Research for Novel Approaches in Sustainable Agriculture
2020 Full Proposal Instructions

Important Dates

The online system will open for submissions: **September 17, 2019**

Proposal submissions are due no later than: **October 29, 2019, 5:00 p.m. ET**

Questions?

Visit the Northeast SARE website at: **www.northeastsare.org/NovelApproaches**. Contact David Holm at **northeastsare@uvm.edu** or 802/651-8335.

About Northeast SARE

The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program offers competitive grants to farmers, educators, service providers, researchers, and graduate students to address key issues affecting the sustainability of agriculture throughout our region. With funding from the USDA, Northeast SARE is one of four regional SARE programs that aims to improve farm profits, stewardship, and quality of life for farmers.

The program—including funding decisions—is driven by the Northeast SARE **outcome statement**:

Agriculture in the Northeast will be diversified and profitable, providing healthful products to its customers; it will be conducted by farmers who manage resources wisely, who are satisfied with their lifestyles, and have a positive influence on their communities and the environment.

The Northeast region includes: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Vermont, and Washington, D.C.

United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Revised 15 August 2019

About Research for Novel Approaches in Sustainable Agriculture Grants

Overview

Northeast SARE's Research for Novel Approaches in Sustainable Agriculture grant program funds projects that conduct applied research testing the feasibility of new practices and approaches for sustainable agriculture that have high potential for adoption by farmers. Practices researched may address any of the three tenets of sustainable agriculture: environmental quality, financial viability, and social sustainability including farm succession/transfer, farmer health and well-being and quality of life. As such, the practices may be related to production, marketing, business management, human resource management, farm family issues, or other topics relevant to sustainable agriculture.

By "novel," Northeast SARE means that there is some evidence the approach is beneficial but more data is needed before recommending the approach for farmer adoption. Should the concept prove feasible, Northeast SARE has an expectation that the project leader or collaborators would follow-up with outreach to farmers and agricultural services providers to promote adoption. Such outreach could be supported by future Partnership, Research and Education, or Professional Development Program grants.

Research may be conducted through field and laboratory experiments and/or social science investigations, or both. Exploratory research based on speculation that a new approach could be effective, or research that is not aimed at determining feasibility of an approach for farmer adoption in the near-term will not be funded. There must be documented interest among farmers and service providers to utilize and promote the novel approach, respectively, should it be proven beneficial and feasible. Applicants must also demonstrate the direct involvement of farmers in development of the proposed project.

> **New for the 2020 Cycle**
>
> The time applications are due has been moved to 5:00 p.m. ET.
>
> Northeast SARE has recently migrated its online grant submissions to projects.sare.org, SARE's national grant management system. Instructions on how to access and submit proposals in the system are included on page 4.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are those who submitted a preproposal and were notified by Northeast SARE that they were approved to submit a full proposal to the Research for Novel Approaches in Sustainable Agriculture grant program. A project leader may submit only one full proposal per year, selecting just one of Northeast SARE's major grant programs (Research and Education, Research for Novel Approaches or Professional Development), even if more than one preproposal was invited to submit a full proposal.

Changes to an Approved Preproposal

Minor revisions to the approved preproposal, such as refinements to the project title, performance target, milestones, or key individuals are acceptable, especially if such changes were suggested by preproposal reviewers. Reviewers will not accept a full proposal that differs significantly from the preproposal unless the changes made were those suggested by preproposal reviewers. Full proposal reviewers will have the preproposal and the suggestions and comments sent from the preproposal review team, so please be sure that the content of the full proposal answers any questions and concerns that were raised.

Project Duration

Typical project length is 2 to 3 years. All projects must be completed by November 30, 2023.

Funding Available

The funding request should fall within the budget range requested in the preproposal, or as otherwise requested by the preproposal review team.

Use of Funds

SARE funding must comply with USDA guidelines and, therefore, there are certain allowable and ineligible expenses for this grant program, see the following list.

Funds may be used only for expenses specific to the project:

- Labor, including wages or salary and benefits, for individuals working on the project;
- Supplies, including copies, research supplies, outreach materials, and software;
- Farm equipment rental or operating charges;
- Equipment that is necessary for, and unique to, the project. Equipment with other general uses is not eligible.
- Travel and per diem necessary for the project;
- Journal publication fees so long as they are incurred during the contract period; and
- Indirect costs up to 10 percent of total grant request.

