



Graduate Student Research Grant Call for Proposals (CFP) Packet

Proposal Due Date: Tuesday, September 29, 2026, 4:00 pm ET
Proposals must be submitted online at: projects.sare.org

Questions?

Visit our website at <https://northeastsare.org/GraduateStudentGrant>. For questions about this Call for Proposals, contact Jane Keir at: northeast-gs@sare.org or 802-656-7652.

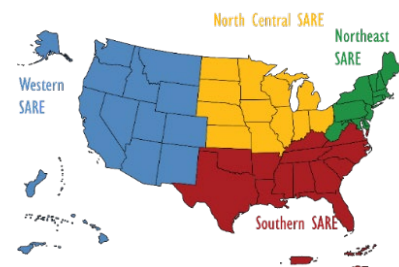
About Northeast SARE

The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program offers competitive grants to farmers, educators, service providers, researchers, nonprofit staff, graduate students and others to address key issues affecting the sustainability of agriculture throughout our region. Northeast SARE is one of four regional SARE programs funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

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;
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.



Northeast SARE

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Northeast SARE, one of four regional SARE programs, is hosted by the University of Vermont and is funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Northeast SARE 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.



IMPORTANT NOTE TO APPLICANTS

We highly encourage research that has high farmer impact, is replicable/adaptable and innovative.

Northeast SARE is one of four regional SARE programs funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The USDA, to the extent permitted by law, will no longer make grants or otherwise fund programs or activities that improperly discriminate based on race or sex, including discrimination in the name of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies. Instead, USDA will prioritize merit and efficiency. USDA recognizes programs and initiatives will have the greatest impact when these programs and initiatives put American farmers, ranchers, and foresters first by:

- solving the most pressing challenges they face;
- protecting America's food, fuel, and fiber supply to enhance national security;
- supporting production of healthy and safe food for consumers;
- expanding and developing domestic markets;
- training the next generation of agriculturalists;
- fuel innovation to keep American farmers at the forefront of productivity.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is committed to advancing these principles and encourages applicants to actively engage farmers, ranchers, and foresters when applying for funding opportunities to ensure relevancy and adherence to them. NIFA also encourages agricultural leaders to engage in the peer review panel process to ensure American producers are better served through research, education, and extension activities.

Projects submitted under this CFP should align with [USDA Secretary's Memorandum 1078- 020](#) Directive on Departmental Research and Development Priorities to:

- increase profitability of farmers and ranchers;
- expand markets and create new uses of U.S. Agricultural Products;
- protect the integrity of American agriculture from invasive species;
- Promote soil health to regenerate long-term productivity of land;
- Improve human health through precision nutrition and food quality.

In summary, proposals submitted to this program must be in alignment with current administration priorities (i.e, Executive Orders—<https://www.federalregister.gov/presidential-documents/executive-orders>; USDA Research Priorities—<https://www.usda.gov/memos>). We are unable to fund any proposals where the identity of a particular person and/or community is the key beneficiary. We encourage you to focus on projects that have high farmer impact and can be generally adapted by a high percentage of farmers in the Northeast. We also cannot fund projects focused on climate change, but can fund projects focusing on environmental work providing direct or indirect benefits to farmers.

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PART I: At a Glance

Project type	Graduate Student grant projects led by graduate students that address key issues in sustainable agriculture. Projects should show relevance to farmers and potential to improve sustainability, resilience, and viability in the Northeast.
Geographic area	Northeast SARE grants must engage communities in the Northeast USA, which includes the following areas: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Vermont, and Washington, D.C.
Project team requirements	1. The applicant, who is the graduate student and project leader. 2. A faculty advisor who will serve as the principal investigator (PI) on the grant and will advise the project leader.
Grant amount and total allocation	Up to \$30,000 per grant. A total of \$750,000 has been allocated for this cycle.
Success rate	30% based on historic data.
Project period	January 1, 2027 – November 30, 2029. Typical project length is 1-2 years. Projects must be completed no later than November 30, 2029.
Funding	This grant is reimbursement based; you must spend money to receive the grant funds. Northeast SARE grants do not require or encourage any matching funds and can be used as match funds for non-federal grant programs.
Required reporting of funded projects	Annual progress report each year of the grant, plus a final report within 60 days of the end of the project.

