

# Western SARE Competitive Grants Professional + Producer 2018 Call for Full Proposals

Submission Deadline: December 6, 2017, 1:00pm MDT

The Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program announces the Call for Proposals for Professional + Producer Research & Education Grants for 2018. With a Professional + Producer Research & Education Grant, an agricultural professional and five (5) producers work together to develop a proposal to conduct **both research and education** on a sustainable agricultural topic. Outreach activities such as: on-farm/ranch demonstrations, farmer-to-farmer educational outreach and other approaches to assist in producer adoption must be included. The goal is to achieve results that can be communicated to producers and professionals and can enhance income, protect the environment, and improve the quality of life for farm and ranch families, communities, and society as a whole.

Farmer/Rancher Involvement: Congress mandates that the SARE grant program depart from “business as usual.” To that end, the Administrative Council requires that farmers and ranchers (producers) be involved from start to finish in the planning, design, implementation and educational outreach of any SARE-funded Research and Education project. Token representation is unacceptable.

Western SARE Professional + Producer Research and Education projects should:

- Design innovative on-farm/ranch experiments that will lead to a more sustainable agriculture.
- Conduct on the ground research and education (outreach) within the scope of the project. **Both research and education components must be distinct elements of the proposal.**
- Identify how the results of this project and the adoption by other producers could advance sustainable agriculture.
- Detail creative educational outreach plans that deliver this new knowledge to other producers and professionals in the western region.

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**All proposals are submitted  
online at:**

<http://wsaregrants.usu.edu>

### Professional + Producer Research & Education Grant Program Schedule

- December 6, 2017 – Proposals are due by 1 p.m. MST. Signatures required.
- January 2018 – Technical review panel reviews and recommends proposals for grant funding.
- March 2018 – Western SARE Administrative Council makes final selections.
- April 2018 – Coordinators of funded grant applications are informed of proposal status.
- Summer 2018 – Funds for selected projects will be disbursed.



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

## 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 agricultural economy depends;
- Make the most efficient use of non-renewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls;
- Sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

- U.S. Code Title 7, Section 3103

## Western SARE Goals

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Promote crop, livestock, and enterprise **diversification**.
- Examine the regional, economic, social and **environmental implications** of adopting sustainable agriculture practices and systems.

## Western SARE Professional + Producer Proposal Applications in Sustainable Agriculture

**Overview:** Professional + Producer Research & Education projects projects **must have at least one agricultural professional and five (5) producers**. Professional + Producer projects may be 1-3 years in length, and request up to \$50,000 per application. The agricultural professional is the Principal Investigator. The producers act as field advisors to the agricultural professional.

**Eligible Applicants:** Any agricultural professional that has the capability to conduct both research and outreach activities is eligible to apply. An agricultural professional is any professional assisting producers at the local level such a cooperative extension service agent/educator, or specialist, USDA-NRCS field staff, agricultural consultant, or nonprofit staff member. All proposals must have at least five (5) independent and separate producers operating for-profit operations. You are a producer (farmer/rancher) if:

- 1) Your primary occupation is farming or ranching;
- 2) You have a farm/ranch tax number; ***or***
- 3) You are a part-time producer and you have at least \$1,000 of documented annual income from the operation.

Nonprofit farm operations may participate in the project, but do not count as one of the five producers.

***Funding:*** Projects may be 1 to 3 years in length. Funds up to \$50,000 per application may be requested.

***Public Domain:*** While proposals and reviews will remain confidential, the Western SARE program considers all funded proposals, subsequent reports, and related information to be in the public domain. See details of this stipulation in the special notes in [USDA Grant Policies](#).

***Following Directions:*** An important and practical element of the granting process is following directions. Each year, Western SARE disqualifies proposals *before review* because applicants fail to follow directions found in the Call for Proposals as well as those associated with the online application process at [wsaregrants.usu.edu](http://wsaregrants.usu.edu).

## **Writing the Full Proposal**

Proposals (a 7-page narrative, a one-page summary, and budget justification) as well as other supporting documents are submitted online at <http://wsaregrants.usu.edu> as PDF documents. The project participant and budget information is entered on-line.

***Text Limitations:*** Text for the narrative portion of the full 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: Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture; Innovativeness; Benefits & Impacts to Agriculture; Objectives; Materials and Methods; Educational Outreach Plan; Educational Materials; Evaluation & Producer Adoption; Timeline; and Roles. 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, and a budget justification should be included. Attach all three files (narrative, summary, budget justification) as PDF files. Proposals that do not follow the guidelines may be disqualified.