Funds may NOT be used for:

- Incentive offers and promotional items, including items of clothing, swag, giveaways, subsidies, raffles, and gift cards;
- Expenses for enduring and non-project specific items such as land purchases, general farm improvements, and construction of buildings, greenhouses, and laboratories;
- Travel to scholarly meetings unless essential to the project, such as presentation of project results;
- International travel unless integral to the project's success and described in the budget justification (Note: There are certain restrictions on costs and carriers.);
- Purchase of motorized vehicles and general use equipment;
- Cell phone charges; and
- Food expenses unless necessary for the continuity of a training event or project meeting. (Note: When SARE funds are used for meals, USDA employees should note this on their expense reports and deduct meal costs from any per diem reimbursements.)

It is expected that costs for copiers, cameras, computers, video equipment, and other items that have a wide range of uses beyond the boundaries of the project be provided by the institution and covered as indirect costs. To be considered as a direct cost, the item must be clearly essential to the particular project and applicants must provide clear justification, making sure that these requests are reasonable and defensible.

Conflict of Interest

Members of the Northeast SARE Administrative Council are not permitted to apply for or receive funding from SARE grants. Members of proposal review teams are not permitted to discuss or vote on proposals that involve institutions they work for, organizations for which they serve as board member or adviser, former graduate student advisees, or close personal friends.

Public Domain

Applications and reviews are kept confidential, shared only among Northeast SARE staff, Administrative Council members, and grant program reviewers. However, Northeast SARE, as a USDA NIFA program, is committed to public access of results of funded projects; therefore, information on funded projects, their reports, and related information will be in the public domain.

Acknowledging SARE

All funded projects are required to acknowledge Northeast SARE as the funding source in all project publications and outreach materials.

Grant Timeline

Navigating the Online Submission System

Proposals are submitted online at: **projects.sare.org**. The online application system will be open for submissions from September 17, 2019 until the deadline, **5:00 p.m. ET on October 29, 2019**. Staff support to answer questions and address technical submission issues will be available until 5:00 p.m. ET on the due date. Applications submitted after 5:00 p.m. ET on October 29 will not be accepted.

From the SARE Grant Management System landing page at **projects.sare.org**, select "Log in." Once logged in, select "Manage my grant proposals." You should see a list of your approved preproposal titles as "Active Proposals" in the system. Note that if you log in before the submission open date—September 17— you will be able to view your approved preproposal(s), but you won't be able to edit to submit a full proposal. After the open date, select the proposal title that you intend to complete from the "Active Proposals" list.

Click on each section on the left, then submit responses to the questions. Detailed guidance for each section is provided in this document. Enter responses by clicking on "Edit Answer" for each question. Be sure to click "Save" after each entry; you must save each question individually—clicking "save" for one question does not save responses entered in other questions.

At any time during the online submission of your proposal, you may preview a draft from the proposal overview page by clicking "View Draft." You can also share the draft of your proposal with collaborators by sending the "Link to Share" found at the top of the draft page (or by creating and sending a PDF of the preproposal).

When all proposal questions are answered to your satisfaction and you have uploaded all required attachments, click the "Submit Proposal" button. Prior to the deadline, you may "unsubmit" to revise the proposal. If you choose to unsubmit, don't forget to submit it again when you are done editing, otherwise it will not go forward to review. Each time you submit or unsubmit, you will receive an email confirmation.

Preparing Answers to Proposal Questions

Recommend Crafting Responses Offline

We highly recommend you prepare your questions offline, completing your responses per the instructions that follow and then copying and pasting your responses into the on-line system. To that end, we have posted a Word document of the proposal questions, see: **www.northeastsare.org/NovelApproaches**.

Text Limits, Formatting, and Writing Suggestions

Keep your writing clear and simple. Avoid jargon and write for a mixed audience that includes farmers, researchers, extension staff, and other agricultural service providers. You can assume grant reviewers have agricultural knowledge, but may not necessarily have deep expertise in your subject area.

There are word limits for most sections of the application. Again, it is highly advisable to develop the proposal content offline, ensuring it is accurate and complies with the word limits. Depending on the word processor used, your word count may differ than the online submission system and additional editing may be necessary after pasting into the online system.

Note that when word count limits are exceeded in the online submission system, the word count font changes to red and you will not be able to save that answer until the word count is at or below the limit. Also note that copying and pasting from some word processing programs may result in the loss of formatting; make any formatting corrections applied from within the online system.

Advanced Planning

Please prepare your application well in advance of the deadline. Most sponsored programs or grants offices need two to four two weeks to review and approve applications, so confirm the policies at your institution and plan accordingly. The Grant Commitment Form, officiated and signed by you and your institutional official, and for any subawardee institutions, must be included as an upload when you submit your application. Letters from your co-operating project leaders must also be included as an upload. Failure to upload required documents will result in the rejection of your proposal.

Full Proposal Outline / Checklist

Components of the full proposal and their word limits appear below, listed in the order they appear in the online application system within section headings. You may use the outline as a checklist to ensure the application is complete before submitting.

