



## Research & Education Grant Program

*2025 Application Open / 2026 Award*

# Research & Education Call for Proposals (CFP) Packet

Proposal Due Date: Monday, February 2, 2026, 5:00 pm ET  
Proposals must be submitted online at: [projects.sare.org](https://projects.sare.org)

## Questions?

Visit our website at <https://northeastsare.org/ResearchEducationGrant>. For questions about this Call for Proposals, contact Heather Omand at: [northeast-re@sare.org](mailto:northeast-re@sare.org) or 802-656-7654.

All links, templates, and appendices for Large Grant Program Materials, including registration for live Q&A sessions can be found at: [northeastsare.org/LargeGrantCFP](https://northeastsare.org/LargeGrantCFP)

## 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.

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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.



## 2026 Proposal Notes

Northeast SARE was unable to release our Research & Education Call for Proposals (CFP) on our traditional timeline. To release this CFP, we adjusted our application and review process to meet organizational deadlines.

1. There is no pre-proposal application. Applicants will directly submit a full proposal.
2. We simplified the CFP and proposal questions to the best of our ability to support the shortened turnaround requested of applicants.
3. We adjusted the review process, including introducing a scoring rubric. These changes are referenced throughout the CFP, and the rubric is available in [Appendix D](#).

### Q&A Sessions for Inquiring Applicants

Northeast SARE staff will be hosting 3 Q&A sessions on the four large grant programs: Farming Community, Professional Development, Research & Education, and Research for Novel Approaches. Registration is available at [northeast.sare.org/largegrant](https://northeast.sare.org/largegrant) where all session recording and questions will be posted.

- Monday, December 8, 2025 from noon – 1pm EST
- Wednesday, January 7, 2026 from 10am – 11am EST
- Wednesday January 14, 2026 from 4pm – 5pm EST

## Table of Contents

This proposal packet contains several parts:

- (1) [At a Glance](#)
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## PART I: At a Glance

Project type	Projects that result in farmer behavior or practice change leading to greater sustainability. An education program is required and farmer engagement is required. Applied research in alignment with educational activities is optional.
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.
Grant amount and total allocation	There is no cap on total grant requests, however, requests typically fall between \$30,000 and \$250,000. A total of \$1,560,000 has been allocated to fund projects this cycle.

Success rate	Historically (with a Pre-proposal process) of those invited, on average about 30-40% of all Research and Education proposals are funded.
Project period	Projects must conclude by November 30, 2029 and the typical project length is 3 years. If awarded, your project will begin after contracting concludes, which is estimated to be June 2026.
Estimated time to complete proposal	Previously, the average time to complete a full proposal was around 50 hours. We have significantly shortened the proposal questions and estimate it will take between 30 and 35 hours to complete your proposal.
Funding	<p>This grant is reimbursement based; you must spend money to receive the grant funds. Please get in touch to inquire as to how small organizations have made this work for them.</p> <p>Northeast SARE grants do not require or encourage any matching funds and can be used as match funds for non-federal grant programs.</p>
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

Suggested date to submit accommodations requests. To make a request, contact <a href="mailto:northeast-large-grant@sare.org">northeast-large-grant@sare.org</a> .....	January 12, 2026, 5 p.m. ET
Full proposal submission deadline.....	Monday, February 2, 2026, 5 p.m. ET
Final award decisions announced to applicants .....	May 2026
New grantee orientation meetings .....	June-July 2026

## PART 3: Grant Overview & Eligibility

This part contains several sections:

1. [Overview](#)
2. [Eligibility](#)
3. [Eligible and Ineligible Expenses](#)
4. [Public Domain](#)
5. [Accommodation Request](#)

### Overview

The purpose of the Research and Education grant program is to invest in education for farmers that leads to changes in farmer behavior, decision-making, and/or practices. These changes must increase the sustainability of farming in the Northeast United States. A Research and Education project can also include an applied research component, related to the educational activities.

- The primary audience are farmers, ranchers, and farm employees (henceforth “farmers”) that meet [Northeast SARE’s Definition of a Farm](#).
- Farmers must be engaged in demonstrating the need for and the design of the project.
- Anyone who works in farming, including farmers, can lead a Research and Education project.

- The education program must be useful to farmers regardless of the results of any optional research component.

This grant program seeks innovative projects that improve existing practices or introduce existing practices to new farmer audiences.

