

## Northeast SARE 2026 Farmer Grant Question and Answer Sessions

Topic	Question	Answer
<b>Budget</b>	I would like to be able to pay interns. Would this grant be a good fit?	Yes, this grant can pay interns for work that is specific to the project. If they are employed by your farm, they should be included in the "Personnel" section of the budget.
<b>Budget</b>	My proposal is for a marketing and outreach partnership between a beginning and new farmer. We want to invest in equipment. What sort of equipment purchases can SARE fund?	SARE will fund equipment that is necessary and specific to the project. If the equipment will have use outside of the project, you can prorate the equipment based on its useful life (usually 5 years). You will want to demonstrate in your proposal how the equipment is necessary and integral to the project and not a normal farm expense.
<b>Budget</b>	Do we need to break out our expenses by month or year?	The budget template asks for your total costs for the whole length of your project. You can include different lengths of time as different line items.
<b>Budget</b>	If the overall project budget is larger than \$30k, how do we show this?	In the budget template, only include expenses up to the \$30,000 that you are allowed to request. Within the proposal narrative, there is a text-based question where you can explain where the rest of your funds are from.
<b>Budget</b>	Is the budget cap \$30,000 total, or \$30,000 per year?	It is \$30,000 for the duration of the project which can be anywhere from 1-3 years.
<b>Eligibility</b>	I was awarded a NYS grown and certified grant this year to implement innovative farming practices. I am looking to write this grant to fund the data collection for these practices. Is that allowed?	You can apply to this grant for data collection, but you can't fund the same work from two different grants, so you will need to clearly distinguish what makes this project different from the NYS grown project.

<b>Eligibility</b>	I'm a mixed vegetable production grower. Are there requirements to own the land that I farm on to apply for this grant?	No, you do not need to own land to apply for this grant as a farmer. You must otherwise meet our definition of the farm. Reviewers will also want to see that you have land security so that you will be able to conduct the full length of the project.
<b>Eligibility</b>	If you qualify to be a farmer and as a technical advisor can you be both in a grant cycle?	You can only submit one proposal as the project leader / farmer. You can be the project leader for a proposal and be a technical advisor or collaborator on another project.
<b>Eligibility</b>	We got a SARE grant last year. We would like to explore further parts of the grant research that we completed. Can we build on last year's grant or do we need to come up with a novel research idea?	You can build on last year's work, but you must clearly explain what is different and what this new proposal will add to your existing project. It's also important to explain the results of your current project to date.
<b>Eligibility</b>	Can you apply to the Farmer grant and graduate student grant?	You can, but you would need to submit separate applications with different plans of work. (You can't get funding to do the same project twice). And, of course, you would need to meet the eligibility requirements meaning you would need to be a farmer and a graduate student
<b>Managing Your Grant</b>	How often are we reimbursed?	You can submit invoices up to once a month, and we recommend sending them at least once a quarter. We have an invoice template you can use. You will submit the invoice and the receipts.
<b>Managing Your Grant</b>	How do we pay employees through this grant?	You pay the employee as usual, then you will submit an invoice to us that shows you paid the employee, and we will send you the reimbursement.
<b>Managing Your Grant</b>	Are all the SARE programs payable on a reimbursement basis?	Currently, all grants are reimbursement-based, but we are exploring other models that may be launched in the coming years.
<b>Other</b>	When will the Partnership Grant open?	The exact date has not been announced yet, but we are planning on offering the partnership grants in spring 2026.
<b>Proposal Topic</b>	I have created some innovative oyster gear such as an upweller and a tumbler. The equipment is not very expensive but what was time consuming and expensive was the innovation. Can I publish that design as a grant project? How do I create a budget around sharing this design?	We can fund product development and product design. We can't fund work that has already happened. You could conduct a project to test the design or to conduct demonstrations for other farmers.