General Information

- ❑ Project start date
- ❑ Project end date
- ❑ State
- ❑ Primary Commodities
- ❑ Primary Practices

Summary Information

- ❑ Project Objective (75 words)
- ❑ Abstract (450 words)

Statement of Need

- ❑ Problem, Novel Approach and Justification (400 words)
- ❑ Knowledge Gap, New Knowledge Needed, and Subsequent Steps Toward Adoption (600 words)
- ❑ Interest of Farmers and Service Providers (300 words)

Research

- ❑ Research Hypothesis or Question (100 words)
- ❑ Research Description (1200 words)
- ❑ Other relevant research information—plot plan or survey design, etc. (upload)
- ❑ Outreach Plan (300 words)

Project Team

- ❑ Key Individuals (400 words)
- ❑ Letters of Commitment from Key Individuals (upload)
- ❑ Project Advisory Committee (350 words)

Previous Work

- ❑ Literature Review (1800 words)
- ❑ Citation List (1000 words)

Budget

- ❑ Institutional Affiliation of Subawardees
- ❑ Budget Justification and Narrative Template (upload)
- ❑ Budget Summary

Host Institution Approval

- ❑ Grant Commitment Form (upload)
- ❑ Institutional Official Contact Information
- ❑ FDP Clearinghouse Information

Step-by-Step Instructions for Proposal Content

When you begin to enter your proposal, you will see the project title and description carried forward from your approved preproposal. If needed, you may edit these by clicking on the edit button.

Project Title. Remember, use a clear, succinct title that captures the essence of the project's intent. Avoid acronyms, jargon and unnecessary words. Please limit the title to 150 characters, including spaces.

Description. A short description of what the project intends to accomplish is used by search engines in the reporting system database, should your project be funded. Please limit to 160 characters including spaces.

Proposal Sections and Questions

The online application system is divided into sections that contain multiple questions. Instructions for questions within all sections are presented below. Aside from the General Information and Summary Information sections, questions have associated review criteria that reviewers use to rate proposal responses.

Online, the proposal sections appear in a list in the left sidebar of the application system; clicking on the section heading will open the fields for entering responses to questions. To enter a response, click the "Edit Answer" button after each question. Answers should be written per the instructions below and should adequately address the associated review criteria.

General Information

This section asks for the following general information:

Project start date. Choose a start date from the calendar pop-up. Projects should not start before March 1, 2020.

Project end date. Choose an end data from the calendar pop-up. You will be asked for yearly budget information for each project period of 12 months or more, as defined by start and end dates. All projects must be complete by November 30, 2023.

State. Select the state where the majority of work will be carried out, i.e., the primary location of the grant activities. Usually this is the home state of the project leader.

Primary Commodities. Please choose only the primary production commodities being addressed or investigated by the project, not every commodity that might potentially be affected.

Primary Practices. Please choose only the primary production practices being addressed or investigated by the project, not every practice that might potentially be affected.

Summary Information

This section has two questions. The first defines the research objectives objective and the second defines the totality of your project activity.

Project Objective (75 words). Succinctly summarize the objective of this project in terms of the knowledge expected to be generated that would enable adoption of the novel approach, and the impact this could have on farms in the Northeast.

Review criteria:

The project objective clearly describes new knowledge expected to be generated to enable adoption of the novel approach, and the potential impact the adoption could have on farms in the Northeast.

Abstract (450 words). This is a standalone summary of the project; the abstract should not refer to subsequent parts of the proposal by using language like, "This will be described later."

The abstract should comprise four subsections, as follows. Include the subheadings in the text you enter to identify each element.

1. Problem, Novel Approach and Justification.
2. Hypothesis or Question and Research Plan.
3. Outreach Plan.
4. Project Objective. Enter the same text here that you enter in the project objective section.

Statement of Need

Problem, Novel Approach and Justification (400 words). Explain the problem or missed opportunity for farmers affecting the sustainability of agriculture in the Northeast that the novel approach to be studied will address. Include the number, type and size of farms, their location, and the extent of agricultural production affected.

Describe the causes (or hypothesized causes) of the problem. Explain the novel approach and provide evidence (data from your pilot studies, or the research of others) demonstrating why it has potential to address the problem or opportunity and benefit to farmers and the sustainability of agriculture in the Northeast.

Provide numerical data directly related to the problem or opportunity, and literature-based rationale to justify the statements made about the items above.

Review criteria:

The problem or opportunity that the novel approach aims to address is important to sustainable agriculture in the Northeast; the type and scale of agriculture in the Northeast affected is well described. Relevant data is provided as evidence that the novel approach has potential to address the problem or opportunity and thus benefit a significant number of farms in the Northeast. Descriptions are clear and statements are justified with data.

