: Minnesota Date: 12/31/2024
Person Completing Form: Susie West Phone: 435-363-6557

What accomplishments/progress has your Affiliate made in the past year? (Consider member resources, awards and recognition, public affairs, etc.)

2024 was a big year for the Minnesota affiliate! We submitted 11 award applications and received 3 national awards along with 9 regional awards, all of which were recognized at a departmental meeting in September. The affiliate also promoted NEAFCS at a departmental meeting in the spring with handouts, stickers and a poster. Our professional development event, *Telling Your Story*, was well attended by professionals across our department and received positive feedback from the event's evaluation. Nearly all of our members contributed to, or were on teams that submitted impact statements on a wide variety of programming areas, showing the breadth and depth of the affiliate's work and how it is making a difference for Minnesotans. Some of this work was also shared at national conferences, including PILD and NHOC, in journal publications and statewide opportunities.

What are your Affiliate's goals for the next 12 months?

- Engage annual and life members
- Continue growing membership for our affiliate
- Maintain high levels of affiliate award applications
- 100% of member contribute to impact statements
- Increase NEAFCS visibility within UMN Extension
- Send at least 2 members to Annual Session
- Support the growth and development of FCS professionals within and outside our affiliate through relevant materials, professional development and outreach
- Engage members to become part of national committees, act as reviewers, and conduct a webinar

What challenges do Cooperative Extension and/or Family & Consumer Sciences face in your state?

- Uncertainty about incoming administration and potential federal changes or challenges to our work
- Staff turnover
- Broad and variable funding streams
- Eroding public trust of institutions and expertise

To assist NEAFCS in future planning and communication, please list concerns your Affiliate has for the NEAFCS Board to address:

Our Affiliate's biggest concern is probably that, despite some of our most robust outreach efforts in recent years, our membership is dwindling. There are a couple of factors that are contributing to this:

- **Burnout:** Many members are serving on multiple committees, holding multiple positions and/or rotating through leadership positions regularly because of the small numbers...this has led to burnout among those who serve in those roles.
 - Current policies around term lengths for certain roles, especially those with higher levels of responsibility and longer learning curves, creates gaps in leadership right when folks start getting the hang of things
 - Some of this burnout is also related to UMN organizational culture/performance appraisal system that doesn't value leadership roles as highly for different job classes, thus, some members aren't incentivized to hold leadership positions because it doesn't benefit them professionally
- **Relevance:** In our department, we currently have access to a limited amount of professional development funds that can be used to cover the cost of joining professional organizations. Colleagues are joining professional organizations that have more resources and opportunities that are better aligned with their professional goals. Much of our work is aligned with public health approaches to community and family health.
 - Examples of organizations: American Public Health Association, Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
 - Some of this is also reflected in award categories and program requirements, about which we shared feedback with the national awards committee in the fall.
- **Degree Requirements:** A large portion of UMN Extension's Department of Family, Health and Wellbeing's 120 staff members are community-based professionals who do not hold degrees. This makes it difficult to market NEAFCS membership when a significant number of our colleagues are not able to participate fully in the benefits.
 - Recognizing the expertise of those with knowledge and skills that are gained through lived experience, cultural wisdom, and sources outside of academia does not degrade the level of professionalism within the organization, but it does send a message that those types of expertise are not as valuable.