Western SARE Competitive Grants
Research & Education
2019 Call for Pre-Proposals
Submission Deadline: June 4, 2018, 2:00pm MDT

The Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program announces the Call for Pre-proposals for Research & Education grants for 2019.

Producer Involvement
Congress mandates that the SARE grant program depart from "business as usual." To that end, the Western SARE Administrative Council requires evidence that agricultural producers are involved from inception to finish in the planning, design, implementation and educational outreach of any SARE-funded project.

Application Process
Applications are submitted online at . The application process for this competitive grant program consists of two stages: 1) submission of a pre-proposal and, 2) after notice of selection, submission of a full proposal. The pre-proposal step assists the WSARE Administrative Council in selecting proposals that exhibit diverse subject matter, cover diverse geography, meet the basic requirements of the Congressional mandate for the grant, and contain original and innovative research, the results of which can be readily adopted by producers. The pre-proposal also spares preparation time of the unsuccessful applicant. Applicants with the most promising pre-proposals will be invited to develop more extensive full proposals.

Requirements for Research & Education Pre-Proposals
- Incorporate both *research and education* in the project.
- Bring together a *functional team to plan and implement* the project.
- Include a minimum of *three separate producers* for on-farm testing, demonstration and collaboration.
- Outline *educational outreach plans* to producers and agricultural professionals.
- Produce quantifiable *scholarly and educational products* to producers and agricultural professionals.
- Address the goals of Western SARE.

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All proposals are submitted online at:
wsaregrants.usu.edu

Research & Education Grant Schedule
- April 2018 – Call for pre-proposals released.
- June 4, 2018 – Pre-proposals due by 2:00 pm MDT.
- July 2018 – Pre-proposals reviewed. Projects selected for submission of full proposals.
- August 2018 – Prinicpal Investigaors informed of pre-proposal status. Selected applicants are invited to submit full proposals.
- November 2018 – Full proposals due.
- January 2019 – Technical Committee evaluates the full proposals.
- February/March 2019 – Western SARE Administrative Council selects full proposals for funding.

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Host Institution:
UtahStateUniversity

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

United States Department of Agriculture
National Institute of Food and Agriculture

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 Research and Education Pre-Proposal Applications in Sustainable Agriculture

Overview: Western SARE funds proposals that examine innovative research technologies and creative extension approaches that advance Western SARE goals (above) and are economically viable, protect the environment, and are socially responsible. Western SARE projects must contain both research and education components. Projects that contain only research, or only education, will not be funded. Additionally, Western SARE requires that agricultural producers be involved from inception to finish in the planning, design, implementation and educational outreach of any SARE-funded project.

Eligible Applicants: Anyone that has the capability to conduct both research and outreach activities is eligible to apply. Multi-state and multi-agency collaborations are encouraged.

Funding: Projects may be 1 to 3 years in length. There is no set funding limit, but awards generally should not exceed $350,000 across three years.

Long-Term vs. Short-Term: Some research/extension work is complex and may require a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that takes many years to complete. To be effective, these projects are likely to exceed the time limits of Western SARE's normal 1 to 3-year funding cycle. Projects that are long-term (more than 3 years) should identify themselves as a long-term project by checking the appropriate box in the on-line portion of the pre-proposal application. Short-term projects are those that can be completed within the three year funding cycle.

Long-term projects that are funded will receive their funding in three-year increments. Each additional increment (up to 3 years) of funding will still go through a competitive full proposal process, but will bypass the pre-proposal process. Long-term projects are eligible for additional increments of funding if the following report criteria are met and approved and funding is available:
1. Reports are submitted in a timely manner;
2. Yearly objectives are reported on, and met (as listed in the approved proposal);
3. Yearly measurable milestones are reported on, and met (as listed in the approved proposal).

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]().

Writing the Pre-Proposal

Pre-proposals are submitted online at [wsaregrants.usu.edu](). The project participant is entered on-line. The pre-proposal narrative and summary, as well as other supporting documents, are submitted as PDF documents.

Text Limitations: Text for the narrative portion of the pre-proposal is limited to five (5) pages with 1" margins and a font no smaller than 12 point Times New Roman. The narrative portion should include the following sections: Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture; Innovativeness; Stakeholder Involvement; Producer Involvement; Objectives; Materials and Methods; 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 should be included. Attach all files (narrative, summary) as PDF files. Pre-proposals that do not follow the guidelines may be disqualified.

PRE-PROPOSAL APPLICATON

A. Project Team (10% of review criteria; entered online)

Pre-proposals must identify a principal investigator and project team that is responsible for conducting the research and outreach activities and guiding the project. The project team (minimum 5 people) must include the following team members:
- Research representative or equivalent (this person usually serves as the principal investigator).

