

Northeast Center to Advance Food Safety

Regional Center Update

Chris Callahan and Elizabeth Newbold

This work is supported by the Food Safety Outreach Program grant no. 2021-70020-35497
from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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NECAFS goal: Enhance produce safety and preventive controls training, education, and outreach among small and medium sized farms and small processors in the Northeast.

Approach: Increase fundamental shared PS & PC understanding of the region's educators and regulators through collaborative action. → They take this knowledge to their growers.

How do we increase fundamental understanding?

Build a regional **network** to **consolidate** food safety outreach and education efforts in a **collaborative** and consistent manner through strong network **facilitation**, resource **sharing**, **networking**, **consensus**-driven decision-making, and **interdisciplinary** action.

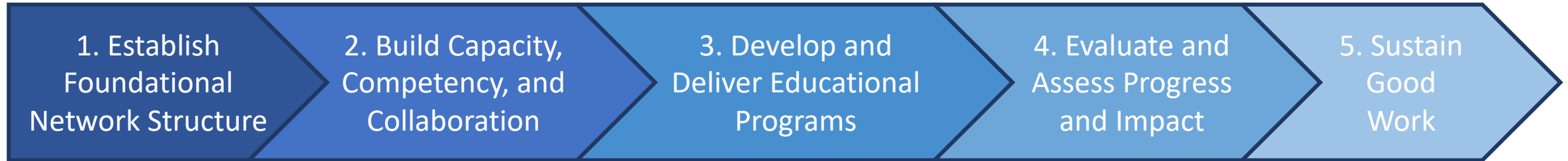


Employ the principles of collaboration, including:

- 1.) building trusting relationships
- 2.) provide voice for individual expert perspectives
- 3.) communication
- 4.) coordination

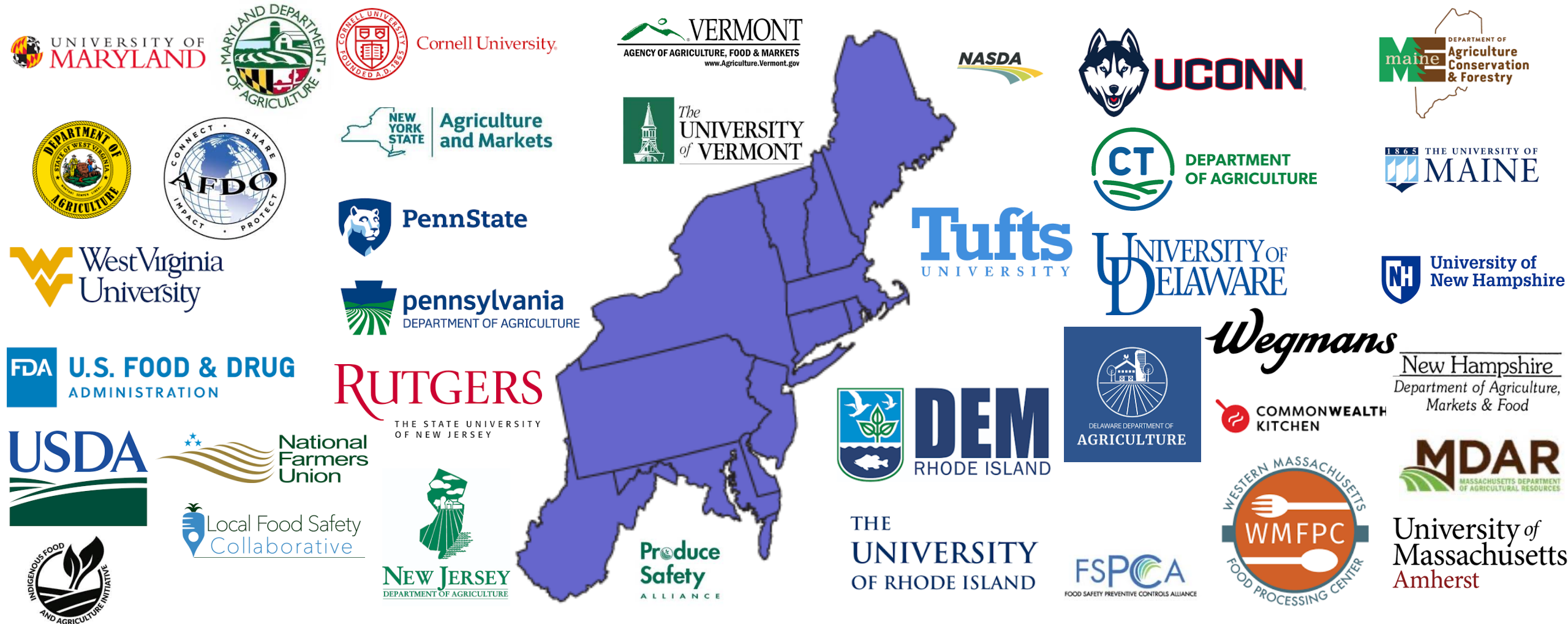
How do we employ the principles of collaboration?