PART 2: Grant Timeline

Q&A Sessions for Inquiring Applicants

Northeast SARE staff will be hosting 4 Q&A sessions. Registration is available at <https://northeast.sare.org/GraduateStudentQA> where all session recordings and questions will be posted.

- Tuesday, September 1, 2026 from noon – 1pm ET
- Tuesday, September 8, 2026 from noon – 1pm ET
- Tuesday, September 15, 2026 from noon – 1pm ET
- Tuesday, September 22, 2026 from noon – 1pm ET

Suggested date to submit accommodations requests. To

make a request, contact northeast-gs@sare.org September 8, 2026, 5 p.m. ET

Proposal submission deadline Tuesday, September 29, 2026, 4 p.m. ET

Final award decisions announced to applicants December 2026

New grantee orientation meetings January 2027

PART 3: Grant Overview & Eligibility

This part contains several sections:

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Overview

The Northeast SARE Graduate Student Grant program supports applied research projects that advance sustainable agriculture in the Northeast. These grants are designed to help graduate students develop grant writing and project management skills, while supporting research and outreach implementation, and addressing real-world challenges faced by farmers and food systems.

Projects funded through this program must demonstrate relevance to farmer needs and contribute to one or more of Northeast SARE's legislative priorities (described above). Graduate Student Grant projects should build on existing knowledge while exploring new ideas or adaptations (innovation) that have the potential to benefit farmers and food systems. Proposals must include outreach activities that share findings beyond the research team, ensuring that results are accessible and actionable for agricultural communities.

Projects must be led by a graduate student having completed their first term (semester, trimester, quarter etc) at an accredited institution and include a faculty advisor. The work proposed should be clearly defined as part of the student's research effort, even if connected to a larger project.

All Northeast SARE projects must explore one or more of the sustainable agriculture themes of the **Northeast SARE outcome statement:**

Northeast agricultural communities honor the holistic connection among land, water, air, and all living beings. Agriculture in the Northeast is regenerative so that all farmers and farm employees can steward resources to ensure sustainability, resilience, economic viability, and a high quality of life.

This program encourages innovative solutions to challenges in farming and food systems in the Northeast USA, including but not limited to the areas of:

- Marketing and business
- Crop production
- Raising livestock
- Aquaculture
- Economic viability
- Community wellbeing
- Ecological knowledge
- Social science
- And more

This program does not support:

- Educational programs for the general public
- Food donation efforts
- General public awareness campaigns about agriculture and nutrition
- Community or school gardening initiatives

Eligibility

Project Team

The project team must include the following.

- The Graduate Student, as the applicant and project lead
- A Faculty advisor
- A host organization / institution
- Optional collaborators

Graduate Student Applicant Eligibility

The Graduate Student (Applicant and Project Leader) must:

- Be enrolled as a graduate student and be actively taking graduate-level courses at an accredited college, university, or veterinary school who is proposing to conduct research in the Northeast region.
- Have completed at least one term (semesters, trimester, quarter etc) in the above program
- Only submit one Northeast SARE Graduate Student Research grant proposal per year
- Receive only one Northeast SARE Graduate Student Grant over the course of their degree
- Be committed to the entire length of the project and submit annual and final reports when due.

Faculty Advisor Eligibility

The Faculty Advisor must be housed at the same institution as the Graduate Student Applicant and must be able to sign and commit to a contract with Northeast SARE.

Organization Eligibility

The Faculty Advisor must be housed at the same institution as the Graduate Student Applicant, and must be housed at an organization that:

- Can sign and commit to a contract with Northeast SARE
- Has enough funds to cover at least the first two months of project expenses. Northeast SARE grants are reimbursement-based. Advance payments are not possible. Reimbursements can be made as frequently as monthly. The reimbursement from the first month can be used toward future month's expenses.
- Can register in [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov) to get a required Unique Entity Identifier, if your project is awarded.
- Will respond promptly to communications from Northeast SARE.
- Is able to implement the project as outlined in the proposal
- Can guarantee that annual and final reports will be submitted when due, as well as invoices in order to receive reimbursement.

Location Eligibility

Project activities must take place in the Northeast region of the US, described in part 1. Applicants and host organizations may be located outside of the Northeast region.

Ineligibility

Past SARE grant recipients with unfulfilled reporting requirements cannot apply (for example, no final project report was filed). Current grant recipients are eligible to apply as long as they are up to date on their project reporting (for example, annual and/or final reports are filed on time).