### ***PROPOSAL APPLICATION***

#### **A. Project Team** (5% of criteria; entered online)

Proposals must identify a principal investigator and at least five (5) producers that are responsible for guiding the project and conducting the research and outreach activities. The project team (minimum 6 people) must include the following team members:

- Agricultural Professional — An agricultural professional is any professional assisting producers at the local level such as a cooperative extension service agent/educator, or specialist, USDA-NRCS field staff, agricultural consultant, or nonprofit staff member.
- Five Producers—Each of the five producers must be independent and separate operators. Non-profits do not count as one of the three required producers. A person qualifies as a producer (farmer/rancher) if they have a for-profit operation ***and:***

- Their primary occupation is farming or ranching;
- They have a farm/ranch tax number; ***or***
- They are a part-time producer with at least \$1,000 documented annual income from farming or ranching activities.
- Other members of the team *may include* additional producers, researchers and others with appropriate expertise for the project, depending on the proposed project scope.
- Principal Investigator – the Principal Investigator (applicant) must be a member of the project team and is responsible for assembling the team and coordinating the project.

The online proposal system will ask for the following information for each team member:

- The organization/position the team member is representing in this proposal (eg., producer, nonprofit, landgrant university, etc.)
- Contact information including address, email, and phone number.
- Team members will be contacted via email by Western SARE for verification that they are part of the proposal.

### **B. Summary** (Limited to 300 words; 1-page PDF)

The summary should include the proposal title and a brief description of the problem or need, the creative approach to solving it, and why this is important. Clearly identify the research question. Describe the research and outreach components of your proposal, and explain how your project will distinctively or creatively address these problems. Identify the potential significance of the project and the expected project outcomes. Please note, a clear and concise description of your proposal is important for the review process. The summary is submitted as a one-page PDF.

### **C. Narrative** (Limit 7 pages; PDF)

#### ***Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture:*** (10% of review criteria)

Explain why this project is needed and how this project addresses a critical need in sustainable agriculture. Describe the potential benefits and impacts for producers and agriculture in general. Clearly articulate how the project and its potential measureable outcomes are relevant to the goals of Western SARE (page 2). Projects should address how they:

- Improve the profitability of farmers/ranchers and associated agricultural businesses;
- Sustain and improve the environmental quality and natural resource base on which agriculture depends; and
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers/ranchers, communities, and society as a whole.

#### ***Innovativeness:*** (5% of review criteria)

Explain how this project is novel and creative. How does this proposal represent an innovative approach or idea?

#### ***Benefits and Impacts to Agriculture:*** (10% of review criteria)

Describe the potential benefits and impacts of your project and its findings on other producers (local, state and regional) or agriculture in general. For example, how does it affect: overall farm/ranch productivity levels, operational profits, soil or water quality or quantity, rural communities, society as a whole? Where possible, use specific estimates of benefits – for example, dollars saved per acre, tons of soil protected from erosion, pounds of chemical reduced, number of acres or people affected, markets expanded, jobs created, etc.

#### ***Producer Involvement:*** (5% of review criteria)

SARE requires the involvement of producers throughout the project. Clearly identify the level of involvement of each producer at all stages – from inception to completion of the project.

**Objectives:** (5% of review criteria)

Please provide a numerical list of project objectives. Each objective should be a statement describing what you intend to achieve. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound (see [Performance Objectives](#)).

**Materials and Methods:** (25% of review criteria)

For each objective, describe the project experimental design, research methods, materials, and project site (experiment station research plots, private farm/ranch, non-profit demonstration farm, etc.). Include sufficient detail so that reviewers can determine if the approach will achieve the objectives. Avoid the use of jargon that may be unfamiliar outside your industry or specialty area. The degree of collaboration should be specifically addressed in multiple investigator projects. If the evaluation plan includes surveys, authors should indicate survey experience and/or describe the survey methodology that will be used. Indicate which partners are involved and who will be responsible for each objective.

**Educational Outreach Plan:** (10% of review criteria)

Explain how you will communicate your project and its findings to producers (specifically) and others (generally). Create a yearly plan for outreach to other producers. This plan should identify dates, locations, and methods using such networking techniques as field days, workshops, demonstrations or other events.

**Educational Materials:** (5% of review criteria)

Provide a list of any educational materials that you plan to produce and use in the outreach plan such as factsheets, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, articles, brochures, social media, etc. Will the outreach and products be useful to other producers? Proper citation of Western SARE in all materials produced from this proposal is required. Logos and associated information will be included in the contracting packet for funded projects.

**Evaluation and Producer Adoption:** (5% of review criteria)

Indicate how the project data, outputs, and extension/outreach activities will be evaluated. This section should describe how changes in producers' knowledge, awareness, attitudes, new skills or practices, etc. will be measured such as a pre-post survey. An approved survey (see [Survey Instrument](#)) is expected to be filled out by **every participant at each outreach event** held. The Evaluation results are required as part of the annual report.