Objectives:



- **Build network**
- **Communication**
- **Sharing Resources**
- **Annual Meeting**

Who makes up NECAFS Network?



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Communication

Monthly Newsletters



Social Media Posts



Topic based webinars

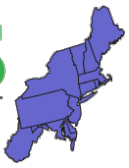


Listserve

Sharing Resources

Food Safety Resource Clearinghouse





NECAFS Annual Conference and Meeting



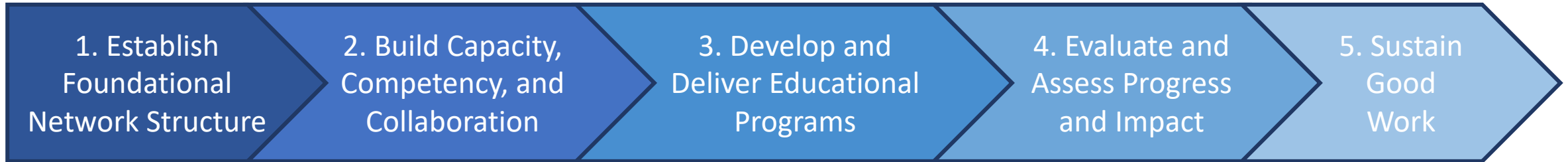
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United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

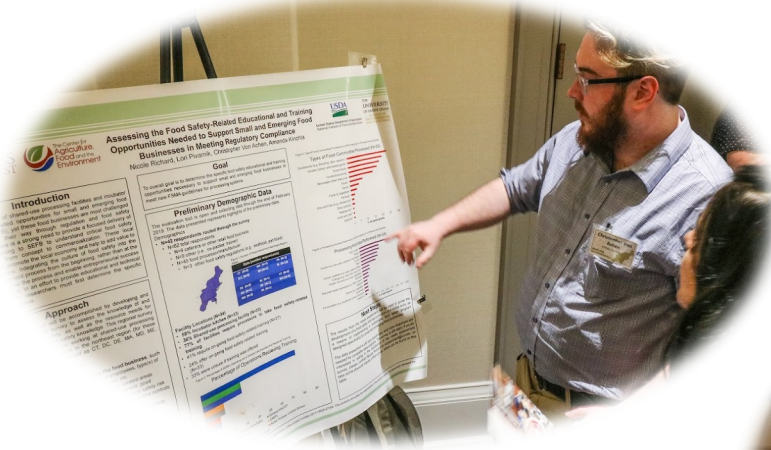
How do we employ the principles of collaboration?

Objectives:



- Build network
 - Communication
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 - Annual Meeting
- **Networking**
 - **Training \$ support**
 - **National integration**

Networking

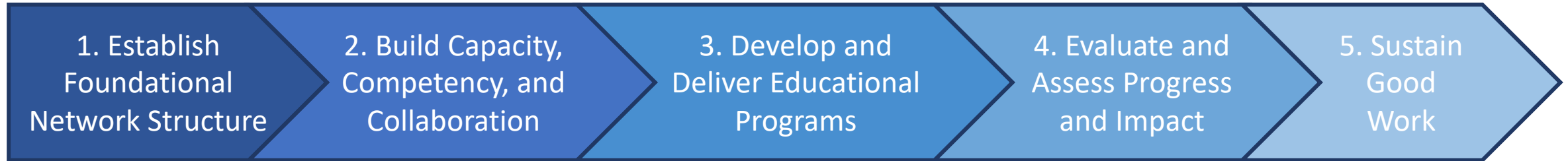


“Networking is really important. Sometimes someone just articulates or frames something in a slightly different way and I can incorporate that into my trainings and technical assistance.”