If you have received other grant funding to support your project, you cannot receive funding to support the same project activities from Northeast SARE.

Members of the Northeast SARE Administrative Council, SARE staff, and SARE State Coordinators are not permitted to be funded or named in proposals.

Research Requirements: IRB/IACUC

Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)

For projects containing research, Northeast SARE has specific IRB and IACUC Research Policies to ensure compliance with ethical research standards. You must clearly state your understanding of Northeast SARE's requirements by indicating the status of your research regarding vertebrate animals and human subjects in the Grant Commitment Form.

In the submission of your proposal, you agree that you understand any funded project involving research with vertebrate animals or human subjects (all youth research requires a full IRB review) must have current, approved IACUC and/or IRB documentation on file with Northeast SARE before grant funds can be used for research. Northeast SARE may request this documentation, including proof of exemption, at any time; failure to supply it will suspend or forfeit award funds.

If required IACUC / IRB approvals are not secured, you may not proceed with those activities. Because these activities are integral to the project, non-compliance will place the entire grant in default and may lead Northeast SARE to terminate the award and close the project early.

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 is typically someone in your sponsored programs or grants office.

Project Leader (Graduate Student)

The Graduate Student applicant will be the project leader if funded. 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 a student at the same organization as the project's Faculty Advisor, and Authorized Official.

Faculty Advisor

A faculty advisor will be named the Principal Investigator of the awarded grant. Faculty advisors must endorse the proposal, oversee the research, and must ensure the project's budgeted expenditures are acceptable. Their approval must be confirmed by setting up an account in projects.sare.org, and being linked to the project proposal.

Project Team/Collaborators

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. At minimum, this must include the Graduate Student and Faculty Advisor.

Farmers may be engaged in the project but are not required. To be considered a commercial farmer, they should meet [Northeast SARE's Definition of a Farm](#). Below are some examples of ways farmers may engage in the project:

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

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

Budget categories are described in [Appendix C](#). The appendix will provide detailed support on common budget expenses, which categories they should be classified as, and tips and directions on how to write these into your budget.

Public Domain

Proposals and reviews are kept confidential, shared only among Northeast SARE staff, Administrative Council members, and grant program reviewers. However, Northeast SARE, as a USDA NIFA program, is committed to public accessibility of results of funded projects; therefore, funded proposal text and funded project reports will be in the public domain.

Accommodation Requests

Northeast SARE is committed to accessibility for all eligible applicants. We encourage you to reach out to us regarding any challenges you experience as you plan and submit your proposal. To do so or to specifically request a disability-related accommodation, please contact Northeast SARE's Graduate Student Grant Administrator, Jane Keir, at 802-656-7652 or northeast-gs@sare.org.

If possible, please make your accommodation request at least three weeks prior to the proposal deadline. Northeast SARE will do our best to address requests made with less notice but may not have the resources to do so.

Proposals include required and optional attachments in Microsoft Excel and Adobe Acrobat formats. If you don't have access to Microsoft Excel, you may open and edit the budget template in Google Sheets. Please contact northeast-gs@sare.org if you encounter any difficulties.

Evaluation/Scoring

Proposals are reviewed through a multi-step process to ensure fairness and alignment with Northeast SARE's priorities:

1. **Initial Review Panels** - Independent panels (comprised of farmers, researchers, nonprofit staff, and agricultural service providers) evaluate each proposal through a single blind review process using a detailed scoring rubric. Each question and the overall proposal are scored based on specific criteria, including alignment with graduate student grant program goals.
2. **Oversight Review Panel** - Top-ranked proposals from the initial review are forwarded to an oversight panel. This group ensures compliance with current USDA and NIFA priorities (provided above).
3. **Final Funding Decisions** - The final slate of proposals is submitted to the Northeast SARE Administrative Council, who makes the final funding decisions.

PART 4: Proposal Questions and Instructions

This part contains four sections, including instructions and proposal questions.

1. [General Instructions to Applicants](#)
2. [Project Information](#)
3. [Proposal Overview](#)
4. [Graduate Student Information](#)
5. [Proposal Questions](#)
6. [Host Organization](#)

Within each section, you will see the categories of questions and number of questions per category. Please use this as a checklist to ensure you have completed your full application.

SECTION I: General Instructions to Applicants

To submit your proposal, go to

<https://projects.sare.org/>.