**Timeline:** (5% of review criteria)

Provide a timeline, such as a [Gantt chart](#), for accomplishing each objective. Identify the major milestones or activities that will be completed, and when each of those milestones/activities will occur.

**Roles:** (5% of review criteria)

Detail the specific role of the agricultural professional (applicant) and any others, including producers, who are to be involved in this project. In the on-line process, under 'Project Team,' be sure to include a paragraph or two describing the agricultural operation for each of the producers.

**D. Budget & Justification:** (5% of review criteria; online & PDF)

Provide a concise budget, with proper justification, that is appropriate to the proposed project. The budget numbers are entered in the online budget table. The budget justification is submitted as a PDF. The budget justification should follow the order given in the budget table.

The budget and budget justification should address the following categories (if applicable). This list is not all-inclusive. For a more comprehensive list, and to find what is not allowable, please go to [Required Budgetary Details](#) and [Indirect Costs](#) under the Helpful Documents section.

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: 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.).

Special Note: Any single item or piece of equipment over \$500 must be listed separately with proper budget justification.

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.

***Research & Education Grant funds may be used for the following purposes:***

- Compensation for field research and educational activities.
- Cost of field sampling, crop analysis and educational surveys.
- Materials and supplies needed for the project.
- Small tools and equipment. Any one piece of equipment costing less than \$5,000. Describe type of equipment (for example, pH meters, balances, scales, hand tools, etc.), cost and a brief narrative on the intended use of the equipment for project objectives. **NOTE:** Any single item or piece of equipment over \$500 must be listed separately with proper budget justification.
- Outreach expenses such as holding a field day, tours, printing, creating a webpage, etc.
- Out-of-town travel needed for the project. State the purpose, destination, number of travelers and estimated cost per trip. (e.g., St. Louis, MO to attend the National Conference; two persons @ \$1,000 each).

- Local travel (where personal auto is used and reimbursed) needed for project. State purpose and total dollar amount of reimbursement for vehicle use. If any overnight stays are anticipated, include the number of nights and the amount for meals and lodging (e.g., local travel for site visits to farmers in neighboring counties - \$500 for mileage and \$500 for meals and lodging (five days @ \$100/day) = \$1,000.) Maximum mileage allowance depends on Institutional policy.
- Hired labor for things that you cannot do yourself. State whether pay is a flat rate, or if the pay includes benefits. If not a flat rate, identify the percentage of fringe benefits.
- Producer labor for project activities **above and beyond their normal farming activities.**
- Refreshments at field days, e.g. coffee, cold drinks, fruit, pie, cookies, etc. Meals are allowable if they maintain the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants. This justification must be provided.
- Services of agricultural professionals can be compensated. Provide the rate in your budget justification.
- Indirect Costs of up to 10% (See [Indirect Costs](#))

### **E. Required Supporting Documents**

All supporting documents should be uploaded into the Supporting Documents section of your online grant application.

***Signature Page:*** Be sure to get all signatures from the relevant parties. You should print the signature page(s) found online within the application. Then, you should get it signed, scanned as a PDF file, and uploaded into the Supporting Documents section of your online grant 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.

***Current Vita:*** Submit a current 2-page vita of the Principal Investigator and ALL collaborators except the farmers/ranchers/producers. All vitae should be assembled in one PDF document and attached under Supporting Documents.

***Letters of Support:*** Each of the five producers that are part of the project team should submit a signed letter of support. This letter should verify their willingness to participate, and outline their role, in the project. All letters of support should be assembled into one PDF document and attached under Supporting Documents.

***Current and Pending Support:*** The Principal Investigator and ALL collaborators except the farmers/ranchers/producers should submit a current and pending support form. All current and pending support forms should be assembled in one PDF document and attached under Supporting Documents.

***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. This document is generated on-line when necessary. Scan and attach as a PDF document.

***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 its equivalent. Attach as a PDF document.

## The Review Process

Eligible proposals received by the due date are reviewed by a panel of agricultural producers, scientists, educators, agricultural professionals, business leaders, and government and nonprofit professionals. As you develop your proposal, keep in mind that funded projects clearly define an opportunity or issue in sustainable agriculture and propose innovative and specific solutions. Proposals are evaluated based on the following criteria:

Proposals will be reviewed for technical merit against the following criteria:

Project Team	5%
Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture	10%
Innovativeness	5%
Benefits & Impacts to Agriculture	10%
Producer Involvement	5%
Objectives	5%
Materials & Methods	25%
Educational Outreach Plan	10%
Educational Materials	5%
Evaluation & Producer Adoption	5%
Timeline	5%
Roles	5%
<u>Budget &amp; Justification</u>	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%

Priority will be given to projects that:

- Closely coordinate research and extension/outreach activities.
- Indicate how findings will be made readily usable by farmers/ranchers and other intended audiences.
- Maximize the direct and meaningful involvement of farmers/ranchers.
- Use an interdisciplinary team approach.
- Include close cooperation between universities/colleges, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and farmers/ranchers.