– Annual meeting attendee, 2023

How do we employ the principles of collaboration?

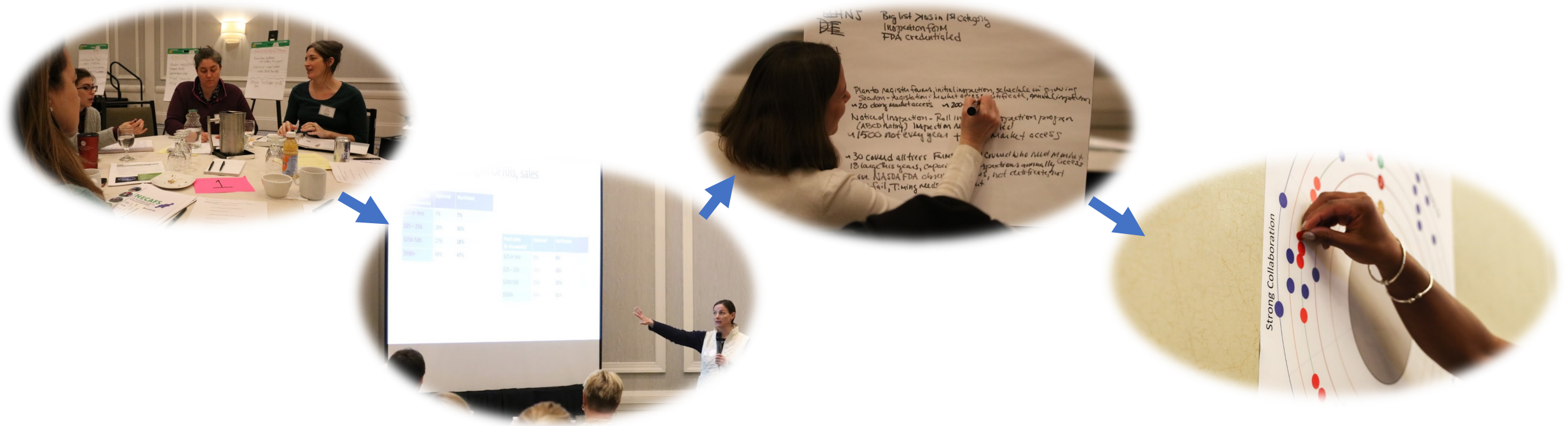
Objectives:



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- **Support creation of research-based knowledge tailoring to regional needs**

Annual Meeting Framework ~Network Informs Work~

Topic Workgroups → Review Data → Facilitated Discussion → Inform Approach to Address Need

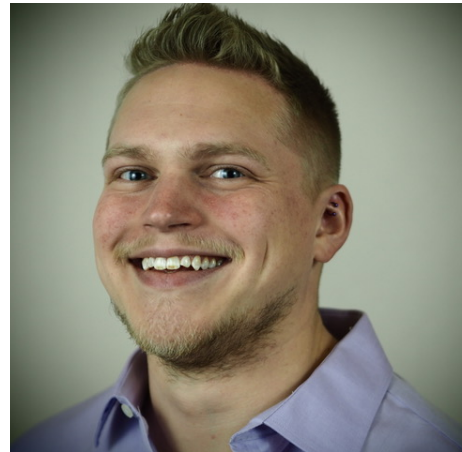


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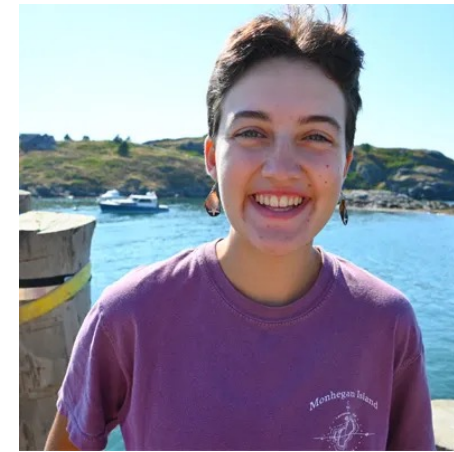
NECAFS Team



