Western SARE Professional Development Program Enhanced State Program Grant Funding

2018 Call for Proposals

Due at 12:00 p.m. MST, NOON, November 8, 2017

Results announced mid-March, 2018

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SARE is a USDA competitive grants program that supports agricultural systems that are economically viable, environmentally sound and socially responsible.

Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Micronesia, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

The Administrative Council of the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program announces the call for proposals for Enhanced State Program Grants for 2018.

Enhanced State Program Grants are aimed at helping Cooperative Extension Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, other agricultural professionals and farmers and ranchers in the Western Region increase their understanding and proficiency in sustainable agriculture.

Proposals are evaluated by a Review Panel against the criteria outlined in this call and in comparison with other PDP grant proposals. The Western SARE Administrative Council – a board of agricultural producers, scientists, educators and business leaders – will then make the final selections of projects to fund. The council typically selects proposals diverse in subject matter and geography and that demonstrate outcomes that farmers and ranchers in the region can successfully adopt.

Important note: Congress mandates that the SARE grant program depart from "business as usual." To that end, the Administrative Council requires that agricultural producers be involved from start to finish in the planning, design, implementation and educational outreach of any SARE-funded project.

PDP projects should:
- Increase sustainable agriculture knowledge, skills and action.
- Have outreach plans that demonstrate how the project will effectively deliver this knowledge.

Sustainable Agriculture:

Congress has defined sustainable agriculture as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will over the long-term:

- Satisfy human food and fiber needs
- Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends
- Make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls
- Sustain the economic viability of farm operations
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

-- U.S. Code Title 7, Section 3103

Professional Development Enhanced State Program Grant Deadlines

- Deadline for submitting Professional Development Program grant proposals:
  12:00 NOON MST November 8, 2017
- Technical Review Panel recommends proposals for grant funding in January 2018.
- Western SARE Administrative Council makes final selections in March 2018. Principal investigators of funded grants are informed by April 1, 2018.
- Funds for selected projects are disbursed summer/fall 2018.

Proposal Review

Proposals are evaluated by a panel of educators, scientists, producers and others with expertise in sustainable agriculture. The Western SARE Administrative Council, a board of representatives with strong knowledge and interest in sustainable agriculture, makes the final selection regarding which projects receive funding.

The criteria required in the proposal provide the basis for reviewer evaluation. These criteria should be incorporated into all eight items in the proposal format. The six items below are the content, and content is the most important aspect of your proposal. Proposal format items A-E on pages 4-7 are the structure, and the application system will ensure that you follow the structure. The criteria are:

1) **Sustainable Agriculture Focus: (20%)** All SARE proposals should focus on issues that relate directly to sustainable agriculture and priorities and goals listed on pages 1 and 2 of this CFP.
2) **Appropriate Approach: (20%)** The activities and methods described must be appropriate for meeting project objectives and outcomes. This includes having the proper expertise and organizations involved.
3) **Appropriate Subject Matter. (20%)** These Enhanced State Proposals are targeted at critical issues which have high likelihood of impacting the sustainability of agriculture in our region. Topics should be carefully selected to ensure that they address a current and contemporary need.
4) **Collaborative Involvement: (20%)** Proposals should illustrate the meaningful involvement of agricultural producers and personnel from land grant universities, nonprofit organizations and other entities in the project's development, implementation and outcomes.
5) **Feasibility and Evaluation of Project Outcomes: (10%)** Proposals must address the desired outcomes in each of the following areas, describing how they will be assessed, measured and documented:
   A. Improving the knowledge base of project participants (ag professionals) in a sustainable agriculture topic or area.
   B. Increasing the likelihood that project participants will use what they learn (intention).
   C. For multi-year projects, demonstrating that project participants used new knowledge and skills in subsequent educational activities in sustainable agriculture.
6) **Budget: (10%)** A reasonable budget with good justification is necessary. Please ensure the narrative explains line items so they may be fully understood.

