



APPENDIX A

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About Northeast SARE Calls for Proposals (CFP)

CFP Layout

CFPs start with the same information – “About Northeast SARE”. Here you will learn about organizational priorities, goals, updates to proposals, applicant support available and resources.

CFPs are broken out into 6 “parts” and many sections within each part.

The questions you need to answer and forms to fill out to complete a submission begins in Part 5 “Proposal Questions and Instructions”.

- (1) [At a Glance](#)
- (2) [Grant Timeline](#)
- (3) [Grant Overview & Eligibility](#)
- (4) [Definitions](#)
- (5) [Proposal Questions and Instructions](#)
- (6) [Appendices](#)
 - a. Appendix A
 - b. Appendix B
 - c. Appendix C
 - d. Appendix D is the program Rubric

The 2nd page of the CFP will have a table of contents that will allow you to see and click directly to the part you are looking for.

Projects We Fund

There are many kinds of projects that are eligible for Northeast SARE grant programs. Some project concepts may fit eligibility criteria in more than one program area. Do your best to answer each question in a way that demonstrates why your project is a strong fit for the specific program you’re applying to.

Tip! The national SARE project database (projects.sare.org/search-projects) includes funded projects from all four SARE regions and is searchable by state, grant type, project coordinator, and keyword.

Comprehensive Review

All project proposals must demonstrate alignment with Northeast SARE priorities which are evaluated under three core competencies throughout your proposal:

- 1) Legislation
- 2) Innovation
- 3) Impact

Your program rubric will describe precisely how these are evaluated. The following is supplemental information to support your understanding.

Priorities

By law, projects that Northeast SARE funds must help improve farming in at least one of the following ways:

1. Maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of the soil;
2. Conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources, and fish and wildlife habitat;
3. Maintain and enhance the quality of surface and ground water;

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4. Protect the health and safety of persons involved in the food and farm system;
5. Promote the well-being of animals; and
6. Increase employment opportunities in agriculture.

These goals come from the federal legislation that guides all Northeast SARE grants. Every proposal must show how it supports one or more of these priorities. Reviewers will use this list when scoring proposals, and projects that don't align with these priorities may not be funded. Proposals submitted to this program must be in alignment with current administration priorities (i.e. [USDA Research Priorities](#) and [Executive Orders](#)).

“New Frontiers”

Northeast SARE is a federally funded program, and proposals (including any associated activities and outreach) should be framed in alignment with current federal priorities.

As you scope and write your project, it's best to speak to broad agricultural outcomes, farming impact, and production systems rather than to specific demographic groups. Northeast SARE does not maintain an internal list or adhere to a specific set of "buzzwords," – we simply focus on the legislated intent of our grant programs – to support farming communities, education and research.

Other resources are available online such as this [Grant Writing and Funding Resource](#) or Forbe's list of [Words that May Trigger Review](#). You may also find Director Dr. Teresa Leslie's ["New Frontiers" webinar](#) helpful. A few examples of how this comes into play for proposal writing:

- Northeast SARE is unable to fund proposals where the identity of a particular person and/or community is the key beneficiary of the project.
- Northeast SARE cannot fund projects focused on climate change, but can fund projects focused on environmental work that provides direct or indirect benefits to farmers.
- We encourage you to focus on projects with high farmer impact that can be generally adopted by a high percentage of farmers in the Northeast, with attention to local agriculture and the role of regenerative practices in increasing production.

If you have questions about how these considerations apply to your specific project, reach out to a Grant Administrator. Inquiring applicants often share resources and ideas in the Q&A sessions offered in advance of the proposal deadline, which can also serve as a resource.

Eligibility and Related Policies

Submission Policy

Project leaders may only submit one proposal per grant program. Project leaders may only receive one award per program per year. If the same project is submitted to multiple grant programs, upon accepting an award, the project leader must withdraw the project from the other grant programs.

Conflict of Interest

- Review Northeast SARE's Conflict of Interest Policy [Here](#)
- Members of the Northeast SARE Administrative Council, SARE staff, and SARE State Coordinators are not permitted to be funded or named in proposals.

- Members of proposal review teams are not permitted to discuss or vote on proposals that are submitted by organizations they work for, organizations for which they serve as a board member or paid consultant, former graduate student advisees or advisors, family members or close personal friends.
- Reviewers may not review a proposal in which their collaborators on research projects or co-authors on peer reviewed publications (including pending publications and submissions) serve as project leaders; the timeline for this prohibition is for any projects or publications within the past three years.
- Northeast SARE's full Conflict of Interest policy can be found at: www.northeastsare.org/COI

How to Submit Your Northeast SARE Proposal

All proposals must be submitted by 4PM ET online into the "Grant Management System", or GMS at: <https://projects.sare.org/>

Make an Account

1. **Go to projects.sare.org** -- what we call "GMS" or Grant Management System. This is where you are required to submit your proposal before the deadline.
 - a. At least 1-2 weeks before the due date, go to projects.sare.org to set up a user account, log in, and begin to enter your proposal in the grant management system to ensure that you are able to use the system.
 - b. If you have any questions about this process or need additional support on using the grant management system, contact the Grant Administrator listed on the first page of the Call for Proposals.