Annie Fitzgerald



Sean Fogarty



Anna Loewald

They lead the completion of identified project activities with guidance by interdisciplinary regional or national workgroup/project team/advisory group. These teams provide review, feedback, direction, and leadership to ensure accuracy and relevance to the target audience.

National Water Lab Map

Need: Help growers find a water testing lab that can conduct at least one method approved by the FDA.

Outcome: Interactive national map with 607 verified labs.



National Water Lab Map
607 labs verified and listed
29,834 views
go.uvm.edu/waterlabmap

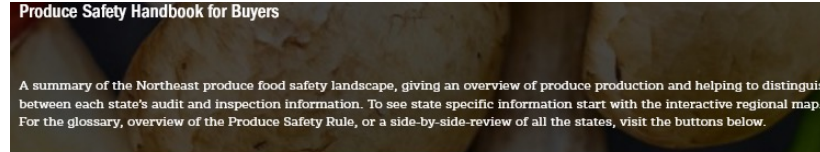
Produce Safety in Hydroponic and Aquaponic Operations

Need: Educators and regulators asked for introductory produce safety content specific to HP/AP operations.

Outcome: Creation of 5 topic-based factsheets to help educators and regulators get started.

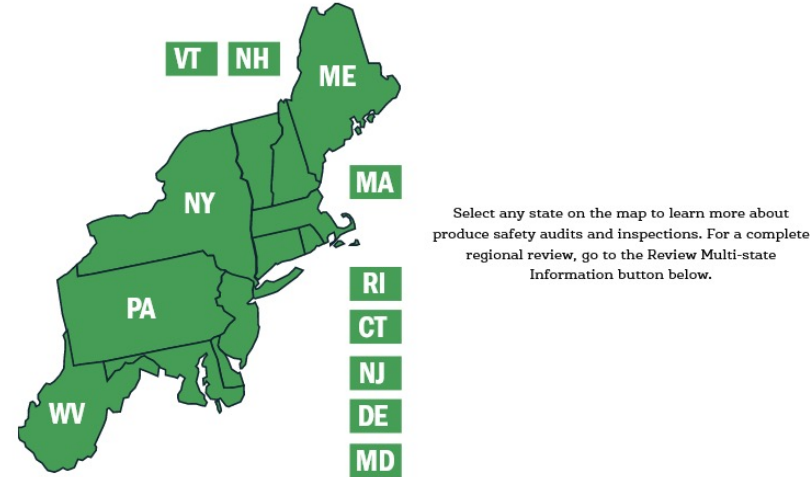


Produce Safety Handbook for Buyers



Need: help buyers understand and navigate each state's produce safety audit and inspection information.

Outcome: Creation of interactive online tool that summarizes the Northeast produce food safety landscape, gives an overview of produce production, as well as each state's audit and inspection information.



Glossary of Terms and FAQ

[Learn more](#)



Plain Language Overview of
the Produce Safety Rule

[Learn more](#)



Review Multi-state
Information

[Learn more](#)

Preventive Controls Workgroup

Need: Three areas of need identified: evaluation, resources, and awareness.

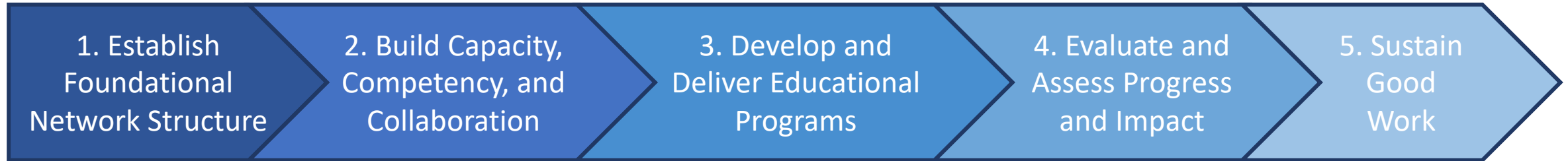
Outcome: Completion of:

- 1.) evaluation tool to be used by PC trainer across the region;
- 2.) interactive online resource collection to help processes get started with PCHF & GMPs; and,
- 3.) regional needs assessment to understand processor's awareness and subject matter needs → informs an outreach and awareness campaign.