Some applicants find it helpful to type responses directly in the [Word version](#) of this call for proposals, and then copy-paste into the Grant Management System (GMS) when submitting their proposals.

Tip! Look at previous grant awards. 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.

Each question in the application includes specific guidance. In addition, keep the following in mind as you complete your proposal:

- How each category and/or question is reviewed is described in the reviewer rubric, [Appendix D](#).
- 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.
- 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.
- Use the "Add Media" button to insert images or upload a PDF or spreadsheet.
- Be sure to cite references to other studies. 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](#).
- Allowable file types for uploads include PDFs, images, and Excel spreadsheets. Specific questions may require a particular format. All files must be unprotected and accessible.
- You may not exceed the stated word limits, and longer responses are not viewed more favorably; Clear, concise answers are encouraged.
- 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 currently compensates farmers who serve on its Administrative Council and review teams at a rate of \$54.40/hour.*

SECTION 2: Project Information

The questions in Sections 2 - 4 have no review criteria, and these sections are not scored by reviewers.

Title: The maximum length is 150 characters (about 35 words or less). Please use title case. Choose a title that lets reviewers know what your project is about.

Project Description: This description will be posted in the public Northeast SARE database if the project is funded. Limit of 300 characters.

Applicant: The name of the person who starts the proposal in the online system is automatically entered as the Applicant. This typically is the Graduate Student. If your organization requires an organizational official to submit the application, then they would instead be the Applicant. To do this, they will need to set up a projects.sare.org profile and start the application. The applicant can give the project leader and/or an additional editor permission to submit the application. Otherwise, the applicant must submit the application.

Graduate Student: If the Graduate Student and the Applicant are the same, your information will be automatically populated. If the Applicant is not the Graduate Student, the Graduate Student will need to set up a profile with projects.sare.org, and the Applicant will need to add them to the proposal.

Faculty Advisor: The Faculty Advisor must have a profile in projects.sare.org. Since the applicant is not the Faculty Advisor, select “change” and “no” to the question, “Will [your name] be the project's Faculty Advisor?” Here, you will enter your Faculty Advisor’s email address that is attached to their projects.sare.org profile. When you type the email in, if they have already made a profile, this information will auto populate, and you can select “Save”.

If their email does not bring up their profile, troubleshoot by first verifying your Faculty Advisor does have a profile and the correct email used. If they do not have an account, they must create one at <https://projects.sare.org/> before the proposal can be submitted.

Additional Editor: The Applicant may give editing access to one additional person. The person must have an existing projects.sare.org account. Once you have added someone, a checkbox will appear allowing you to give them permission to submit the proposal on your behalf.

SECTION 3: Proposal Overview

Primary State: Select the state where the majority of work will be carried out, i.e., the primary location of the grant activities. Usually this is the home state of the project leader.

Optional: Geographic Scope: If this project will take place in more than just the primary state, list all the states where this project will take place.

Primary Commodities, Primary Practices, and Primary Benefits and Impacts: For each section (Commodities, Practices, and Benefits & Impacts), choose only the top 2-3 options that best represent your project's primary focus areas. Do not select categories simply because they might be indirectly impacted or mentioned in your proposal. These selections are used for project classification and data aggregation, so it is important that they reflect the core focus of your work.

- **Commodities:** projects.sare.org/commodities/
If your project is not commodity-specific, select "Does not apply to specific commodities".
- **Practices:** projects.sare.org/practices/
- **Benefits and Impacts:** projects.sare.org/benefits-and-impacts/

Project Start Date

Choose a start date from the calendar pop-up. The earliest possible start date is January 1, 2027.

Project End Date

Choose an end date from the calendar pop-up. Projects must be completed no later than November 30, 2029.

SECTION 4: Graduate Student Information

Please provide the following information.