Key Points to Consider in Project Development

1) **Institutional and collaborative participation:** A goal of the program is to broaden the trainer/educator base of sustainable agriculture expertise. Multidisciplinary, multi-state and multi-university efforts that include other private or public entities are encouraged. Agricultural producers, NGO reps, agency people and community leaders should all be included as part of the planning/trainer/educator team.
2) **Integrated training and education:** Applications should emphasize an integrated or holistic approach with methods and outputs that support a broad-based educational effort. SARE encourages applications that integrate multiple aspects of sustainable agricultural production, marketing/economics, families, rural communities and quality of life.
3) **Training and educational methodology:** Projects must demonstrate enhanced knowledge and skills of participants, and trainer/educator teams are encouraged to develop new and innovative ways for

learning to take place. Projects that create electronic or written educational products (e.g. manuals, web-based tutorial or databases) should have an accompanying training component for use of that product, such as training sessions or tutorials.

4) **Impacts and outcomes assessment:** It is important to provide evidence that educational objectives have been fulfilled, with desired outcomes clearly defined, evaluated and documented. Grantees should build in a reasonable timeline and approach to properly complete evaluation of project impacts. **Please use the WSARE PDP logic model as a reference point as you develop your proposal.** The Western SARE PDP logic model can be found under "Helpful Documents" on the Western SARE web site, http://wsaregrants.usu.edu.

5) **Location:** Funds must flow through a land grant institution and a current SARE State Coordinator must serve as the principal investigator for the project. Subcontracts to other institutions eligible to receive federal funds are allowed.

6) **Letters of support:** Letters of support are not mandatory; however they are encouraged and should be included in the proposal under "Optional – letters of support and references."

Criteria for 2018 Enhanced State Program Grants

Professional Development Enhanced State Program Grants are designed to educate agricultural professionals and producers about critical issues in sustainable agriculture.

Projects must improve the ability of agricultural professionals, farmers and ranchers to put in place systems or methods that will enhance the sustainability of agriculture.

Approaches can include:
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Development of materials or curricula
- Demonstrations
- Web-based courses
- Tours

Multi-faceted proposals are encouraged. Projects using multiple techniques or methods are preferred, as are efforts whose results can be applied to wide and diverse audiences.

Subject matter can include any sustainable agriculture endeavor, including animal agriculture, agronomic or horticultural crop production or the effects of sustainable practices on quality of life for producers or rural communities as well as the economic impacts of agricultural practices or changes in practices.

A list of high priorities identified by working groups includes:

❖ Ag Resiliency and Climate change
❖ Cover Crops and Soil Health
❖ Local Food Systems
❖ Ecosystem Services
❖ Biodiversity, Habitat and IPM
❖ Building "Hot Shot Teams" to address critical issues in sustainable agriculture

Strong teamwork is critical to the success of these grant applications and selected proposals. Even though SARE State Coordinators will serve as the PI on the projects, teams should include broad-based and diverse representation. Team members should include farmers, ranchers, NGO representatives, agency personnel, land grant employees and any other relevant contributors.

Funding is capped at $25,000 for single-state projects, $50,000 for multi-state projects and $100,000 for projects addressing the needs of the entire Western Region. Projects requesting significantly less than the maximum allowable amount generally have a greater likelihood of being funded.

Program Goals for Projects Funded by Western SARE

1. Promote good stewardship of the nation's natural resources by providing site-specific, regional and profitable sustainable farming and ranching methods that strengthen agricultural competitiveness; satisfy human food and fiber needs; maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of soil; conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources and fish and wildlife habitat; and maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground water.
2. Enhance the quality of life of farmers and ranchers and ensure the viability of rural communities, for example, by increasing income and employment, especially profitable self-employment and innovative marketing opportunities in agricultural and rural communities.
3. Protect the health and safety of those involved in food and farm systems by reducing, where feasible and practical, the use of toxic materials in agricultural production, and by optimizing on-farm resources and integrating, where appropriate, biological cycles and controls.
4. Promote crop, livestock and enterprise diversification.
5. Examine the regional, economic, social and environmental implications of adopting sustainable agriculture practices and systems.

Proposal Format

ESP proposals are submitted online at http://wsaregrants.usu.edu. The project participants and general budget are entered on-line. The proposal summary and narrative, as well as other supporting documents, are attached as PDF documents in the on-line system.

