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/PDP. Contact Northeast SARE Professional Development Program coordinator Janet McAllister at northeastsare@uvm.edu or 860/486-1950.

About Northeast SARE
The Northeast Sustainable 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.


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Northeast SARE, one of four regional SARE programs, is hosted by the University of Vermont and is funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Northeast SARE programs are offered to all without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

Revised 13 Sept 2019
About Northeast SARE Professional Development Grants

Overview
The Northeast SARE Professional Development Grant program funds projects that train agricultural service providers - such as Cooperative Extension, state department of agriculture personnel, crop consultants, veterinarians, farm advisors with private businesses, and nonprofit organizations - about sustainable practices and approaches so that they, in turn, can educate farmers. These train-the-trainer projects must be directed toward increasing the knowledge, skills and abilities of educators to teach farmers about sustainable practices and approaches.

Outcome Funding
Professional Development projects must use an outcome funding approach that directly connects project activities to measurable goals related to agricultural service providers teaching farmers about changes in practice that lead to improved economic, environmental or quality of life conditions for farmers. Central to this approach for Northeast SARE grants is the performance target, a statement that describes the changes in behavior among project beneficiaries (in this case, agricultural service providers) expected as a result from the proposed project. To learn more about outcome funding, download our "Guide to Outcome Funding" at: www.northeastsare.org/PDP.

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 Professional Development 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 your 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, listed below.

Funds may be used 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 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

Online application system opens for submissions ........................................................... September 17, 2019
Proposal submission deadline ............................................................................................ October 29, 2019
Applicants notified of Administrative Council fund decisions................................. February 21, 2020
Earliest start date for projects......................................................................................... March 1, 2020
Pre-award grant management conference calls with Northeast SARE staff............. March 2020
Contracts from UVM after pre-award conference calls................................................... March 2020

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 or deal with 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 approved preproposal titles as “Active Proposals” in the system.

Note that if you are logging in before the submission open date – September 17 – you will see your approved preproposal listed under “Approved Proposals” and will be able to view the preproposal, 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 following the instructions within each section. Note that there is greater detailed guidance for the questions below in these instructions below, so it is best to complete your responses per the instructions below and then copy and paste your responses into the on-line system. To enter responses online, click “Edit Answer” for each question and 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 writing of your proposal, you can 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 the required attachments, click the “Submit Proposal” button. Prior to the deadline, you may “unsubmit” to revise the proposal. If you unsubmit, don’t forget to submit it again when you are done editing, otherwise it won’t 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/PDP.
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. You may use the outline as a checklist to ensure that your application is complete before submitting.

General Information

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

Summary Information

- Performance Target Narrative (75 words)
- Abstract (450 words)

Statement of Need

- Description of Problem (400 words)
- Solution and Benefits (400 words)
- Beneficiaries and their Interest in the Problem (300 words)

Achieving the Performance Target

- Education Plan (500 words)
- Milestones for Beneficiary Learning
- Performance Target
- Verification Plan (300 words)

- Draft Verification Tool (upload)

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 Information
- FDP Clearinghouse
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 date 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 beneficiary performance target objective and the second defines the totality of your project activity.

**Performance Target Narrative (75 words).** Write a narrative statement that combines all the components of the performance target that are entered for the Performance Target question found later in the application. (see detailed instructions for the performance target question below)

**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 three subsections, as follows. Include the subheadings in the text you enter to identify each element.

**Problem and Justification:** A brief description of the problem or opportunity to be addressed, the farmer audience affected, and justification for the project’s need from the farmers’ perspective.

**Solution and Approach:** The proposed solution to the problem or opportunity and the approach for reaching or carrying out the solution.
**Milestones and Performance Target:** The final portion of the abstract summarizes the number of beneficiaries who will be engaged and the knowledge and skills they will acquire through the milestones, and ends with the behavior change to be achieved, as described in the performance target.

**Statement of Need**
The three questions in this section define the problem and the opportunities for solutions to be addressed by the project, and the beneficiary audience that will be engaged to participate.

**Description of Problem (400 words).** Explain the problem, harm, or missed opportunity for farmers that the project will address; the causes (or hypothesized causes) of the problem; and why - in the context of social, economic and/or environmental sustainability for agriculture - it is important that it be addressed.

Describe the number, type, and size of farms where the problem or opportunity occurs, and the extent of agricultural production affected and if available, data about the farmers’ needs and interest to address the problem.

Provide references and numerical data to justify claims made in the description. Data sources that provide justification may include references in literature, the work of others, farmer surveys, extension surveys, census data, etc.

**Solution and Benefits (400 words).** State the solution to the farm problem or missed opportunity that will be the focus of the project’s educational efforts.