- How do you prefer to be called? (Optional)
- Graduate Student Degree Sought
- College Program/Department
- Expected Date of Graduation

SECTION 5: Proposal Questions

This section contains five categories of questions that align with the criteria used in the reviewer rubric. Each category's weight and the number of questions it contains are shown below:

(1) Comprehensive Review – 15% of total score

- a. Legislation (5%)
- b. Innovation (5%)
- c. Impact (5%)

(2) Context – 25% of total score

- a. Project Summary (450-word limit)
- b. Introduction (1200-word limit)

- c. Previous Work *(500-word limit)*
- d. Citation List *(no word limit)*
- (3) Plan of work – 25% of total score**
 - a. Project Objectives *(400-word limit)*
 - b. Project Activities *(2000-word limit)*
 - c. Timeline *(500-word limit)*
 - d. Optional: Other Relevant Research Information *(Upload)*
- (4) Outreach and Impact – 15% of total score**
 - a. Outreach and Dissemination *(500-word limit)*
 - b. Impact *(500-word limit)*
- (5) Project Team – 10% of total score**
 - a. Project Team *(400-word limit)*
 - b. Letters of Commitment (file upload)
- (6) Budget – 10% of total score**
 - a. Spreadsheet / Budget Justification and Narrative Template *(Upload)*
 - b. *Optional:* Other Funding Sources *(200-word limit)*
 - c. Total Direct Costs *(Data entry into GMS)*
 - d. Total Indirect Costs *(Data entry into GMS)*
 - e. Total SARE Request *(Data entry into GMS)*

CRITERION 1: Comprehensive Review – 15% of total score

All project proposals must demonstrate alignment with Northeast SARE priorities. Reviewers will evaluate three core competencies throughout your proposal as ‘comprehensive review’. These are defined in the rubric and include:

- 1. LEGISLATION (5%):** Does this project contribute to SARE's legislated priorities? These include: supporting farmers in enhancing profitability, quality of life, and natural resources (soil, water, animals, plants, etc.), and/or improving employment opportunities for American farmers and farm workers.
- 2. INNOVATION (5%):** Is this project innovative by addressing new practices, improving existing practices, or introducing existing practices to a new farmer audience?
 Innovation is defined as the development or adoption of new concepts or ideas and the successful exploration of new ideas. Ideation is the basis of creativity. The process of creative ideation develops new concepts; Innovation applies them. Creativity can only emerge when an innovator takes the idea and puts it into practice. Innovation can also be social and develop and implement novel and effective solutions to meet social and environmental challenges. The results should improve the welfare and well-being of individual farmers and farming communities and reproducible. Within the scope of Northeast SARE, examples can include, but are not limited to:
 - The introduction of a new behavior/practice, one with which farmers are not yet familiar
 - The introduction of an improved or better agricultural behavior/practice, which may not be new, but is an improvement upon what occurred before.

- The opening of a new market that has not been entered previously, whether this market has existed previously.
 - A new source of supply of materials or goods, again irrespective of whether this source already exists or whether it has first to be created.
 - Improved organizational structure and/or capacity.
3. **IMPACT (5%):** Will the project have substantive impact on farmer's ability to steward resources to ensure sustainability, resilience, economic viability, and a high quality of life in the Northeast? Projects having a significant impact/impression on farmers and farming communities is critical. Impact can be economic, social, environmental etc. For example:
- How does the research support farmer/farming community livelihoods?
 - How does the research build strong economies through local and/or regional trade?
 - How does the research improve crop production?

For impact, replicability/adaptability is important. Replicability/adaptability 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 of behavior.

These comprehensive review criteria guide the overall evaluation of your proposal and should be evident across multiple sections, not just addressed in isolation.

CRITERION 2: Context — 25% of total score

1. Project Summary (450-word limit)

This is a standalone summary of the project that will be made public if the project is funded. It should briefly describe:

- The issue you want to address
- A proposed solution to address the issue (objectives)
- How you will address the issue (methods)
- How you will share the results (outreach)

Since this abstract is the first thing reviewers will see, take some time to make it clear, concise and compelling.

2. Introduction (1200-word limit).

Tell the story of your project. Include:

- ✓ Description of the issue being addressed and why it is important.
- ✓ How your project will address the issue.
- ✓ How the project connects to the needs and interests of farmers in the Northeast.
- ✓ How the project aligns with SARE's outcome statement (on page 5) and legislative priorities (on page 1).

3. Previous Work (500-word limit)

What efforts have been made by others to solve the problem or use this opportunity? This section is the place to show reviewers how the current body of knowledge provides a foundation for your research question. Address the following:

- ✓ Describe the current knowledge and practice on this topic and how your project builds on existing efforts.
- ✓ If the practice is known but has not been applied in your community, explain how you will test what has worked elsewhere or make adaptations for your area.

4. Citation List (no word limit)

Provide a list of citations referenced in your proposal using the style/format of your choosing. Cite the source every time you incorporate research, words, ideas, data, or information that is not your own.

