



# North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc.

## RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FUND

### REQUEST FOR MAPLE RESEARCH PROPOSALS

2024 Research Proposal Submission Guidelines

**LOI Deadline: June 15, 2024**

**Proposal Deadline: September 1, 2024**

The North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc. Research and Education Fund (NAMSC-RF) is pleased to announce a Request for Maple Research Proposals (RFP). Qualified research institutions, state/provincial governmental research professionals and privately held research and development organizations (applicants) are encouraged to apply for funding consideration. Preference will be given to collaborative projects and those applicants documenting leveraged support from sources outside the NAMSC-RF.

To help ensure that proposals meet the requirements and interests of the Fund, we are asking applicants to first submit Letters of Interest (LOIs). These should be no more than two pages, and should broadly summarize the proposal the applicant intends to submit, including:

- Issues to be addressed and questions to be answered by the project.
- Qualifications of institution/principal investigators.
- Amount to be requested.

The NAMSC Research Committee will review the LOIs and communicate with applicants by July 15 to invite those selected to submit a full proposal.

1. The NAMSC-RF is soliciting and will be considering proposals which fall in one of two funding categories:

- a. Traditional “seed funding” grants providing support up to \$5,000 (with equal or greater institutional match).
- b. Expanded grants of \$10-35,000 (with equal or greater institutional match) in support of significant research projects.

2. The NAMSC-RF will consider proposals which address one or more of these industry related issues:

- a. Sap & syrup production efficiency, alternative energy / sustainability / energy cost reduction for maple syrup production.
- b. Sap, syrup and/or sugar production quality.
- c. Methods and management of the sugarbush including: soil health, invasive species, maple diseases, and short/long term effects of chemical or other treatments.
- d. Development of value-added products, or other projects designed to expand market opportunities for maple products.

3. Applicants are asked to submit requests to this RFP which clearly and concisely document:
- a. Scope and duration of project (multiple-year projects will be considered, with interim reports required)
  - b. Technical and scientific merit
  - c. Demonstrated need
  - d. In kind and partial support
  - e. Potential for continued support (if needed)
  - f. Application of research across industry
  - g. Outcome and best practice application
  - h. Collaboration
  - i. **An adequately itemized, justified and documented budget (required)**. Proposals requesting funds for specialized research equipment, supplies, hardware, software and the like will be given priority over proposals requesting funding for personnel, laboratory and technical assistants, or principal investigator stipends. Institutional overhead will not be covered by these grants. While the Research Committee understands the need for personnel and institutional overhead, we have limited funding and request that applicants seek funds from other sources to provide for those expenditures. Overhead costs from other sources may be used as matching funds.

4. The following criteria will be considered by the committee when reviewing proposals (no priority intended):

- Does the proposed project address the mission and objectives of the NAMSC?
- Does the proposed project have projected benefits which enhance the industry?
- Does the proposed project have projected benefits which exceed costs?
- Does the proposed project have support from the private sector?
- Does the proposed project demonstrate cost sharing for the research?
- Does the proposed project support equipment **specific** to this research (not basic 'cost of doing business' equipment)?
- Does the proposed project focus on targeted challenges facing the maple industry?
- Does the proposed project address gaps in support of production, food quality or safety, or packaging of maple products?
- Does the proposed project include innovation of pilot products or instrumentation in addressing research targets?
- Does the proposed project have industry support (includes equipment, packaging and process manufacturers)?
- Does the proposed project conform to standards and principles established for institutional research in both U.S. and Canada?
- Does the proposed project comply with federal, provincial and state environmental legislation?
- Does the proposed project enhance and support working relationships between research institutions, related agricultural or forestry business entities, or manufacturers of maple equipment, container and supplies?
- The proposed project should fund a minimum of direct income support.

- The proposed project should not constitute normal commercial expansion for private individuals.
- The proposed project should not include requests for funding of clerical or management costs.

5. Research Proposal submission format to include:

- a. A narrative not to exceed five (5) type written pages (standard, double spaced, 12 point).
- b. Literature citations are expected and will not count toward the page limit.
- c. The accurate budget and justification may cover an additional two pages.
- d. Submission of proposals in electronic format to [khopkins@maine.edu](mailto:khopkins@maine.edu) **on or before September 1<sup>st</sup>**.

Researchers must be prepared to present their findings at the annual meeting of the NAMSC following completion of the project (held in October). NAMSC will reimburse up to \$1,000 for travel expenses for each project to attend the meeting.

All applications will be reviewed by the NAMSC Research Committee, which, in turn, recommends their findings to the full council which makes the final decision on funding.

Final decisions for grant awards will be made by vote of the Delegates to the North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc. at its October annual meeting. Applicants approved for funding will be notified by December 1<sup>st</sup>. Prior to funding, grant recipients will be required to sign a General Agreement outlining terms and conditions including, but not limited to, following standard research protocol in accordance with the civil jurisdiction of the NAMSC – RF, and a hold harmless / indemnity agreement between the grant recipient and NAMSC.

Thank you for your interest in the maple syrup industry. If you have questions, please contact us.

Contact information:

Kathryn Hopkins, Chair  
NAMSC Research Fund  
PO Box 476  
Norridgewock, ME 04957  
Phone 207-634-3782  
[khopkins@maine.edu](mailto:khopkins@maine.edu)

The NAMSC Research Fund is a non-profit, volunteer committee of the North American Maple Syrup Council, Inc. (5-1-22)