



## Information for Prospective Technical Committee Members

The [Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\) Program](#) offers grants to farmers, graduate students, educators, researchers, agricultural service providers and others who work with farmers to address key issues affecting the sustainability of agriculture in the Northeast region (Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.).

We currently offer six competitive grant programs that focus on different audiences (eg. farmers and graduate students), scope and funding amounts:

- [Farmer](#)
- [Graduate Student Research](#)
- [Partnership](#)
- [Professional Development Program](#)
- [Research and Education](#)
- [Research for Novel Approaches in Sustainable Agriculture](#)

Our work is guided by an outcome statement as a long-term vision for our region's agriculture:

*Northeast agricultural communities honor the holistic connection among land, water, air, and all living beings. Agriculture in the Northeast is accessible, sustainable, and just, addressing historic and current inequities so all farmers and farm employees can steward resources to ensure sustainability, resilience, economic viability, and a high quality of life.*

Northeast SARE cultivates a diverse pool of grant reviewers, called the Technical Committee (TC). Each year, for all our grant programs, reviewers serve on grant review panels to contribute their lived experience and expertise to review and rank proposals for the extent to which they address the grant program's criteria and contribute to our outcome statement. These recommendations are provided to Northeast SARE's Administrative Council, which makes the final selection of proposals to fund.

### Why Join the Technical Committee?

Reviewers have a significant role in making decisions regarding Northeast SARE funding; approximately \$9 million invested annually in sustainable agriculture projects in our region. Additionally, we invite reviewers to provide input into our application and review procedures. Becoming a grant reviewer can be a wonderful professional development experience - there is no better way to learn how to write strong grant proposals than serving as a reviewer. In addition, reviewers have the opportunity to read about innovative ideas to improve and sustain our region's agriculture.

Northeast SARE provides a consultant payment of approximately \$375 per day (adjusted annually based on federal cost of living adjustments) to reviewers who identify as not receiving a salary covering their participation. This could include (but is not limited to): farmers; self-employed and retired individuals; representatives of non-

profit/non-governmental organizations (NGOs), employees or owners of for-profit businesses, hourly workers, etc. The stipend is intended to cover the time spent conducting review on behalf of Northeast SARE.

### **Who is Eligible?**

The Technical Committee is a group of farmers, educators, researchers, non-profit staff, federal and state employees, consultants, and other individuals who work in agriculture and food systems. Northeast SARE specifically aspires to build stronger relationships with Black, Indigenous, all People of Color and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer+ farmers, farm workers, researchers and food systems and agricultural practitioners in our effort to acknowledge and address inequity and inaccessibility in our programs. Membership is not limited to those who reside in the Northeast, but all members should have strong knowledge of and experience in sustainable agriculture in the Northeast. Reviewers must have access to a reliable internet connection for participating in virtual review team meetings and accessing our online grant management system.

### **Expectations of Technical Committee Members**

TC members are expected to fully participate in their assigned review panel to:

- Carefully read and evaluate proposals based on review criteria;
- Provide constructive written comments about each proposal;
- Notify grant coordinators immediately if you have a conflict of interest with any proposal;
- Practice awareness and naming of implicit bias when it may be present;
- Maintain confidentiality of proposals; and
- Approach review team discussions with respect and an open mind.

The estimated time commitment for TC members is 20 to 30 hours per year (typically spread out over two months) to review proposals for one grant program, although some members commit more time by serving on multiple grant review teams.

### **Questions?**

Please contact Heather Omand, steward of the Technical Committee, with any questions you may have.

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*Our 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. SARE is funded by USDA NIFA. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*