CRITERION 3: Plan of Work — 25% of total score

1. Project Objective(s) (400-word limit)

Clearly state the objective(s) of your project – an objective is a statement in specific and measurable terms that describes what you intend to achieve or the question you seek to answer. Write your project objective using the following four required components.

1. State the hypothesis(es) or research question(s) to be tested or evaluated
2. The research to be conducted in your project
3. The knowledge expected to be generated by that research
4. The benefit farmers in the Northeast are expected to have if adopting the approach

2. Project Activities (2,000-word limit)

Describe the core activities of your project. The types of activities should be based on your project's objectives.

- ✓ As a general guide, provide the following types of information depending on your project's focus:
 - a. **For research activities**, outline the research questions or objectives. Provide a description of the **research method(s)** used to complete each of the objectives in your proposal. Describe your experimental design, research methods (treatments or populations, controls, etc.), data collection and analysis protocols (types of data to be collected, how, and with what controls), and how findings will be used to inform or improve farming practices.
 - b. **For education activities**, identify the specific information that will be shared and the methods you will use to deliver it.
 - c. **For community engagement activities**, describe how the agricultural community(ies) will be engaged and what content or practices will be shared.
- ✓ **Anticipated results** – Describe the expected outcomes or anticipated results of your project.

- ✓ **Measures of success** – Explain how you will assess if your project is successful.

3. Timeline (500-word limit)

Provide a clear timeline of major activities throughout the project period, including dissemination of results. Include who is responsible for each activity.

Tip: Use a table such as:

Time Period	Activity	Personnel involved/time allotted
August - September, 2026	Meet with partner farmer and set up plots	<i>Person 1</i> , project leader; <i>Person 2</i> , farmer. Est. 32 hours per person.
March 2027, first 2 weeks	Prepare beds and plant seeds for control and treatments	<i>Person 2</i> and one assistant., 24 hours per person.
March - August 2027	Take measurements weekly	<i>Person 1</i> , 2 hours /week for 18 weeks
September - October	Analyze results, produce recommendations guide, and write up report	<i>Person 1</i> , 60 hrs
October	Present results at Farmer conference	<i>Person 1</i> , 8 hrs

4. Optional: Other Relevant Research Information (Upload)

This optional section is to provide visual or supplementary materials that clarify your research approach. Examples include plot plans, sampling plans, experiment diagrams, or interview guides (maximum 5 pages total).

Use the "Add a file" button to upload a PDF, images or spreadsheet.

CRITERION 4: Outreach and Impact – 15% of total score

1. Outreach and Dissemination (500-word limit)

Demonstrate how research findings will reach and benefit target farmers. Clearly state your dissemination methods and specific outreach publications, events, partners, or resources you will utilize.

2. Impact (500-word limit)

Briefly describe how sharing your project could potentially impact the agricultural community. Include:

- ✓ How it will benefit each target audience.
- ✓ The documentation you will collect to assess project impact - both quantitative and qualitative documentation is welcome.

CRITERION 5: Project Team — 10% of total score

1. Project Team (400-word limit)

Demonstrate adequate expertise and capacity for project implementation by describing your project team. This must be, at minimum, the Graduate Student and Faculty Advisor. Clearly state each team member's name and role, their relevant experiences and skills, and relationships with farmers. Identify positions or roles to be hired with required qualifications if team members are not yet identified.

Describe how goals are set and decisions are made within your project team to ensure a successful project. If applicable, explain how your team uses regular check-ins or feedback mechanisms to adjust strategies, improve project outcomes, or respond to unexpected challenges.

2. Letters of Commitment (Upload)

Please submit a letter of Commitment written by any key individuals (that are not yourself and faculty advisor) or collaborators on the project. This includes farmers collaborating on your research. Letters should include:

- ✓ What is their experience and knowledge as related to the project?
- ✓ What is their role in the project?
- ✓ What is their commitment to the project?

Use the "Add a File" button to insert your uploads one at a time. Allowable file types for this question are PDFs and/or images.

CRITERION 6: Budget — 10% of total score

To satisfy the budget requirements, you must upload a completed budget justification and narrative spreadsheet and enter the dollar amounts into the online proposal into the prompted text fields (as reflected in #3-5 below). More information is provided in [Appendix C](#).

