



Leadership Skill Development Mini-Grant 2025-2026 Call for Proposals (Round 3)

Submission Deadline: May 12th, 2026 by 5.00 p.m. MST.

Submit by email to: wrdc@uidaho.edu

Project Funding Range: Up to \$2,000 per year per applicant

Project Duration: Projects must be completed within two months of the award decision

Funding Decisions Announced: End of May, 2025.

Grant Program Manager: Dr. Nadeeka Weerasekara, Email: nadeeka@uidaho.edu

Overview of Leadership Skill Development Mini-Grants

The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) offers funding for proposals that present innovative research and educational outreach aimed at advancing rural development in the Western United States. Faculty and staff from Land Grant Institutions in the Western Region are eligible to apply for the Leadership Skill Development Mini-Grant Program.

These mini-grants provide a unique opportunity for personal and professional growth, with proposals focusing on either research, extension, or a combination of both. Proposals must target the development of leadership skills within Extension or research communities, emphasizing the growth of leadership capabilities in faculty, staff, community members, and partners in the Western Region. The goal of this grant program is to enhance leadership capacity among staff, faculty, and/or community groups.

About the WRDC

The Western Rural Development Center (WRDC) is one of four rural development centers established by Congress's Rural Development Act of 1972. It is a collaborative effort between the United States Department and the University of Idaho. The core of its funding comes from the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. The WRDC works with public universities in the Western region to conduct research-based studies and educational outreach programs. It also partners with local communities, decision-makers, entrepreneurs, families, farmers, and ranchers to address various rural development issues. The center's objective is to enhance the research and extension capacity of the region's land-grant universities to help rural communities thrive in today's world. The WRDC works in conjunction with the other three Regional Rural Development Centers in the country to achieve their shared mission.



Western Land-Grant Institutions:

American Samoa Community College, College of Micronesia, Colorado State University, Montana State University, New Mexico State University, Northern Marianas College, Oregon State University, University of Alaska, University of Arizona, University of California, University of Guam, University of Hawaii, University of Idaho, University of Nevada, University of Wyoming, Utah State University, Washington State University, Blackfoot Community College, Chief Dull Knife College, Dine College, Fort Belknap College, Fort Peck Community College, Institute of American Indian Arts, Little Big Horn College, Navajo Technical College, Northwest Indian College, Salish Kootenai College, Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute, Stone Child College, and Tohono O’odham Community College.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on how the proposed activity will assist in building leadership skills for the applicant or the community they serve.

During the project term, grantees are expected to engage personally or collaboratively to develop their leadership skills or those of their constituents. The choice of methodology is at the discretion of the applicants. Methods may include enrolling in or teaching leadership training (e.g., workshops, classes, courses, or webinars), studying leadership publications, or engaging in specific leadership activities such as leading a community project, organizing a seminar, or mentoring junior staff. Working in cohorts or small groups to design and implement leadership enhancement plans is encouraged.

Mini-grants must be completed within two months of receiving the funding decision. Recipients are required to submit a report to the WRDC and their direct supervisors, detailing their accomplishments and learnings from the funded activities or program evaluations. This report ensures that recipients document their progress and the impact of their work on leadership skill development for themselves or within their communities.

Submission Guidelines

Proposals should be formatted with one-inch margins, in 12-point font, and 1.5 line spacing, and must include the following items in the specified order:

Proposal:

1. Applicant's Name, university affiliation, and position
2. Summary of the request, including the activity to be funded, goals, and objectives. Explain how the activity is designed to build leadership skills, how goals and objectives will be accomplished, and provide an evaluation of the proposal. This section is limited to **500 words**.
3. List of item(s) to be purchased with WRDC funds to support leadership skill development, including any relevant information or web links to access the leadership skill-building activity.

Funding

The WRDC will not send funds directly to applicants but will cover the costs associated with the proposed activities. The funding amount can be up to \$2,000 annually, depending on available funds. The WRDC will pay for expenses such as registrations for training, curriculum materials, periodicals, or books. Please note that funds will not be provided upfront. Approved expenses will be reimbursed upon submission of valid invoices.