Knowledge Gap, New Knowledge Needed, and Subsequent Steps to Adoption (600 words). Explain the gap in research results that prevents promoting adoption of the novel approach – what information is missing that, if obtained, would allow promotion of the approach to farmers? Describe the knowledge expected to be generated by the project that will build on previous research results, providing the missing information needed to allow farmers to adopt the novel approach. Use numerical data and literature-based rationale to justify these statements.

Describe the key steps that will be necessary for farmers to adopt the novel approach should the project generate the needed information to make adoption a realistic goal for farmers. For example, how will farmers obtain the design, materials, plant or animal stock, tools, or other essential components required to implement the approach? If technical support would be needed, where do you expect it could come from?

Review criteria:

A substantiated gap in research results exists that prevents promoting adoption of the novel approach. The knowledge expected to be generated builds on prior research and is likely to allow farmers to adopt the novel approach. Statements are justified with data.

The key steps necessary for farmers to adopt the novel approach are well described, and it is clear how farmers might obtain essential components and support needed to adopt the approach.

Interest of Farmers and Service Providers (300 words). Describe the data that provides evidence of the interest of famers to adopt the novel approach, and the interest of agricultural service providers to promote it to farmers, should research demonstrate the approach's benefits and feasibility.

Data showing farmer and service provider interest can come from surveys, personal contacts, participation in pilot studies, and/or other assessments conducted by the applicant or others. Data from surveys or other methods of contact must be presented numerically, not as percentages of unknown numbers or unquantified statements such as "multiple" or "many."

Review criteria:

Quantified data is presented providing evidence of farmer and service provider interest in the project.

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Research

Research Hypothesis or Question (100 words). State the hypothesis(es) or research question(s) to be tested or evaluated that will address the knowledge gap(s) described.

Research Description (1200 words). Describe the research materials and methods proposed to test the hypothesis or evaluate the research question(s).

<u>For field or laboratory research</u>, the description must include the elements listed below (e. is optional). Include the subheadings in the text you enter to identify each element.

    a. Treatments: Proposed treatments and rationale for their selection.

    b. Methods: Experimental design, experimental unit size, and treatment application.

    c. Data Collection: Data to be collected, measurement protocols, and statistical methods of analysis.

    d. Farmer Input: How farmers contributed to development of hypothesis and treatment selection, and the ways they may contribute to conducting the research.

    e. *(Optional)* Additional Information: Other relevant features of the proposed research.

<u>For social science research</u>, the description must include the elements listed below (e. is optional). Include the subheadings in the text you enter to identify each element.

    a. Target Population(s).

    b. Methods: Experimental design, methods and instruments to be used.

    c. Data Collection: Data to be collected, measurement protocols, and methods of analysis.

    d. Farmer Input: How farmers contributed to development of hypothesis and study design, and the ways they may contribute to conducting the research.

    e. *(Optional)* Additional Information: Other relevant features of the proposed research.

Optional: **Other relevant research information (upload)**. Here you will upload to the submission system materials that clarify the research plan such as a plot or sampling plan, experiment diagram, outline of focus group or interview plan, or other supporting research documentation.

Outreach Plan (300 words). Describe how the research results will be communicated before the end of the project. Acceptable outreach activities include: presentations at local, regional or national conferences; workshops and field days; and publication of fact sheets, booklets and videos; etc. Describe plans for peer-reviewed publication during or after the project.

Communication of both positive and negative research results to the agricultural community is required because farmers benefit from knowing about both what does and does not work.

Project Team

The three questions in this section describe the project leadership and guidance for project direction.

Key Individuals (400 words). Briefly describe the project leader (coordinator/principal investigator) and other key individuals (cooperators) who will devote significant time to the project leading major components of the work. Descriptions should demonstrate the ability to manage the project and conduct its activities. Name the individuals, their organizational affiliation, and their primary responsibilities in the project. If some key individuals have not yet been identified, provide a description of the type/qualifications of the persons who would be recruited to fill those positions.

Also name any other individuals and their organizations, outside of your own, that will be receiving funds requested from SARE to carry out the project, as well as those organizations who will be contributing significant money, personnel time, facilities or equipment to the project.

Letters of Commitment from Key Individuals (upload). Each key individual (other than the principal investigator/project leader who is the applicant) must provide a letter of commitment. Each letter should indicate that the individual understands their role, describe what they will bring to the effort, and acknowledges their willingness to participate. Letters should be written by the individual team members, not the project leader.

Combine all letters into one PDF attachment for the upload.