Explain the expected benefits for farmers from solving the problem or acting on the opportunity.

Explain the expected benefits for agricultural service providers from participating in the project to learn how to help farmers solve the problem.

Provide evidence that supports how and why the solution is expected to be effective. Claims made about the proposed solution must be justified; the same sources listed in the section above may be used.

**Beneficiaries and their Interest (300 words).** Describe the number and type of agricultural service providers you will recruit as participants, and the total pool (including geographic range) you will recruit from. These should be service providers who are concerned about the problem, in a position to teach or advise farmers, and interested to participate if the project is funded.

Describe the service providers’ need for education and their interest to participate in the project to learn and help farmers solve the problem. Statements of need and interest to participate must be justified with specific, numerical data.

*Note:* Professional Development projects may include farmers as co-learners, instruction partners, and as secondary beneficiaries but agricultural service providers must be primary beneficiaries of the project.
Achieving the Performance Target

The five questions in this section describe the educational and other interactions agricultural service provider beneficiaries will engage in to achieve the performance target, and methods and questions the project team will use to verify service providers’ learning and performance target achievements.

Education Plan (500 words). Describe the outcome-focused education program you will conduct to teach agricultural service providers and motivate them to teach or advise farmers about the problem and proposed solution. This plan must be realistic, describe content and methods appropriate to engaging the service providers, and be likely to lead to achievement of the performance target.

The education plan must include:

- Methods for recruiting and enrolling agricultural service providers.
- Concepts and curriculum topics in which service providers will increase knowledge and skills, including known challenges to farmer adoption that will be addressed.
- Methods and sequence for instruction to facilitate learning (workshops, demonstrations, webinars, consultations, etc.).
- Methods for supporting service providers as they learn and as they plan and take actions (post-training contacts by email, phone, in-person; record keeping tools or templates; fact sheets, videos or other instructive materials).

Milestones (Limit of 12 milestones – 75 words each). Milestones list logically connected learning, skills acquisition, and action steps that service providers will accomplish, in sequence, as they participate in activities outlined in the education and verification plans. The progression of milestones should prepare beneficiaries to achieve the performance target.

Milestones outline what quantified numbers of service providers will experience as they interact with the project team throughout the project – from recruitment and pre-training engagement, through steps for learning and support for follow-up actions to achieve the performance target, to verification of follow-up actions.

They are written in terms of what service provider beneficiaries will do and learn; they are not a plan of work or list of activities that the project team will perform.

If funded, the project’s milestones will become the benchmarks for required progress reports; as such, they must be verifiable (measurable).

Each milestone is written as a statement with four components:

- A realistic number of service provider beneficiaries who participate;
- The project activities or educational experiences in which the service providers take part;
- The specific knowledge or skills they learn or the intermediate action step they complete as a result of participating; and
- Proposed completion date.

Review criteria:
The education plan clearly describes a credible, effective and achievable approach; educational activities are planned so as to engage the beneficiaries throughout the project; curriculum topics are listed in detail; instruction and support methods are described.

Review criteria:
The milestones describe a sequence of knowledge and skills acquisition by service providers, and the changes they make or steps they take that lead—logically and realistically—to the performance target. The milestones describe how project personnel and beneficiaries interact for project recruitment, pre-training engagement, learning during the education program and engagement to support follow-up action, and verification of actions.
Performance Target (75 words). The performance target is the core statement in the proposal that defines the specific, beneficial and verifiable action outcomes that agricultural service providers take as a result of participating in the project. The target is a project’s measurable goal, not a guarantee.

The performance target includes the following three required components and one optional component:

**Required – performance target for service providers:**
- The number (not an undefined percentage) of agricultural service providers who will take action to teach, advise or assist farmers after learning through the project.
- The specific, verifiable action(s) the service providers will take for teaching, advising, and assisting farmers.
- The total number of farmers the agricultural service providers will educate or assist, and when appropriate,
- Additional descriptors of the extent of farm production these farmers manage, such as the total number of acres, animal units, markets, enterprises, etc. the farmers manage.

The number of beneficiaries who will take actions, the number of farmers they reach, and the extent of farm production should be realistic estimates based on what you know about the difficulty or complexity of the desired change and the interests and capabilities of the beneficiaries. Strong engagement and input from service provider beneficiaries during proposal planning are essential for establishing ambitious but realistic numbers in the performance target.

**Optional – performance target for farmers:**
- The number of farmers who will make the recommended change or action as a result of learning from the agricultural service providers.

This optional component should be part of the target only if you feel confident you will be able to measure or collect data about the farmer actions before the end of the project. Projects that include farmers as co-learners and/or that have agricultural service providers working intensively with farmers throughout the project sometimes choose to include this optional component.

