Rhode Island Network for Excellence in Science and Technology (RI-NEST)
An Initiative of RI NSF EPSCoR
2026 Fall Meeting*
Friday, October 30, 2026, 8am to 4:45pm
Rhode Island School of Design

8-8:45am: **Breakfast + Networking**

8:45-9:00am: **Welcome to RISD, land acknowledgement, opening remarks**

Touba Ghadessi, Provost, RISD
Silvermoon LaRose (Narragansett Niantic), Assistant Director, Tomaquag Museum
Elin Torell, Project Director, RI-NEST

9:00-9:15am: **Impact of EPSCoR, view from the U.S. Congress**

Jack Reed, U.S. Senator for Rhode Island

9:15-9:30am: **Notes from the network: RI-NEST and its future**

9:30-10:15am: **Announcement of RI-NEST seed grant awardees and program highlights**

10:15-10:30am: **The importance of research in Rhode Island**

Sheldon Whitehouse, U.S. Senator for Rhode Island

10:30-10:45am: **Presenting Rhode Island's new Science and Technology Plan**

10:45-11:00am: **EPIIC and industry collaboration at RISD**

Katherine Cooper, Director, Academic and Creative Partnerships, RISD

11:00am-12pm: **Building RI's collaborative research ecosystem**.

A moderated discussion from investigators within the EPSCoR ecosystem on the barriers and bridges to building collaborative research in Rhode Island.

Elin Torell, Project Director, RI-NEST
Scott Schnur, Partnerships and Tribal Engagement Specialist, RI-NEST
Jennifer Bissonnette, Co-Principal Investigator, RI-NEST, Houghton P. Metcalf, Jr. (HD 96) Director, Edna W. Lawrence Nature Lab
Margot McIlwain Nishimura, Assistant Provost for Academic Engagement, RISD
Anabela Resende da Maia, Co-Principal Investigator, RI-NEST, Professor of Biology, Rhode Island College,
Daniel Roxbury, Principal Investigator, SIMCoast, Professor of Chemical, Biomolecular, and Materials Engineering, University of Rhode Island

Peter Wong, Director, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, Roger Williams University

12-1pm: **Lunch & Networking**

Chinonye Nnakwe Whitley, PhD, Program Officer for the U.S. National Science Foundation's EPSCoR E-CORE grant program, will provide virtual remarks at the beginning of lunch.

1-2pm: **EPSCoR in Rhode Island, an interactive symposium**

A showcase of research projects and partners from across the Rhode Island NSF EPSCoR ecosystem in Rhode Island. Featuring interactive science activities, tabling from community partners, and raffle tickets to visit the RISD Museum.

2-4:15pm: **Behind the Scenes! Touring Research @RISD**

Visits to RISD's Hyundai Motor Group (HMG) Regeneration Studio, Edna W. Lawrence Nature Lab, and Fleet Library's Materials Collection.

4:15-4:45pm: **Closing remarks and raffle drawing**

**Activities and times subject to change*