Do **<u>not</u>** upload: letters of general support from individuals not involved in your project, curricula vitae, or sample promotional materials about your institution.

Project Advisory Committee (350 words). An advisory committee consisting of at least two farmers and one agricultural service provider (eg., Extension, NRCS or other federal or state agency, private or non-profit sectors, veterinarian, or other farm advisor) is required. Additional people representing other affiliations, such as researchers, may also be included on the committee.

It is expected that project advisory committee members have provided input to the project team during proposal development and will periodically do so throughout the project, for example, in the assessment of farmer interest, research design and treatment selection, and plans to share project findings. Advisory committee meetings may occur in person or by conference call or webinar.

Provide the names and affiliations of those who will serve on the advisory committee. State how they were engaged for advice during proposal development and how and when they will meet throughout the project.

Previous Work

The two questions in this section describe and define the previous work that this project builds upon.

Literature Review (1800 words). Outline the scientific foundation and merits of your project and identify and explain the references used to understand the problems, challenges, and opportunities your project will address, as well as current knowledge associated with the proposed solution. Include only those sources most relevant to your project. This section is the place to convince reviewers that there is a body of knowledge that provides a compelling rationale for the project.

Clearly describe how your project will complement or build upon the results of previous research efforts. Show that you are informed about previous relevant research including grants from SARE if they are relevant to your project. The national SARE database of projects (projects.sare.org/search-projects) contains projects from all four SARE regions and is searchable by state, type of grant, author and keyword.

Citation List (1000 words). Provide a list of full citations referenced in the literature review and elsewhere in your proposal. Include only those citations directly related to the proposed project.

Budget

The questions in this section establish the specifics of the request for funding.

The funding needed is defined by your budget, an expense plan that provides your best estimate for the expenses you expect to encounter.

Itemize all expected expenses and calculate their costs as precisely as possible to show reviewers what funds are needed to carry out your project, and why they are needed.

Even the most persuasive proposal will not be funded if the budget is not clear, is too high or too low for the efforts described, or if it includes requests for items not relevant to the proposed work or for items not allowed by SARE.

Both a detailed budget justification/narrative and a budget summary are required. The budget justification/narrative is provided by completing a spreadsheet template. The category subtotals from the spreadsheet are then entered into the budget summary in the on line system.

Institutional Affiliation of Subawardees. The institutional affiliation of the project leader (principal investigator) is already defined in the applicant profile and does not need to be entered again. Enter any additional institutions that will receive funding.

In the budget summary question, all institutions entered are made available for you to select and enter a budget.

> **Review criteria:**
>
> Budget items reflect the realistic needs of the project; and the total budget request is appropriate in terms of the magnitude of the project's expected results. All expenses are well justified.

Budget Justification and Narrative Template (upload). Use the Northeast SARE Budget Justification and Narrative Template (Excel spreadsheet) provided at: **www.northeastsare.org/NovelApproaches**. Be sure to select a template that matches your project length (i.e., two or three years).

In the template, itemize the quantity and per-unit cost of each expense and include a narrative description that explains the need for and use of each expense. The spreadsheet should calculate the total cost of each item, the category subtotals for each year, and overall project totals. Budget categories in the spreadsheet are explained in Appendix A.

The competitiveness of applications is undermined by an inadequately justified budget. For example, if a budget shows expenses of $18,450 for lab tests but provides no number of tests, cost per unit or explanation about the purpose of these tests, the justification is inadequate. If the total of itemized expenses does not sum to the amount requested in the budget, the amount is not properly justified. If an item is requested without any detail as to why it is needed or how it is related to the project, the budget is not properly justified. This level of detail is required by USDA/NIFA and the University of Vermont. It also shows reviewers you have carefully considered the funding needed for your project.

A budget justification and narrative template is required for each institution that will receive funds through subcontracts.

The completed template(s) must be uploaded as an Excel file (.xls or .xlsx) to the online submission.

Budget Summary. Once the Budget Justification and Narrative Template is complete, enter the summed subtotals for each major budget category from the template—personnel, materials and supplies, travel, printing and publications, other direct costs (before subawards), and indirect costs—into the budget summary in the online submission system. Individual line item expenses are **not** needed in the budget summary. Since detailed narrative and justification are provided in the Budget Justification and

Narrative Template, for "Item Description," you may enter "subtotal from budget detail spreadsheet" and you may leave the "Details/Justification" box blank.

You will be provided data entry columns for each year of the project. The number of years provided are defined by the project start and end dates entered in the General Information section at the beginning of the application.

If other institutions are to receive funds under subawards, their budget amounts should be reported in the relevant institution/organization budget, not in the lead institution budget (otherwise the amount will be summed twice in the overall budget total request). To enter, subawardee budget information, be sure to select the appropriate institution (found in the last data entry line).

