



# 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, Maryland, Massachusetts, 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:

*Agriculture in the Northeast will be diversified and profitable, providing healthful products to customers. Farmers and the people they work with will steward resources to ensure sustainability and resilience, and foster conditions where farmers have high quality of life and communities can thrive.*

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 experiences and expertise to review and rank proposals for the extent to which they address the grant program's criteria. These recommendations are provided to Northeast SARE's Administrative Council that 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 is 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 also be a wonderful professional development experience—there is no better way to learn how to craft strong grant proposals than serving as a reviewer. Lastly, reviewers have the opportunity to read about innovative ideas to improve and sustain our region's agriculture.

Northeast SARE provides a consultant payment of \$300 per day to reviewers who do not identify as receiving a salary/wage to cover 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 agricultural issues affecting Northeast farmers. 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 Associate Director Heather Omand 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.*