Text Limitations: Text for the narrative portion of the proposal is limited to seven (7) pages with 1" margins and a font no smaller than 12 point Times New Roman. The narrative portion includes the following sections: Introduction; Objectives and Timetable; Relevance to Western SARE Goals/Sustainable Agriculture; Methods; Products; Outcomes; and Evaluation. Citations may be included at the end of the narrative portion (not part of page limitation). In addition, a one-page summary of no more than 300 words should be included. Submit the summary and narrative as PDF files.

A. Team Members and Roles

Please list all team members, their affiliations, and define and explain their roles. Please explain how the team member is well suited to help achieve the goals and outcomes specified in the grant application.

B. Summary

Provide a concise summary of the project proposal. The summary is limited to 300 words and submitted as a one-page PDF.

C. Narrative (Limit 7 pages; PDF)

Introduction: Describe the context and need that justify your project.
- A needs assessment with defined or documented need from the target audience is necessary to effectively justify the proposal. Please use your data or other hard data to explain why your project is needed. Needs strengthen the justification of the proposal.
- Describe the factors that influence the implementation and success of the project, including climate, politics, regulations, socio-economic conditions or market forces.
- At least one in-text citation (e.g., Smith 2007) should appear in your narrative to indicate where each reference was used.
- Please list any previously funded SARE projects related to your proposal and explain how your project differs from this previous work. Sources to search include:
  - ✓ National SARE database (http://www.sare.org/projects)
  - ✓ National Agricultural Library (http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic)
  - ✓ USDA-NIFA-CRIS Research (http://cris.csrees.usda.gov/)

Objectives and Timetable: A list of what you hope to accomplish and when it will be done (this is required in the reports and needs to be matched with the application).

Relevance to Western SARE Goals/Sustainable Agriculture: How does your proposal directly address the Western SARE goals found on page 4? All goals do not need to be addressed, but all proposals must address at least one goal. Proposals that address multiple goals are usually scored higher by reviewers.

Methods:
- List and explain the assumptions and beliefs you and others have about the project, the participants and the way you expect the project to operate – the principles that guide your work. (Faulty assumptions may scuttle expected outcomes.)
- Describe the resources, contributions and investments (inputs) that will be used in the project. Resources can be financial (requested funds), human (volunteers, partnerships, contributions of farmers, ranchers and other practitioners) and physical (technology, equipment, etc.).
- Describe your methodology and activities, and provide a timeline of these activities.

Products: What will the project produce? Products may include educational materials, workshops, conferences, demonstrations, tours, curricula and partnerships.

Outcomes: These are the results and benefits for individuals, groups, communities and systems. Outcomes should include increased awareness, knowledge and capacity of participants to provide educational programs and evidence of changed intention or behavior of project participants.

Evaluation: Show how you intend to measure outcomes stated in your proposal. What outcome indicators will be measured, who will conduct the evaluation, how will the evaluation be done, what will it cost and at what time intervals during the project will evaluation take place?

D. Budget

Use the format posted on the web and include a justification for each line item as instructed. If multiple institutions are involved, include the total project budget page followed by a separate budget and narrative page for each institution. Funds may not be requested for research, tuition reimbursement or the purchase of major depreciable items. A budget justification is required. Submit the budget justification as a PDF document.

Senior/Key Personnel: Identify the funding requested, and briefly describe the role and percentage time (FTE) for the PI (major professor), Co-PIs, and any other key personnel that will work on the project.

Graduate Student(s): Identify the funding requested, and briefly describe the role and percentage time (FTE) for any graduate students involved with the project.

Other Personnel: Identify the funding requested, and briefly describe the role and percentage time (FTE) or hours for any other personnel involved with the project. This includes other professionals, hourly labor, and secretarial-clerical labor (only when specific to the project).

Fringe Benefits: For each of the personnel, identify the benefit rate (e.g., percentage, flat fee).

Travel: Identify the purpose and costs for any domestic travel. Note: As a general rule, international travel is not allowed on Western SARE grants.

