

Who We Are

After a collaborative process that included board conversations, member input, and honest reflection on NREA's role as a national organization, the Executive Board formally adopted an updated Vision, Mission, and Core Values for NREA.

These principles are a commitment, grounded in more than a century of showing up for rural schools, informing how NREA will move into the future.



Vision

The NREA envisions strong rural schools and communities where education is the catalyst for resilience, opportunity, and success.

Mission

As the trusted voice for rural education, the NREA advocates for every rural learner, educator, and community.

Core Values

Advocacy

We champion the needs of rural students, educators, and communities through proactive policy engagement and storytelling that elevates rural voices.

Collaboration

We believe progress happens through relationships. We bring together educators, families, partners, and policymakers to co-create solutions that reflect the realities and assets of rural life.

Community

We believe that rural schools are the heart of their communities. We foster strong relationships, honor local voice, and serve as active partners in building vibrant, sustainable futures.

Innovation

We encourage creative problem-solving and forward-thinking approaches that reflect the strengths and realities of rural education contexts.

Leadership

We cultivate and support bold, resilient, and ethical leaders who advocate for and guide the future of rural education.

2026-2030 Strategic Plan



Using the new Mission, Vision, and Core Values as a guide, the NREA Executive Board adopted NREA's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan in spring 2026, which identifies five main goals for the future. These goals reflect where our members, affiliates, and partners are telling us NREA is most needed.

Goal 1: Grow and Strengthen NREA Membership

NREA will continue building a diverse, active, and growing community of rural education stakeholders. Growing membership is not just a revenue strategy. It is a signal that NREA is delivering real value to the people closest to rural schools.

Goal 2: Invest in State Affiliates and Their Leaders

NREA will strengthen communication, consistency, and capacity across all state affiliates. By 2030, every affiliate director should have access to onboarding support, peer mentoring, and ongoing professional learning.

Goal 3: Build Partnerships and Expand Revenue

NREA will cultivate a diverse portfolio of strategic partnerships and sponsorships that generate sustainable revenue, extend our reach, and advance rural education across sectors. This goal positions NREA to pursue grant opportunities and expand financial flexibility so we can direct resources where rural schools need them most.

Goal 4: Elevate Rural Education in Federal Policy and Advocacy

NREA will deepen its presence in federal education policy conversations as a recognized, data-informed voice that shapes decisions affecting rural students, schools, and communities. When rural education comes up in Washington, NREA should already be in the room.

Goal 5: Advance Professional Learning for Rural Educators at All Levels

NREA will develop and deliver professional learning that builds the knowledge, skills, and confidence of rural educators and leaders, designed with rural contexts at the center. By 2030, NREA will be a trusted source of professional learning that rural educators actively seek out.