



NASDA Foundation Strategic Plan 2026-2029

Letter from the Senior Director

Since its founding in 1981, the NASDA Foundation has been committed to advancing education, outreach, and research for the nation's state departments of agriculture. Over the past several years, we have seen agriculture and food systems navigate unprecedented challenges – growing workforce shortages, evolving consumer expectations, and increasing administrative complexity. These challenges demand a stronger, more nimble partner for the states who serve on the frontlines.

This strategic plan represents the NASDA Foundation's evolution from convener to service partner. Our members have told us what they need most: relief from administrative burdens, more efficient program delivery, and a trusted ally who can transform coordination into real results. In response, we are embracing a new model of state capacity empowerment – providing direct services such as grant development, standardized reporting, technical training, and workforce development initiatives. In short, we are rolling up our sleeves alongside our members, so they can focus on serving producers and communities to address agricultural needs.

Our strategic plan is organized around three core themes – Programs, Awareness, and Financial Sustainability. Together, these priorities chart a course for greater impact: delivering high-quality programs aligned with shared state priorities, amplifying the stories and successes of agriculture, and ensuring the Foundation's financial stability to serve for decades to come.

Most importantly, this plan reflects the voices of our members. It was built through their insights and designed to answer their call for stronger communications, more applied research, and services that simplify the work of government while magnifying its impact. With this plan, the NASDA Foundation stands ready to empower states with the tools, expertise, and partnerships they need to meet the challenges of today and the opportunities of tomorrow.

We are grateful for the trust of our members and partners, and we look forward to working together to create measurable impact for agriculture and food systems nationwide.



Chris Jones
Senior Director, NASDA Foundation

Strategic Plan at a Glance

The NASDA Foundation works collaboratively with NASDA and while the Foundation has adopted a unique mission, both organizations have a shared vision and purpose.



Vision

NASDA is an indispensable champion for a thriving American agriculture and food system.



Purpose

To sustain and enrich individuals and communities with essential food, feed, fuel, and fiber.



Mission

Engage state departments of agriculture to enhance American food and agricultural communities through education, outreach, and research.

Our Challenge

Agriculture, food systems, and rural economies face a rapidly evolving set of challenges. From implementing food safety programs to addressing food insecurity, building resilient rural economies, and ensuring a skilled agricultural workforce, state departments are continually asked to do more with limited resources.

Without a coordinated strategy and a robust support infrastructure, states risk duplicating efforts, experiencing administrative overload, and missing opportunities to engage with more producers and rural communities.

Our Solution

NASDA Foundation is shifting to a model of state capacity empowerment, where we provide tools, expertise, and services that allow states to focus on program impact and operational capacity.

Through high-quality programs to address shared state priorities, national storytelling and engagement campaigns to build awareness of key issues, and diversification of funding streams to ensure financial sustainability, NASDA Foundation serves as a mechanism that state departments use to further their strategic objectives.

Core Member Benefits

The NASDA Foundation partners with state departments of agriculture to foster collaboration, convene stakeholders, and develop initiatives that enhance state-led impact. Core member benefits include:

Grant Writing & Management Support:

assisting states in applying for and administering federal/state/private funding.

Strategic Planning & Program Design:

facilitation, frameworks, and opt-in support for state initiatives.

Communications & Storytelling:

amplifying member successes through national campaigns.

Data & Reporting Tools:

standardized models to reduce reporting burdens across agencies.

Convening & Peer Learning:

cross-state cohorts, best practice exchanges, and knowledge-sharing sessions.

Training & Workforce Development:

FSMA trainings, professional development, and leadership training for programmatic development.

Strategic Priorities



Education

- ✓ Expand training initiatives, including national programs and FSMA-related education.
- ✓ Bring webinars to states to share information and tools that elevate staff professional development.
- ✓ Support agricultural literacy by addressing consumer concerns and misinformation, and strengthen workforce development through partnerships such as FFA, 4-H, National Agriculture in the Classroom, AFA, and community colleges.



Outreach

- ✓ Leverage the NASDA Foundation as a clearinghouse for state program needs, including program development and execution, staff professional development, and workforce development.
- ✓ Foster collaboration between state agencies, federal partners, and private sector stakeholders.
- ✓ Build stronger engagement with states, ensuring program staff and leadership are fully onboarded.



Research

- ✓ Evaluating programmatic information to further develop training programs for staff development.
- ✓ Facilitate more applied research on food systems, business development and natural resources/efforts.
- ✓ Improve survey mechanisms to capture state-specific needs and align resources accordingly.

Core Pillars



Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA)

Expands cooperation between state and federal agencies. This program supports NASDA's mission to create a secure and resilient food supply.



Business Development

Emphasizes creating opportunities for skillbuilding and career advancement in agriculture. This supports NASDA's efforts to address workforce challenges in the sector.



Rural Development

Addresses economic growth and resilience in rural communities, complementing NASDA's efforts to advocate for programs that support rural infrastructure.



Natural Resources Stewardship

Centers on conservation and sustainably managed farmland. This aligns with NASDA's goals of integrating environmental stewardship with agricultural development.



Food & Nutrition Security

Focuses on improving access to safe and nutritious food, supporting NASDA's work in addressing food insecurity while emphasizing the importance of a safe and secure food supply chain that includes local and regional foods.

Strategic Goals: 2026 - 2029



Operations

- ✓ Grow unrestricted revenue by 1% annually.
- ✓ Cover 100% of operating costs by FY 2028.
- ✓ Secure at least three new private sector partnerships by 2027.



Program Delivery

- ✓ By the end of FY 2027, the NASDA Foundation will develop and deploy two collaborative, optional service models that are co-designed with state agricultural departments with complete initial state-led implementation in each by June 2028.
- ✓ Launch and sustain a multi-state FSMA leadership training series by 2028 that builds programmatic development skills for state food safety directors and staff, reaching at least 75% of eligible states.
- ✓ Expand workforce development programs to reach 400 students by 2029.



Awareness & Engagement

- ✓ By the end of 2027 and evaluated through the annual member survey, the NASDA Foundation will grow awareness from the current 60% level (2025 member survey) to 70%.
- ✓ Achieve at least 5,000 annual media impressions and secure 3 annual key speaking engagements.



Research & Data

- ✓ Conduct annual member needs survey with 80% state participation.
- ✓ Publish at least two applied research briefs per year.

Implementation & Accountability

Governance: Define clear roles and expectations for the Foundation Board, and conduct annual plan reviews.

Stakeholder Engagement: Enhance collaboration with federal agencies and foster greater state involvement through sponsorship and opt-in models.

Operational Efficiency: Strengthen administrative support mechanisms to ease burdens on state agencies, develop a structured suite of services tailored to diverse state needs, and establish robust evaluation systems to measure impact.

Closing Statement

NASDA Foundation is here to make your work easier, your programs stronger, and your impact greater. Through this strategic plan, we recommit ourselves to supporting agriculture and food systems in every state with practical tools, direct services, and shared vision for a resilient future.