Finally, make sure that the subtotals in the budget summary match the subtotals in the budget detail template(s).

Host Institution Approval

This section has the final required components of your proposal.

Grant Commitment Form (upload). Please print the Grant Commitment Form available at: **www.northeastsare.org/NovelApproaches**. The project leader must sign as applicant on the Grant Commitment Form. An authorized official at the applicant's institution (typically a sponsored programs officer or organization's financial manager or executive director) must also sign.

Note: You may share your proposal with your host institution's authorized official by clicking on the "View Draft" button on the previous page, then print the proposal or share the proposal by providing the "Link to share" URL.

Upload a pdf or image copy of the completed, fully officiated Grant Commitment Form here, and enter the information from the Form into the next two questions.

Institutional Official. For the institution serving as fiscal agent for the project, provide the name and contact information of the official for the institution serving as fiscal agent for the project.

FDP Clearinghouse. Please check the response to the question, "Is this institution registered in the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Expanded Clearinghouse?" A list of participating organizations can be found at: fdpclearinghouse.org/organizations.

Note: Completed Grant Commitment Forms are also required from **all** institutions that receive SARE funds under cooperator subawards—so please sure to work with your project partners to receive their completed (and signed) Grant Commitment Form well in advance of the deadline. You must upload PDFs (or image files) of these forms with your submitted proposal.

Required Documents

Applications with missing or incomplete required documents will not advance to grant review so be sure the following required documents are uploaded:

- ❑ Letters of Commitment from Key Individuals (as a single PDF)
- ❑ Budget Justification and Narrative Template (in spreadsheet format) for each institution receiving funds
- ❑ Grant Commitment Form for each institution receiving funds (as PDFs or image files)

Selected Applications

If the Northeast SARE Administrative Council selects your project for funding, you may expect the following.

Notification

The Northeast SARE Administrative Council will select applications for funding by February 20, 2020 and Northeast SARE staff will notify applicants of the status of their applications on February 21, 2020.

Contracting and Disbursement of Funds

The Sponsored Programs Office or Authorized Representative of the grant recipient will receive a Subcontract Agreement from the University of Vermont, the host institution for Northeast SARE. Funds are to be used exclusively for the proposed project, subject to the restrictions outlined in "Use of Funds." Funds are released on a reimbursement basis to the institution in response to invoices from the institution's financial office. Northeast SARE will hold the last 10 percent of the award until the final project report has been received and approved.

IACUC and IRB Documentation

If your project is funded and involves livestock, SARE will require certification of protocol review from your university's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). If your project is funded and involves human research subjects, SARE will need a completed approval document from your institution's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Protection of Human Subjects in Research.

Required Reporting

Northeast SARE requires annual progress reports and a comprehensive final report for all projects. All reports will be submitted in our online system using our reporting template. Reports should describe the progress made on the project, detail the findings observed, and document any outputs and impacts. All outreach and educational activities should be reported as well as any measured changes in knowledge and skills, attitudes and opinions, and/or the adoption of new practices. Products and educational tools should be added to the report as attachments. When possible, photographs should be included to help document and promote the project.

Progress reports are due by January 15 each year the project is active and final reports are due within 60 days of the project's end date. The final report should include full, detailed results of project activities that were defined in the application. Also at the close of projects, SARE asks for contact information of 8-12 project participants whom SARE may contact in the future for program evaluation.

To strengthen your proposal and to understand further what you will be asked to report on if you are awarded a grant, please look at the performance indicators in Grantee Reporting and SARE Post-Project Evaluation (Appendix B). This table lists information you will be asked to report during the project and items SARE may assess two to four years after the project's completion. To be eligible for funding, it is not necessary that your project include results under all of the performance indicators. For more information on what SARE hopes its project investments will achieve, please review the SARE Logic Models at: www.northeastsare.org/About-Us/SARE-logic-models.

Resources

The following resources may help you as plan and write your application.

- Learn about all projects funded to date by the SARE program by visiting the national reporting site at: projects.sare.org/search-projects/. You may search the database by keywords, region, state, project type, year, and commodities and practices addressed.
- The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library specializes in resources on sustainable food systems and practices: www.nal.usda.gov/afsic. Information specialists are available to share resources and search techniques that may be relevant to your application.

Appendix A: Explanation of Budget Categories and Items to Include

Personnel Costs

Personnel costs include those for the project leader, student wages, support staff or other hired labor. These must be shown as either an hourly rate multiplied by the anticipated time needed to complete the project or as a percentage of FTE at a given salary. There is also a separate line in the personnel section for fringe benefits.