1. Spreadsheet / Budget Justification and Narrative Template (Upload)

Use the Northeast SARE provided Budget Justification and Narrative Template (Excel spreadsheet) which is available at: <https://northeast.sare.org/FullProposalBudget>.

- ✓ Clearly describe the expenses you are asking Northeast SARE to fund, and why these expenses are necessary to the project.
- ✓ Calculate costs as precisely as possible to show reviewers that you have thought through all the expenses for the project.

If you don't have access to Microsoft Excel, you may open and edit the template in Google Sheets. Please contact northeast-gs@sare.org if you encounter any difficulties.

If your proposal includes any sub-awards, the applicant must submit a Budget Justification and Narrative Template for each sub-awardee. For more information about what a subaward is please see [Appendix C](#).

Upload the completed budget as an Excel file (.xlsx) to your online proposal submission.

Tips on using the Northeast SARE provided Budget Justification and Narrative Template (Excel spreadsheet):
The completed budget must be uploaded as an Excel file (.xlsx) to your online proposal submission.
Most spreadsheet software (such as Google sheets) can download or save files in .xlsx format

2. Optional: Other Funding Sources (200-word limit)

This optional section is used to support reviewer understanding of your project's budget to assess its reasonability. For example, describing how you will obtain other resources necessary to the project's success that may not be requested in your budget to Northeast SARE.

- ✓ If other resources are necessary for the success of the project, how will they be provided?
- ✗ Matching funds are not required for SARE grants. If your organization is providing facilities, resources, or significant in-kind contributions to the project, these are best described here and not in the budget justification.

3. Total Direct Costs

- ✓ Enter the total direct dollar amount requested (including cents) from the Budget Justification and Narrative Template ("Total Direct Costs").

Direct costs are all the expenses that are specific to the project and would not be needed if the project was not funded.

4. Total Indirect Costs

- ✓ Enter the total indirect dollar amount requested (including cents) from the Budget Justification and Narrative Template ("Total Indirect Costs").

Indirect costs are also known as "overhead" or "facilities and administration" costs. For more information about what indirect is please see [Appendix C](#).

5. Total SARE Request

Enter the total dollar amount requested (including cents) from the Budget Justification and Narrative Template ("Total SARE Request").

The total indirect plus total direct costs requested above should add up to this number.

SECTION 6: HOST ORGANIZATION

This section has 4 required questions, one of which is a mandatory upload. This section is not scored by reviewers, and there are no review criteria.

1. Authorized Official Contact Information

Provide the name and contact information of the authorized official for the organization who will serve as fiscal agent for the project.

2. FDP Clearinghouse Information

Please respond to the question, “Is this organization registered in the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) Expanded Clearinghouse?”

The FDP Clearinghouse is a publicly available website that provides organization profiles with information that is helpful in creating a grant contract. Being registered is NOT required. A list of participating organizations can be found at: fdpclearinghouse.org/organizations.

3. Grant Commitment Form (file upload)

This form certifies that you have received approval from an authorized official at your organization.

Download the Grant Commitment Form at:

<https://northeast.sare.org/GraduateStudentCommitment>

Completed Grant Commitment Forms are required from all organizations that receive SARE funds under subawards. If your project includes subawards please be sure to work with your project partners to receive their completed (and signed) Grant Commitment Forms well in advance of the deadline. If an organization or partner will not receive a subaward, no Grant Commitment Form is required.

- ✓ The project leader and faculty advisor must both sign.
- ✓ An authorized official at your organization must sign.
- ✓ Please ensure uploaded files are unprotected and accessible.
- ✓ Upload a PDF or image copy of the completed, signed Grant Commitment Form.

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.

4. IACUC/IRB

Does this project involve human subjects research?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Does this project involve research with vertebrate animals?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If I checked yes to either of the above, I understand that I will be required to obtain an IRB or IACUC determination and submit evidence of the results of that process to Northeast SARE, prior to any funds being provided for the proposed research.

PART 5: Appendices

You may access the appendices referenced, using the links below:

[Appendix A: Preparing and Submitting your Proposal](#)

[Appendix B: Expectations For Funded Proposals](#)

[Appendix C: Budget Guidance — Explanation of Expense Categories and Examples
Budget Template](#)

[Reviewer Rubric for Evaluating Graduate Student Research Grant Proposals](#)

All links, templates, and appendices for Grant Program Materials
can be found at: northeast.sare.org/grants/get-a-grant