How do we employ the principles of collaboration?

Objectives:



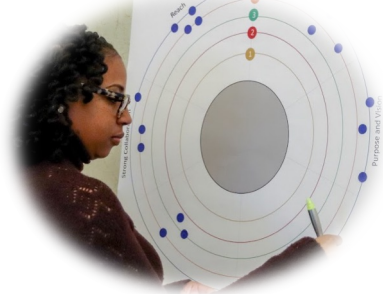
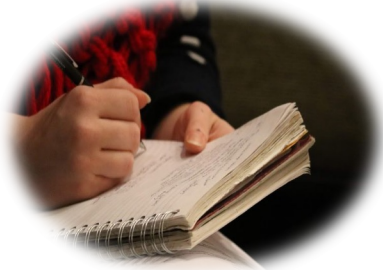
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- **Measure impact**

Evaluation Feedback from Network

1.) Evaluation completed annually with network members at the NECAFS Annual Conference and Meeting.

2.) Used to inform NECAFS approach over the next 12 months:

- what people benefit from most
- where our work should evolve or change

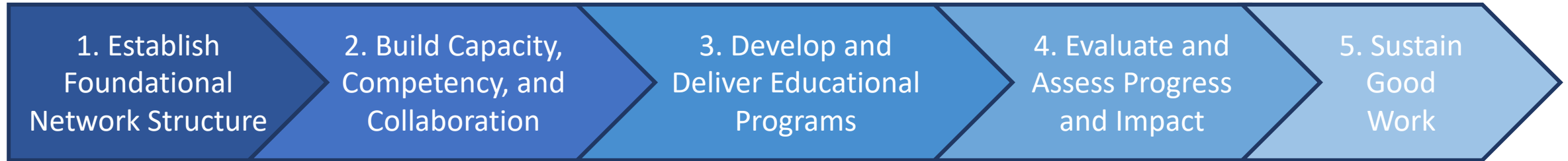


“Assign literature reviews for us to read! Really great motivating force to help me and our colleagues stay on the ball. The amount of content was great, as was the amount of breakout discussion time and active learning.”

“I feel like I'm still struggling to stay engaged with the materials, resources, and initiatives NECAFS develops in between annual meetings. More structured and regular communication and/or training opportunities for us as regulators and educators would be great.”

How do we employ the principles of collaboration?

Objectives:



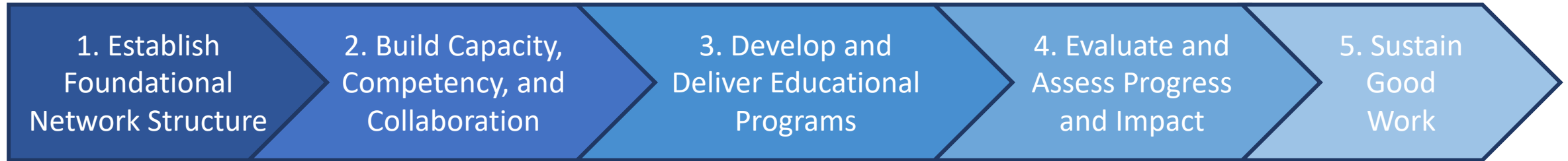
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- **Additional funding**

Additional Funding

Leverage network
discussion, decision-
making, and past
activities to secure
additional funding to
complete defined work.

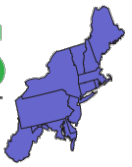
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Objectives:



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|--|---|--|--|--|
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Increase fundamental shared PS & PC understanding of the region's educators and regulators through collaborative action.



Questions?



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