You may share your proposal with your host organization's authorized official by clicking on the "View Draft" button on the Proposal Overview Page, then print the proposal or share the proposal by providing the "Link to share" URL

Prepare your Materials

1. Writing your proposal
 - c. We suggest drafting your application using the version of the Call For Proposal.
 - i. You can delete the first 8(ish) pages up until "PART 5: Proposal Questions and Instructions" which is the beginning of the proposal questions.
 - d. There are required uploads with your application, which are all noted in the CFP
 - e. Prepare your proposal well in advance of the deadline. Historically applicants have reported spending approximately 30-50 hours to write and submit a large grant proposal, and approximately 20-40 hours to write and submit a small grant proposal
2. Required documents must be included and submitted by the deadline. Late submissions will not be accepted under no circumstances (even if it is due to a delay in the Grant Management System)
3. Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.
4. Required forms vary by program. **Use the checklist in the CFP**
 - a. (If applicable/required): The Grant Commitment Form must be signed by you and the person authorized by your business or organization to make financial commitments. If your project includes any subawards, each entity must also complete a Grant Commitment Form.

Submit your Prepared Proposal

1. If you used a word document to draft your responses, Copy and Paste your text from the word document into the GMS. Remember to SAVE!
2. Complete the "Title" "Project Description" "Applicant" and "Project Leader" questions first. On the left, click on each section heading to answer questions. Press "Save" after every entry to store your text.
3. When you complete the required questions in each section, a "✓" appears. If an " * " is there, it means a required question has not been completed. Your application cannot be submitted until all required questions have a response.
4. You may preview a draft of your proposal anytime by clicking "View Draft." You can share the draft with others with "Link to Share" at the top of the draft page.
5. You may log out and return later to work on your proposal. Log in and select "Manage Grant Proposals." Your draft proposal will be listed under "Unsubmitted Proposals."
6. When you have answered the last question and are ready to submit, click the "Proposal Overview" button to return to the proposal overview page. Then, click "Submit Proposal" at the bottom of the page. The button will not appear until you have answered all required questions. Click once to see the confirmation page, then make sure to select "Submit proposal" again. You will receive an email confirmation of your submission.
7. We recommend you allow for a full day to enter and submit your proposal online.
 - a. You have to have uploaded all documents and press submit before 4:00PM ET or the system will kick you out.
 - b. If all of your materials are not submitted by this deadline, your proposal will not be reviewed.

Un-submit Your Proposal

1. Up until the official deadline, you can unsubmit at any time to revise your proposal.
2. Each time you submit or unsubmit the proposal, you will receive an email confirmation.
3. If you wish to make any edits, you may *unsubmit* your proposal, revise, and then *resubmit* it before the 5:00 p.m. deadline. If your proposal was submitted before the deadline, then withdrawn to edit and not resubmitted it will not be accepted for review.

General Instructions to Applicants

Proposal Response Instructions:

1. How each category and/or question is reviewed is described in the reviewer rubric, located at the end of this CFP Packet in Appendix D.
2. Each question in the application includes specific guidance including the question or prompt, and word count when applicable.
 - a. Some questions may require an upload. Allowable file types for uploads include PDFs, images, and Excel spreadsheets – allowable uploads vary by question. All files uploaded must be unprotected and accessible.
 - b. You may not exceed the stated word limits.
 - c. Optional materials are not required and are not needed for a strong score - However, these materials can help clarify your project and may, as a result, improve scores.
 - i. Use them, if allowed, to strengthen reviewers' understanding of your project's feasibility, rigor, or foundation.

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3. Do not include external website links in your proposal (except in citations); reviewers will not have access to links and they will not be considered.
4. You may use any official citation style. You can learn about the different citation styles in Owl Purdue's [Style Guide Overview](#) or learn more about [research and citations here](#).
5. You must use the Northeast SARE provided Budget template.

Writing Tips

- We suggest you use a word processing program to develop your proposal offline, ensuring it is accurate and complies with word limits before (copy &) pasting into the online system.
- Keep your writing clear and simple. You can assume grant reviewers have solid sustainable agriculture knowledge, but not necessarily deep expertise in your subject area.
- Northeast SARE values all ways of knowing and accepts a wide range of supporting evidence, including academic research, personal experience, community voices, cultural knowledge, and more.
 - Examples of acceptable evidence include (but are not limited to): published literature, unpublished reports, pilot study data, survey or focus group results, community engagement records, case studies, and sources like the Census of Agriculture.
- Materials that repeat or restate required content do not strengthen an application.
- How each category and/or question is reviewed is described in the reviewer rubric, located at the end of this CFP Packet in Appendix D.