**Review criteria:**
The performance target describes actions service providers will take to educate farmers, the number of farmers they teach and a descriptive measure of the scale of production the farmers manage, if appropriate; the performance target is specific, measurable within the timeframe of the project, and ambitious.
Verification Plan (300 words). Describe how and when measurements will be made to verify participants’ learning through the milestones and their follow-up actions to accomplish the performance target.

The verification plan should include:

- Data collection methods and tools project leaders will use to collect milestone (learning) and performance target (action) data from service provider beneficiaries.

- Timing of when data will be collected and/or reported to you by service providers.

- Supportive guidance and tools you will provide to service providers to inform them of the performance target, help them record data about actions and results, if appropriate, and be prepared to respond to your requests for data about their follow-up actions.

Examples of supportive guidance and tools for beneficiaries include:

- Project introduction or enrollment forms that explain the project focus, scope, and performance target, and that are used to obtain written commitment to participate.

- Data sheets, templates or checklists where beneficiaries can record data and information about their project activities on paper or online.

Draft Verification Tool (upload). A draft verification tool is required. Please include questions that beneficiaries will answer to verify the extent to which they have made the change described in the performance target. You may also upload examples of the tools you will provide to beneficiaries.

For guidance on developing your verification plan and tools, please refer to the examples in the appendix and our Project Verification Planning Guide at: www.northeastsare.org/PDP.
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 not 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 one farmer and one agricultural service provider (from Extension, NRCS, 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 leaders during proposal development, and periodically will do so throughout the project – in the assessment of service provider interest and in the design and implementation of the education plan. 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 you will meet with them 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, 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 efforts. Show that you are informed about previous relevant projects including grants from SARE if they are relevant to your project. The national SARE database of projects ([projects.sare.org/search-projects/](http://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.
Budget Justification and Narrative Template (upload). Use the Northeast SARE Budget Justification and Narrative Template (Excel spreadsheet) provided at [www.northeasticsare.org/PDP](http://www.northeasticsare.org/PDP). 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.northeasticsare.org/RandE](http://www.northeasticsare.org/RandE). 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](http://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:

- Draft Verification Tool (as a PDF)
- 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](http://www.northeastsare.org/About-Us/SARE-logic-models).

**Resources**

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

- To learn about all projects funded to date by the SARE program, visit the national reporting site at: [projects.sare.org/search-projects](http://projects.sare.org/search-projects). You may search the database by region, state, project type, year, commodities and practices addressed, as well as by keywords.

- The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library specializes in identifying resources about sustainable food systems and practices: [www.nal.usda.gov/afsic](http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic). Information specialists can share resources and search techniques that may be relevant to your application. Contact AFSIC via the web, email at: afsic@nal.usda.gov, or phone: 301-504-6559.
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 Abrahamsen, 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 Professional Development Program Grantee Reporting and SARE Post-Project Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logic Model Category</th>
<th>Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Who Collects/When Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(When you report you will receive prompts for these indicators)</td>
<td>Grantee Collects/Reports by End of Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
<td>Number and type of individuals who received training – Extension, NRCS, Agency, Non-Profit, Farmer, Other (e.g. consultants, industry)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs:</strong></td>
<td>Number and type of educational activities conducted by the project (workshops, field days, tours, webinars, consultation, etc.)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Activities</td>
<td>Number and type of educational products and tools produced by the project (fact sheets, guides, video, bulletins, web content, computer programs, data bases, decision tools, curricula, etc.)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>− Products</td>
<td>Number of service providers and (optionally) farmers who report changes in KASA (knowledge, attitudes, skills, awareness) as a result of participating in project education</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of service provider participants who report intention to use new knowledge and skills and/or incorporate project information in their work with farmers</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>Number of service provider participants who use new knowledge and skills and/or incorporate information from project in their educational activities, services, information products, tools for farmers</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and type of educational activities, services and products conducted/produced by service provider participants (workshops, field days, tours, webinars, talks, consultations, fact sheets, articles, guides, etc.)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Primary Action Outcomes</strong> (2-3 year projects)</td>
<td>Number of farmers reached through service provider participants’ educational efforts</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total amount of production these farmers manage, if known (a number and appropriate production unit, e.g. acres, animals, sq. ft., product volume/sales)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New professional collaborations as a result of project (if occurred)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SARE grant leveraged another grant (if occurred)</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Action Outcomes</strong> (optional in PDP projects)</td>
<td>Number of farmers who use information learned to adopt a practice, approach, technology (including what is adopted)</td>
<td>Optional in PDP projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of acres, animals, or other production units affected by farmer adoption (as an indicator of scale of adoption)</td>
<td>Optional in PDP projects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>