

# **EXTENSION DISASTER EDUCATION NETWORK (EDEN)**

**Strategic & 5 year Approach**



# Executive Overview

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For the period 2026–2031, the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) will advance its mission to strengthen disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and long-term resilience across our communities, the Cooperative Extension, and the national disaster management system. Through coordinated, science-based education and outreach, EDEN supports communities, producers, and systems facing increasing disaster risks and complexity, contributing to resilient agricultural, natural, and human systems.

EDEN enters this strategic period positioned for growth, with an expanding national network of member institutions, strengthened leadership and engagement structures, and demonstrated increases in participation and collaboration. To build on this momentum, EDEN will prioritize clearly demonstrating program impact, strengthening sustainable and diversified funding, building workforce and leadership capacity, modernizing operations and communication systems, and expanding strategic partnerships. Together, these efforts are intended to improve efficiency, accountability, and access to high-quality disaster education nationwide.

EDEN will continue to implement an all-hazards, locally driven approach while addressing emerging and high-impact risks that affect agriculture, natural resources, and communities. Priority areas include cybersecurity and digital resilience; artificial intelligence implications for critical infrastructure; nuclear and radiological preparedness; agricultural biosecurity; and disaster mitigation and long-term resilience. Programs will remain adaptable to regional and state needs while aligned across the full disaster management continuum.

Implementation and oversight of this strategic plan will be guided by clear governance structures, regular performance reviews, and ongoing assessment to ensure responsiveness to emerging risks and opportunities.

The five focus areas that follow establish EDEN's strategic priorities and performance expectations for 2026–2031, providing a framework to strengthen partnerships, enhance capacity, and deliver measurable outcomes in support of national disaster resilience goals.

# Focus Areas (2026–2031)

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## 1. Assess and Communicate EDEN's Impact

EDEN will work to assess and capture the value of their work. This information will be communicated to both internal and external partners.

- Work with an evaluation team to develop a realistic evaluation plan to effectively capture the impact of EDEN
- Develop an annual, standardized impact report (Annual Report)
- Regular communication with delegates, POCs, Extension administrators, and internal and external partners regarding EDEN's work
- National amplification of state-level impact stories

**Success indicator:** Development of an EDEN impact portfolio that highlights the work that is being done to achieve our mission.

## 2. Secure Sustainable, Diversified Funding for targeted programs & initiatives

EDEN will expand financial resources and increase impact by:

- Diversifying federal funding beyond a single agency
- Explore the development of launching earned-revenue products (courses, credentials, exercises, CEUs)
- Develop and support regional EDEN teams to efficiently respond to local and regional funding opportunities in disaster management in their region.
- Pursuing nonprofit status to unlock new funding sources
- Securing at least two major private or corporate partnerships

**Success indicator:** Stable multi-source funding with increased dollars flowing to states to support established and new programs and initiatives.

## 3. Strengthen Network Capacity, Leadership, and Succession

EDEN will invest in people and continuity through:

- Clear expectations and SOPs for POCs, delegates, and chairs with regular communication to them regarding expectations.
- Formal onboarding and mentorship pathways
- Formal professional development opportunities for POCs and Delegates including monthly EDEN webinars, exercise trainings at conferences, and special training session
- Succession planning at committee and leadership levels
- Engagement of early-career professionals
- Creation of an EDEN Emeritus/Alumni group

**Success indicator:** Leadership transitions occur smoothly without loss of momentum or institutional knowledge.



# Focus Areas (2026–2031)

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## 4. Modernize Operations, Technology, and Communication

EDEN will improve efficiency and reduce fragmentation by:

Implementing a shared workspace for governance and operations

- Consolidating platforms (website, database, listservs)
- Maintaining an up-to-date national Resource Dashboard
- Supporting communication that minimizes “tech fatigue”
- Exploring AI-supported tools using vetted EDEN content

**Success indicator:** Network members can collaborate and communicate easily and consistently.

## 5. Elevate National Recognition and Partnerships

EDEN will strengthen its national presence by:

- Establishing formal liaison roles with key federal agencies
- Formalizing MOUs and partnership agreements with key federal disaster management services and organizations
- Engaging service organizations, nonprofit organizations, non-governmental agencies, foundations and corporate partners in disaster management and resilience programs and initiatives
- Participating in national advisory bodies and organizations
- Creating an external advisory board of disaster management partners

**Success indicator:** EDEN is routinely engaged by national partners for collaboration and implementation in disaster management.