## Reporting Requirements

Annual and final reports should describe the progress made on the research project, detail the findings observed, and document any outputs and impacts. All educational activities should include an evaluation component that measures changes in knowledge or awareness, attitudes and opinions, and/or the adoption of new practices.

Please review the documents in [Helpful Documents](#) to strengthen your proposal and to understand what will be expected of you and your project team if you are awarded a grant:

- The [Research and Education Logic Model](#) outlines what SARE hopes its project investments will achieve in terms of who is participating, what are the outputs, what outreach is done and what participants learn, do, or improve -- at least in part -- due to the project.

- The [Professional + Producer Evaluation Expectations](#) list shows which results you report on during the project and what SARE may assess two to four years after the project's completion.
- The [Survey Instrument](#) is a sample tool of how grantees can gather results from a project's outreach activities. This survey is one important way for collecting required data to measure changes in farmer/rancher knowledge, attitude, skills and awareness.

## **Selected Proposals**

If the Western SARE Administrative Council selects your project for funding, you may expect the following:

**Notification:** The Western SARE Administrative Council will select proposals for funding during its 2018 winter/spring meeting. (The Administrative Council reserves the right to restructure or reduce the budget of any grant proposal before final approval.) Western SARE staff will notify applicants of the status of their proposals in April 2018.

**Contract:** The Sponsored Programs Office or Authorized Representative of the grant recipient will receive a Subcontract Agreement from Utah State University (USU), the contracting institution for Western SARE. This agreement is the award notice for this grant and contains the Terms and Conditions of the grant.

**Funds:** Year 1 funds are released upon receipt of a fully executed subcontract. Year 2 and Year 3 funds are released upon receipt and approval of the annual reports. 10% of the award is held pending receipt and approval of the final report. All expenses are cost-reimbursable. USU shall reimburse grant recipients not more often than monthly for allowable costs. All invoices shall be submitted using grant recipient's standard invoice, but at a minimum shall include current and cumulative costs. All invoices MUST contain the project number (OW18-xxx). USU may request receipts to meet General Accounting Office requirements. In the event circumstances require alternative payment options, please contact Western SARE after you receive notice of intent to fund your application. Detailed financial records are required.

**Photographs:** Grant recipients are required to document their project with photographs, which can be useful to them and help us highlight and promote their work on our website and in publications. Digital photographs and videos are preferred.

**Proper Citation:** The Western SARE program must be credited as the funding source in any publications or outreach materials generated, with the logo included.

**Reports:** A yearly report is required – an annual progress report or final report depending on your project status – each year the project is conducted. Project reports are compiled each year and shared with producers, interested policymakers and leaders at community, state, regional and national levels. All educational materials and products must be constructed in an electronic format. This format will be required in your reports. Evaluations of outreach events, such as the outreach participant surveys ([Survey Instrument](#)) are also required. Our goal is to have all your information available on the Western SARE website once your project's final report is approved.

**Site visits:** SARE recognizes there are limits to what can be accomplished, measured and reported during the life of your project. As a result, along with your reporting, Western SARE staff plan to conduct post-project assessments of representative projects to get a fuller measure of the SARE program's impact in areas such as:

- Who is participating in SARE-funded projects?
- What is being created by the projects (e.g., new knowledge, new approaches)?
- What are people learning from these projects?
- What changes are farmers and ranchers making?
- What economic, environmental, social or productivity benefits are farmers and ranchers seeing as a result of having made a change?

**Changes:** Grantees must report information changes (e.g., address, phone number, change in principal investigator, etc.) for all funded projects to the Western SARE office.

## **How to Apply**

Apply at: [wsaregrants.usu.edu](http://wsaregrants.usu.edu)

We strongly encourage applicants read the entire Call for Proposals before beginning to write the proposal. After writing the proposal, review the call for proposals again to ensure that all requested information is provided.

**Proposals are due by 1 p.m. MDT - December 6, 2017**

In compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, this material can be made available in other formats upon request.

## **Resources**

Information on past projects including summaries, highlights and reports can be found at [westernsare.org/projects](http://westernsare.org/projects). We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about sustainable agriculture and the Western SARE program. Tips for writing proposals are available under [Grant Writing Tips](#) on the Helpful Documents page.

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](mailto:afsic@nal.usda.gov).

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