Materials & Supplies: List the total funds requested for materials and supplies, and indicate the general categories and amount for each category (e.g., glassware, chemicals, fertilizer, etc.).

Other Direct Costs: As applicable, please identify the purpose and costs for any direct costs other than materials and supplies such as publication costs, consultant fees, subawards, communications, copies/postage/printing, conferences/workshops, professional service fees (e.g., graphic design, welding), honoraria/speaker fees, mini-grants, and any other direct expenses.

A well explained budget clarifies and strengthens the proposal. Matching funds are not required and if included, we request that they only be mentioned in the narrative portion of the proposal and not on the budget page. Indirect costs up to 10 percent are allowed. Please review "Required Budgetary Details" under "Helpful Documents" on the Western SARE website http://wsaregrants.usu.edu .

E. Budget

The following supporting documents should be uploaded into the online grant application.

Signature Page: Signatures from all relevant parties (e.g., PI, Co-PIs) are required. Print the signature page(s) from the online application. Have all relevant parties sign the signature page, scan (as a PDF), and upload into the online application by the deadline (this is in lieu of mailing the original signature page). If you are unable to upload the signature page, hard copies may be mailed into the Western SARE office—however they should be in the Western SARE office by the deadline.

Vitae: A brief vita (brief resume) is required for each principal investigator and major participant. The limit is two pages for each. Submit each vitae as a PDF document.

Current and Pending Support: All current and pending support forms should be assembled into one PDF document and attached.

Animal Welfare Assurance Statement: If the project includes warm-blooded vertebrate, the Animal Welfare Assurance statement must be signed by the PI and an IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) representative or attending veterinarian. Attach as a PDF document. Do not submit the form if it is not applicable to your proposal (e.g., no warm-blooded vertebrate animals in project).

Institutional Review Board Approval: For projects dealing with human subjects, applicants will need to provide evidence of review and acceptance or exemption by their Institutional Review Board (IRB), or submit the IRB Assurance Statement. Attach as a PDF document.

Funds are expected to be available no later than October, 2018.

For more information about this call for proposals or for hard copies: Contact Jim Freeburn or Jill West at (307) 532-2436 or *e-mail* – freeburn@uwyo.edu or. You may also contact Al Kurki at (406)494-8655 or *e-mail* – akurki@ncat.org.
About Western SARE: Information can be found at the Western SARE website, www.westernsare.org, or by emailing wsare@usu.edu.

Submission and Funding: Go to http://wsaregrants.usu.edu and apply. **Please remember that the proposal form is character sensitive. Be careful if you are cutting and pasting. Visually review your proposal before hitting the submit button.**

Hard copies of this CFP are available by contacting the Western SARE PDP office.

Proposals must be received by 12:00 NOON MST, November 8, 2017.

All Western SARE calls for proposals (Research & Education, Farmer/Rancher, Ag Professional + Producer and Professional Development Program) are listed on the website, as are previously funded proposals.

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (SARE) is funded through the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) under Chapter 1 of Title XVI of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 and extended by the 1995 Farm Bill reauthorization. The purpose of the subtitle is to encourage research with education and on-farm demonstration projects designed to increase the producer knowledge base and assist in the adoption of sustainable practices on the land. Ideally, projects will integrate research, education and on-farm demonstrations within whole-farm sustainable agricultural systems involving plants and animals, demonstrating tangible outcomes and addressing Western SARE goals.

RESOURCES

Information on sustainable agriculture can be found at the National SARE website, www.sare.org (the database of nationwide SARE projects can be searched under "Project Reports").

The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library specializes in locating, collecting, and providing information about sustainable agriculture. Information specialists can answer questions, highlight resources, and share search techniques for literature reviews and background research. AFSIC has a number of resources at http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/ that may be relevant to your proposal; or, contact AFSIC at 301-504-6559 or afsic@nal.usda.gov.

The following are listed under "Helpful Documents" on the Western SARE website, http://wsaregrants.usu.edu .

- **Special Notes Regarding Western SARE and USDA Policies and Requirements**
- **Western SARE PDP Logic Model**
- **Required Budget Detail**