Only people employed by the recipient organization should be listed in this category. If people outside your institution will be paid to work on the project, they should be listed under "Other Direct Costs" (categorized as "Speaker/Trainer Fees," "Consultants," or "Services") or "Subcontracts/Subawards."

Non-Personnel Costs

Non-personnel expense categories include: materials and supplies, travel, publications/printing, and other direct costs (communications, photocopying, speaker/trainer fees, consultants, services, conferences/meetings/workshops, trainee support, off-site office rental, purchase of equipment, rental of equipment or land-use charges, and other/miscellaneous). Under each category, name each expense, provide narrative justifications of the expense, and provide information on units, quantities, and per unit costs.

Materials and Supplies. This section is for items that are specific to the project and have a reasonable useful life of less than three years. Supplies can include items such as office supplies, project-specific software, specialized tools, measuring devices, and other materials that will be used and used up during the course of the project. Again, be specific, for example:

> *Soil test kits to measure soil health before and after treatment. 4 kits x $22 each = $88*

> *Mapping software to collect, store and visualize project field data = $420*

> *Paper for in-house project flyers and workshop handouts. 10 reams x $2.60 each = $26*

Travel. Specify the purpose of the trip and include who is traveling, the destination, and expenses per trip. When requesting funds for travel by car, use the mileage reimbursement rate set by the institution administering the grant. If you are not associated with an institution, then you may use the rate established by the University of Vermont (host of Northeast SARE); this rate is adjusted each year and is currently $0.58 per mile. For auto travel, indicate who is traveling, the destination, number of trips, and total anticipated mileage. For lodging, state the room cost and number of nights. Here are some sample budget lines:

> *Research assistant making 4 trips to cooperating farm, 14 miles each; 56 miles @$0.58/mile = $32.48*

> *Project leader making 3 trips to soil lab, 26 miles each; 78 miles @$0.58/mile = $45.24*

> *Project leader making 1 trip to growers' meeting; 104 miles @$0.58/mile = $60.32*

If the budget includes air travel, long-distance trips must clearly be justified as central to the project. All plane travel must be booked according to the guidelines of the Fly America Act which roughly states that, except under certain circumstances, all flights must be booked on U.S. flag carriers. In addition, all flights must be booked in coach class.

Publications and Printing. This budget category is specific to any publication development costs (editing, design and printing) that the project may incur, including project brochures and educational materials. Include publishing costs for scientific or technical journal articles here. You may include the cost of developing web-based publications here, but would not include general web hosting or photocopying as these expenses belong in "Other Direct Costs." Show a per-piece cost for any publications you plan to develop. For example:

> *24-page resource directory, layout and design at $30/hour, 15 hours = $450*

> *Printing at $1.12 each, 1000 pieces = $1,120*

Other Direct Costs. This budget category includes: communications, photocopying, speaker/trainer fees, consultants, services, conferences/meetings/workshops, trainee support, off-site office rental, purchase of equipment, rental of equipment or land-use charges, and other/miscellaneous.

Communications costs typically include postage, fax and telephone expenses. Please note that charges for cell phones are not allowable.

For example, if you plan to mail 350 flyers to announce a field day, the line item would read:

> *Postage for 350 field day flyers at $0.50 each = $175*

If you are planning ongoing long-distance telephone contact with cooperators, it is fine to estimate what these will cost. For example:

> *10 hours in-state evening long distance phone calls to cooperating farmers = $ 50*

> *4 hours in-state daytime long distance phone calls to project cooperator = $ 45*

> *2 conference calls with planning committee @ 1 hour each = $ 72*

Photocopying. If you will make copies over the course of the project, estimate the number of copies needed and the cost per page. You may also estimate your copying costs, based on past experience. For example:

> *500 copies of the bulletin for distribution at field day @ .05 each = $25*

> *100 pages a month @ .05 each X 12 months = $60*

Speaker and trainer fees. This section should include the name(s) of speakers and trainers you will use, description of the services they are providing and their fees.

Consultants. If outside entities are hired on a temporary basis to carry out specific tasks, these charges are listed under consultants. Include those receiving stipends or payments for services and their organization or farm, statement of work or description of what will be done to earn the payment, and a breakdown of number of days or hours of service, rate of pay, etc. For example:

> *John Abrahamson, education consultant, assist in organizing and facilitating 4 meetings at $325 each = $1,300*

Farmer collaborators are often paid a stipend, while some institutions process payment for such contributors under consultants. Either is acceptable. SARE strongly feels that farmers should be paid for the time they contribute to a project at a reasonable rate; Northeast SARE compensates farmers who serve on its Administrative Council and review teams a rate of $300 per day. Please note: there is a distinction between paying farmers to contribute to a project (by participating in planning or project evaluation or in the role of a trainer or presenter—these are appropriate and encouraged) versus paying farmers to receive the benefits of training (by attending a workshop or conference as a recipient—here, payment would not be appropriate).

