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## 2026 Cohort of NASDA Next Generation Students Announced

PORTLAND, Maine – The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Foundation is excited to host the 2026 NASDA Next Generation program at the 2026 NASDA Annual Meeting in Portland, Maine, Sept. 13-16. This program is designed to engage college students with leaders in agricultural policy and industry, fostering professional connections and promoting exposure to state and federal policy discussions.

“As agriculture continues to evolve in the face of new challenges and opportunities, investing in the next generation of agricultural leaders is more important than ever,” NASDA Foundation Senior Director Chris Jones said. “What is especially exciting about this group is the breadth of perspectives they bring. Their varied academic experiences and approaches reflect the increasingly connected nature of agriculture and demonstrate that the thought leadership needed to move the industry forward can come from many different pathways. We are excited to see these outstanding students develop their voices, build valuable connections and discover how they can contribute to the future of agricultural policy and innovation.”

This year’s co-hort also includes the [inaugural 2026 Scott E. Fancher Agricultural Law NASDA-National Ag Law Center Fellow Madison Mills](#) who is studying at California Western School of Law. Mills spent this summer researching national agricultural issues and their linkage to NASDA Foundation programs for state agriculture departments at NASDA’s headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.

### 2026 NASDA Next Generation participants:

- Hannah Castle, The State University of New York - Morrisville, Agricultural Business
- Hazel Handy, Bates College, Environmental Studies and Political Science
- Jack Lingenfelter, University of Georgia, Agribusiness
- Jayda Goodson, New Mexico State University, Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Communications
- Jordan Ramos, University of Maine, Environment and Studio Art
- Josie Veilleux, University of Maine – Orono, Sustainable Food Systems
- Kaleigh Backstrom, Auburn College of Veterinary Medicine (B.S. Poultry Science)
- Kendall Beard , University of Tennessee – Knoxville, Agricultural Leadership
- Laura Coderre, University of Connecticut, Environmental and Natural Resource Economics
- Madison Mills, California Western School of Law, NASDA-National Agricultural Law Center Fellow
- Nyssa Barrett, University of New Hampshire, Environmental Conservation &



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#### Sustainability, Justice Studies

- Pindar Yawulda Mbaya, University of Vermont, Food Systems (Ph.D. 2027)
- Remi Sylla, University of Massachusetts – Amherst, Biology - Environmental Science
- Ruby Blustajn, University of Rhode Island, Aquaculture & Fisheries
- Saanvi Madduri, Colby College, Economics and Data Science
- Sadie Olmstead, University of Maine, Sustainable Food Systems

Launched in 2015, NASDA's Next Generation Program provides an opportunity for college students to interact directly with leaders who represent state departments of agriculture from around the country. The initiative aims to educate students about NASDA's role as a convener and advocate for states while offering insights into the broader landscape of agricultural policy through hands-on participation in NASDA's annual meeting. Since its inception, more than 250 students from across the nation have participated.

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The NASDA Foundation is the only educational and research organization that directly serves the nation's state departments of agriculture. The NASDA Foundation's mission is to enhance American food and agricultural communities through education, outreach and research. The NASDA Foundation works with states to nourish people and communities while serving as the stewards of the environment and public trust. To learn more about the NASDA Foundation, please visit [nasda.org/nasda-foundation](https://nasda.org/nasda-foundation).



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