<p><b>Proposal Topic</b></p>	<p>Do we need to do research to ensure that our proposal is for something that has not been done in prior years?</p>	<p>We recommend making sure your project is work that is new or innovative, at least within your local context. You can address this in the context section of your paper, and provide examples of other work that has been done and what makes your project different.</p>
<p><b>Proposal Topic</b></p>	<p>It seems like projects can either focus on research OR education/demonstration activities. Do the education/demonstration projects still need to have a research component? Or can it be focused on sharing something we have already developed with others?</p>	<p>Education and demonstration do not need to have a specific research component. We will want to see a clear plan of work (developing the education / demonstration, conducting it, and evaluating the impact). We will want to see a way to assess the impact of your education or demonstration, such as an evaluation from program participants.</p>
<p><b>Proposal Topic</b></p>	<p>Are there SARE examples of similar shared infrastructure or cooperative marketing projects we could reference to strengthen our narrative?</p>	<p>You can always search the SARE Projects database for terms relating to project ideas. <a href="https://projects.sare.org/search-projects/">https://projects.sare.org/search-projects/</a></p>
<p><b>Proposal Topic</b></p>	<p>Can we have a two-tiered grant proposal, i.e., researching simplified pest testing based on academic paper, and outreach that teaches the developed simplified testing method? One year each?</p>	<p>We've absolutely seen projects that are multi-year with a first year focusing on research and subsequent years focused on outreach. Every proposal is different, but most of our projects involve both research and outreach.</p>
<p><b>Technical Advisor</b></p>	<p>How do we get connected to an advisor?</p>	<p>Technical advisors are required. You will need to find one in your network. They should help you develop your project and provide guidance during the project. You could ask your local extension office, find a private consultant, a veterinarian, an experienced farmer in your network, or someone else with experience.</p>
<p><b>Technical Advisor</b></p>	<p>Do you have to have a research partner through your local county? How would I establish that relationship?</p>	<p>Your "research partner" should be a technical advisor. They do not need to be based in your county. Any expert (extension agent, non profit worker, other farmer, consultant, etc.) can fill this role.</p>
<p><b>Technical Advisor</b></p>	<p>Can the Technical Advisor be a local soil conservation agent who will specifically help with promotion and outreach to local farmers?</p>	<p>Yes, the technical advisor can provide support on any aspect of the project: research, education, or outreach.</p>

<b>Technical Advisor</b>	Does the geographic location of the advisor come into consideration to your evaluation? I am personally based in New England but have been coordinating with a technical advisor in a different part of the country.	The technical advisor does not need to be located in the Northeast, but they need to have expertise related to your work, and you should demonstrate that you'll be able to work with them successfully remotely.
<b>Technical Advisor</b>	Is the farmer able to also be the technical adviser?	No, each proposal must have a farmer Project Leader and a separate Technical Advisor. They cannot be the same person because the technical advisor's role is to support and provide outside expertise to the farmer.
<b>Technical Advisor</b>	Can a husband who primarily runs the farm be the farmer and his wife be the technical advisor?	There is not a specific prohibition against family members serving as technical advisors, but we do not recommend it. Reviewers are looking for a technical advisor who is going to provide outside expertise to the project.
<b>Technical Advisor</b>	Can we have multiple technical advisors? For example, a plant disease lab advisor and 3 experienced farmer advisors--1 with specific plant knowledge, 1 with amendment specific knowledge, 1 with applied research specific knowledge?	You would name one person as your official technical advisor, and you can add the additional people as collaborators. Take a look at the project team section in the call for proposals.
<b>Technical Advisor</b>	Do technical advisors need to be free of cost or can they be reimbursed from the grant?	Yes, technical advisors can be reimbursed for their work on the project. This cost is usually included in the "Consultants, Speakers, and Services" section of the budget template.
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	Can we talk to someone in SARE about our project proposal to see if it's a good fit for this grant?	If you just want a quick check on if your idea is eligible, you can contact the grant administrator. For proposal development help, request technical assistance by November 11th: <a href="https://forms.gle/3zBat9neLG5C2ocD6">https://forms.gle/3zBat9neLG5C2ocD6</a>
<b>Writing Your Proposal</b>	We have been collecting data for 1-2 years already. How do we incorporate this in the proposal?	You can include this in the context section. You will want to show your preliminary work, demonstrate the need for the work, and show how your project will grow on that existing work.
<b>Writing Your Proposal</b>	How do we verify farmer participation at education activities?	You don't need to record sensitive information about attendees (like names or addresses), but you will want to record the total number of farmers and the total number of other types of participants.

<p><b>Writing Your Proposal</b></p>	<p>My project is about disseminating climate-friendly practices. How can I present this work?</p>	<p>We fund projects that directly impact farmers and meet our legislative priorities. We recommend using neutral language and focusing how your work would lead to on-farm changes. Check out this webinar for more info: <a href="https://northeast.sare.org/news/new-frontiers-recording/">https://northeast.sare.org/news/new-frontiers-recording/</a> . This session does a deep dive in how language is shifting in response to legislative priorities.</p>
<p><b>Writing Your Proposal</b></p>	<p>If we have an education-focused grant, do we need to be the experts? Or can the application help fund bringing in an expert to teach me and my neighbors about a solution to a shared problem?</p>	<p>Yes, this could be an acceptable project idea. You would definitely want to have the experts identified in your proposal and make a plan of work regarding how the education would happen (zoom, in-person demonstrations, etc.) You (the farmer) do need to be the person leading the project, so while the experts are providing the education, you want to be taking the active role in organizing and conducting the project.</p>
<p><b>Writing Your Proposal</b></p>	<p>I'm not an academic researcher. Can I conduct research as part of my project?</p>	<p>This program is for on-farm research, so we expect it to be conducted by non-academics. We want it to be applicable to your farm and others, while still following basic research methods. See this guide for conducting on farm research: <a href="https://sare.org/resources/how-to-conduct-research-on-your-farm-or-ranch/?tid=3">https://sare.org/resources/how-to-conduct-research-on-your-farm-or-ranch/?tid=3</a></p>