Budget Preparation Tips

- Read [Appendix C](#) for a better understanding of eligible expenses AND what information needs to be provided on budget requests at the proposal stage
- Project expenses and funding requests should align with the project duration, scope of work, and corresponding engagement and outreach.
- Northeast SARE strongly encourages that proposals request funds to pay farmers (and others who take time out of their normal work to provide a service to the project) for the time they contribute to a project at a reasonable rate. *For example, Northeast SARE compensates farmers who serve on its Administrative Council and review teams at a rate of \$54.40/hour.*
- Education is a core value at Northeast SARE. Reviewers want to see a demonstrated effort towards disseminating research in accessible ways. This may include things like videographers for video content, graphic designers or language translations of materials – which are all allowable budget expenses.

The "Get a Grant" page is your one-stop shop for all attachments and materials referenced in the CFP and needed to submit your proposal: northeast.sare.org/grants/get-a-grant/

Glossary

Northeast SARE Definitions:

1. [Definition of a Farm](#)
2. Farmer Impact
3. Replicability
4. Innovation

People Involved in this Project:

1. [People Involved in the Project](#)
2. Service Providers (*relevant only to Professional Development Program*)

Program Specific Definitions

Novel Approaches

1. Novel
2. Proof of Concept

Graduate Student

1. Faculty Advisor

Definition of a Farm

[Review Northeast SARE's Definition of a Farm HERE.](#)

Farmer Impact

Farmer Impact is having significant impression on farmers and farming communities; Impact can be economic, social, environmental etc. and replicability is important.

Innovation:

Innovation is defined as the development or adoption of new concepts or ideas and the successful exploration of new ideas.

Replicability

Replicability is the ability of another farmer or farming community to obtain similar results when applying the same method(s). In other words, another farmer can utilize the results of the research to benefit their farming practices or behavior.

Primary Commodities, Primary Practices, and Primary Benefits and Impacts

[Commodities](#), [Practices](#), [Benefits and Impacts](#) are mandated criterion from National SARE to categorize project proposals that are funded. These are not used in proposal review or impact scoring/review. Please refer to these definitions when selecting your responses in the proposal.

People Involved in the Project

Authorized Official

The Authorized Official (AO) is the person authorized to sign for the organization that would host the grant. The AO will serve as fiscal agent for the project. The AO is typically one of the following: a program officer; an organization's financial manager; the executive director of the organization; or, the owner of a farm or business. The same person may serve as the AO and the Project Leader when required by the host organization's structure.

Project Leader

The Project Leader is part of the Project Team and is the one responsible for the oversight and implementation of the project. They must be employed at the same organization as the project's Authorized Official. This is sometimes called a "PI" or Primary Investigator. The Project Leader must demonstrate the following:

- Skills and experience to oversee and implement the project
- A meaningful relationship with farmers and/or service providers

Northeast SARE only acknowledges a Single-Project Leader as a single point of contact. Functionally, in program design, you may operate with Co-Project Leaders; Northeast SARE will only maintain contact with the Project Leader on file in your application.

Project Team

These are the project team members who will devote significant time to implementing the project. This includes anyone receiving funds to implement project activities, as well as anyone who is contributing significant money, labor, facilities, or equipment in kind.

Farmers

The farmers who will engage in the project. Below are some examples of ways they may engage in the project:

- Attend project events
- Use materials or content produced in the project
- Implement practices developed or promoted in the project
- Provide input on the shape and direction of the project
- Provide feedback on project impact

The majority of farmers must be involved in farms that meet [Northeast SARE's Definition of a Farm](#).

Service Providers

Service providers are the focal audience for Professional Development projects' educational activities (where they are required) but may be present in any program's design such as project team or advisory committee. Examples of their engagement in the project follow:

- Engage in educational activities hosted by the project team
- Engage with materials or content that the project produces
- Implement practices developed or promoted by the project
- Provide input on the shape and direction of the project
- Provide feedback on the impact of the project

Program Specific Definitions

Novel Approaches

Novelty

Novelty refers to an approach, practice, technology, or strategy that has not yet been tested, validated, or adopted within a farming context — distinct from Innovation, which encompasses both new ideas and improvements to existing ones.

Proof of Concept

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Evidence from prior experiments or pilot projects strongly suggests a practice or approach is beneficial and feasible, but additional testing, data and refinement is needed before recommending farmer adoption.

Graduate Student

Graduate Student

The Graduate Student is considered the applicant and must write the proposal.

- They must be enrolled as a graduate student and have completed at least one term (semester, trimester, quarter) at an accredited college, university, or veterinary school.
- They must be a student at the same institution as the project's Faculty Advisor, and Authorized Official.
- They must be proposing to conduct research in the Northeast region.
- They must be committed to the entire length of the project and submit annual and final reports when due.
- If funded, the Graduate Student will be the Project Leader, responsible for the oversight and implementation of the project.

Faculty Advisor

A Faculty Advisor must be named as Principal Investigator of the awarded grant. While the Graduate Student is the Project Leader, the Faculty Advisor must endorse the proposal, oversee the research, and ensure the project's budgeted expenditures are acceptable.