- Extension/outreach representative or equivalent.
- Three Producers—one of the producers will be designated as the "producer representative" and will be involved in all aspects of the project from idea inception through completion. Each of the three producers must be independent and separate operators. Non-profit operations 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 pre-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 pre-proposal.

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

The summary should include the pre-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 pre-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. A clear and concise description of your pre-proposal is important for the review process. The summary is limited to 300 words and submitted as a one-page PDF.

C. Narrative (Limit 5 pages; PDF)

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture: (20% 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 (p.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: (10% of review criteria)
Explain how this project is novel and creative. How does this pre-proposal represent an innovative approach or idea?

Stakeholder Involvement: (5% of review criteria)
Western SARE is committed to addressing the needs of diverse agricultural stakeholders (both on-farm/ranch and off-farm/ranch). Pre-proposals must include documentation that stakeholder-identified needs are being addressed by the proposed project. Sources of stakeholder-identified needs include but are not limited to:

- Recommendations from stakeholder groups such as grower organizations or commodity commissions.
- Needs and issues from Western SARE sub-regional conferences (westernsare.org)
- Other documented needs assessment evaluations.

Explicitly citing such sources demonstrates both that a project is important and that the applicants are engaged with their respective stakeholders.

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: (10% of review criteria)
Please provide a <u>numerical list</u> of project objectives. Each objective should be a statement describing what you intend to achieve. Objectives must be specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.

Materials and Methods: (30% 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.

Roles: (10% of review criteria)
Detail the specific role of the principal investigator, project team members, and any others, including producers, who will be involved in this project. For each objective, indicate who will be responsible, and which partners are involved.

D.   Required Supporting Documents (PDF)

All supporting documents must be uploaded into the online grant application as PDF documents.

Signature Page: The research representative and the extension/outreach representative should sign the signature page. Print the signature page(s) found online within the application, obtain needed signatures, scan as a PDF file, and upload into the online system 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 team members <u>except</u> the farmers/ranchers/producers (letters of commitment are required for producers). All vitae should be assembled in one PDF document and attached under Supporting Documents.

Letters of Commitment: A letter of commitment is required from each of the three producers. The letter of commitment should outline the producer's involvement in the project, and contain their signature.

The Review Process

Eligible pre-proposals received by the due date are reviewed by a diverse group of reviewers (stage 1), which includes agricultural producers, scientists, educators, business leaders, and government and nonprofit professionals. Selected pre-proposals are invited to submit full proposals. Full proposals are reviewed by a Technical Committee (stage 2) that assesses the technical merit of each full proposal. The Western SARE Administrative Council evaluates the full proposals and makes the final selections.

Evaluation of the pre-proposal is based on:
- Clear articulation of how the project and its potential measurable outcomes are relevant to the federal definition of sustainable agriculture (p.2) and the goals of Western SARE (p.2).
- Appropriateness of the design of the project.
- Likelihood of obtaining the objectives of the project in the time requested.
- Applicability of the project finding and outcomes to producers.

Pre-proposals will be reviewed against the following criteria:

Project Team	10%
Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture	20%
Innovativeness	10%
Stakeholder Involvement	5%
Producer Involvement	5%
Objectives	10%
Materials & Methods	30%
Roles	10%
Total	100%

Priority will be given to projects that:
- Closely coordinate research and extension/outreach activities.
- Indicate how findings will be made <u>readily usable</u> 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

Please review the information in <u>Helpful Documents</u> to strengthen your pre-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 *Research and Education Reporting Expectations* list shows the reporting requirements 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 Pre-Proposals

Notification: The reviewers will make recommendations to the Western SARE Administrative Council, which will select which projects may submit full proposals in July 2018. Western SARE staff will notify applicants of the status of their pre-proposals in August 2018.

How to Apply

Apply at: wsaregrants.usu.edu

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read the entire Call for Pre-Proposals before beginning to write the pre-proposal. After writing the pre-proposal, review the call for pre-proposals again to ensure that all requested information is provided as outlined.

Pre-Proposals are due by 2 p.m. MDT – June 4, 2018

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

See the "Helpful Documents" at wsaregrants.usu.edu. If you have further questions after consulting these documents, please contact our office at 435-797-2257 or wsare@usu.edu

Information on past projects including summaries, highlights and reports can be found at westernsare.org/projects. We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about sustainable agriculture and the Western SARE program.

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 www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/ that may be relevant to your proposal; or contact AFSIC at 301-504-6559 or afsic@nal.usda.gov.

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