Services. If an outside entity is hired for a specific custom job, it should be listed under services. Provide details of these non-contracted services rendered for the project, including fees or hired payments, purpose and quantities. For example:

> *Darla Adams, WonderMark, precision spraying, 4 applications of fungicide at $300 each = $1,200*

Conferences, meetings, and workshops. Costs of holding project conferences, meetings, and workshops are included in this category. Expense examples include the rental of facilities and equipment

for the meeting, signage for field days, fees for guest speakers, and travel and per diem for presenters. Details of costs for each conference or meeting should be itemized and provided in the budget narrative.

Meal expenses may be included in the budget only in situations where providing the meal maintains the continuity of a formal group meeting or educational training, and not offering such a meal would impose inappropriate discomfort for the meeting participants. Conversely, meals may not be charged as project costs when individuals decide to go out for breakfast, lunch or dinner together when no need exists for continuity of a meeting; this kind of activity is considered an entertainment cost.

Note: Costs for project personnel to travel conferences should be included under "Travel" and payments made to or for recipients of these trainings should go under "Trainee Support," see below.

Trainee support (participant support costs). If meals, transportation or lodging are to be paid on behalf of participants who are receiving training as the project beneficiaries, these expenses should be listed as trainee support costs. When using Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC) calculations, these expenses are removed to determine MTDC.

Off-site office rental is most often covered under the institution's indirect costs (see below) and would only be applicable if a remote site was specifically needed to carry out the project.

Purchase of equipment or **cost of fabrication.** Fabrication of equipment is only appropriate when a project plan of work calls for a piece of equipment to be constructed as an integral part of the project.

Rental of equipment or **land-use charges.** Land-use charges are most typical in field research situations when a rental rate is applied or a research station that has a standard per-acre fee for field plot maintenance.

Other and miscellaneous. If you have a project expense that truly does not fit into any of the above categories, it should be included in this section. Avoid using this budget category for items that really belong somewhere else. Each item must be clearly identified and justified to be allowed. Unidentified, unjustified, and undefined ("etc." or "contingency expense") items are not allowed.

Subcontracts or Subawards

If there is a portion of the project that will be subcontracted out to another institution, list it in this section. List the institution, organization or farm. Provide the subaward leader's name and budget amount. Each subawardee will need to complete a Budget Justification and Narrative Template and Grant Commitment Form – these must be uploaded to the proposal in the online submission system.

Indirect Costs

USDA currently allows indirect costs. Applicants whose institutions have a negotiated federal indirect cost rate may budget the indirect portion to be up to 10 percent of total funds requested. This is the maximum, a cap on indirect set by USDA on SARE grants. This amount can be estimated as 11.11 percent of the total of direct costs, or more accurately by dividing total direct costs by nine. If you calculate a fractional dollar amount, round down so the amount of indirect remains under 10 percent of the overall total. If the negotiated institutional rate is less, then that lower rate limit applies. If your organization has never had a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, you may request a *de minimis* rate of 10% of modified total direct costs.

Appendix B: Northeast SARE Research and Education Program Grantee Reporting and SARE Post-Project Evaluation

Logic Model Category	Performance Indicators *(When you report, you will receive prompts for these indicators.)*	Who Collects/When Reported	
		Grantee Collects/ Reports by End of Project	SARE Collects/ Post Project
Participants	Number of farmers participating in research	✓	
	Number of farmers participating in education/outreach activities	✓	
	Number of agricultural service providers participating in education/outreach activities *(optional)*		
Outputs: – Activities – Information – Products	Research activities conducted	✓	
	Research results of the project	✓	
	Number and type of education/outreach activities conducted	✓	
	Number journal articles in press or published *(if produced)*	✓	✓
	Number and type of other, non-refereed outreach publications/products *(if produced)*	✓	✓
Learning Outcomes	Number of farmers that report changes in KASA *(knowledge, attitudes, skills, awareness)* as a result of participating in project	✓	
Action Outcomes	Number of farmers who use information learned to adopt a practice, approach, technology *(including what is adopted)*	✓	✓
	Number of acres, animals, or other production units affected by adoption *(as an indicator of scale of adoption)*	✓	✓
	New professional collaborations as a result of project *(if occurred)*	✓	✓
	Number of citations of project results *(if occurred)*	✓	✓
	SARE grant leveraged another grant *(if occurred)*	✓	✓
Condition Outcomes	Economic, environmental, social benefit(s) for farmers from adopting practice, approach, technology on farm	✓	✓