The 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 sustainable so 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 and social sustainability
- Ecological knowledge
- Projects related to climate and/or bioenergy work that provide direct or indirect benefits to farmers, ranchers, and private foresters
- 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

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

### Project Leader Eligibility

The Project Leader can be anyone who works with farmers, including personnel at:

- Nonprofit organizations
- For profit businesses (including farms) that provide agricultural consulting, veterinary services, etc.
- Farms, farmers, farm employees and farming community groups
- Communities committed to building the capacity and resilience of sustainable agriculture
- Colleges and universities
- Cooperative Extension
- Municipalities
- State Departments of Agriculture
- Federal agencies like NRCS

A Project Leader may submit up to one proposal per year to each of the Large Grant Programs: Farming Community, Professional Development, Research & Education, and Research for Novel Approaches. However, a Project Leader may only accept one grant award per year across the four programs.

### **Organization Eligibility**

The Project Leader 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 towards 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 submit annual reports each year of the project, plus a final report within 60 days of the project end date.

### **Location Eligibility**

Project activities must primarily 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 if 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.

### **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.

## 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 Large Grant Manager, Kaitlyn Sirna at 440-336-0594 or [northeast-large-grant@sare.org](mailto:northeast-large-grant@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-large-grant@sare.org](mailto:northeast-large-grant@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 made up of farmers, researchers, nonprofit staff, and agricultural service providers evaluate each proposal. Single blind reviews are conducted using a detailed scoring rubric. Each question and the overall proposal are scored based on specific criteria, including alignment with program goals.
2. **Oversight Review Panel** - Top-ranked proposals from the initial review are forwarded to an oversight panel composed of a subset of reviewers. This group ensures a fair blind review and that proposals meet programmatic requirements, reflect organizational priorities, and comply with eligibility rules.
3. **Final Funding Decisions** - The oversight panel recommends a slate of proposals for funding. This slate is then submitted to the Northeast SARE Administrative Council, which makes the final decisions on which proposals will be funded.

## PART 4: Definitions

This part contains two sections:

1. [Definition of a Farm](#)
2. [People Involved in the Project](#)

### SECTION 1: Definition of a Farm

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

### SECTION 2: 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. 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

#### 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](#).

#### Advisory Committee

An advisory committee is required to provide input on project design and implementation. Members must include at least two farmers and one other advisor to the project. Additional members are allowed.

## PART 5: Proposal Instructions and Questions

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

1. [General Instructions to Applicants](#)
2. [General Information](#)
3. [Proposal Questions](#)
4. [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 1: General Instructions to Applicants

There are many kinds of projects that are eligible for Northeast SARE grant programs. Some project concepts may be eligible 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](https://projects.sare.org/search-projects)) includes funded projects from all four SARE regions and is searchable by state, grant type, project coordinator, and keyword. Northeast Large Grants are coded as follows: Farming Community (CNE), Research & Education (LNE), Professional Development (ENE) and Research for Novel Approaches (LNE-R).*

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, located at the end of this CFP Packet in [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.
- 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 the 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 \$52.93/hour.*

## SECTION 2: General Information

This section has 12 questions which are short answer, fill in, and drop-down menu questions. There are no review criteria, and this section is not scored by reviewers.

**Title:** The maximum length is 150 characters which is about 35 words or less. Please use title case.

**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. The applicant can give the project leader and/or the additional editor permission to submit the application. Otherwise, the applicant must submit the application.

**Project Leader:** Person leading the project and responsible for successful completion of activities described in the application.

**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.

**Primary State:** Select the state where the majority of the 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 3–5 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/](https://projects.sare.org/commodities/)  
If your project is not commodity-specific, select “Does not apply to specific commodities”.

- Practices: [projects.sare.org/practices/](https://projects.sare.org/practices/)
- Benefits and Impacts: [projects.sare.org/benefits-and-impacts/](https://projects.sare.org/benefits-and-impacts/)

## Project Start Date

Choose a start date from the calendar pop-up. The earliest possible start date is anticipated to be June 1, 2026, but delays in the review may impact this by  $\pm 30$  days. You will be notified at the time of award announcements of the start date and when Northeast SARE can begin reimbursement on expenses incurred.

## Project End Date

Choose an end date from the calendar pop-up. Projects must be completed by November 30, 2029.

## SECTION 3: Proposal Questions

This section contains six categories of questions that align with the criteria used in the reviewer rubric. Be sure to answer all parts of each question. Each category's weight and the number of questions it contains are shown below:

### (1) Comprehensive Review – 15% of total score

- Legislation (5%)
- Innovation (5%)
- Impact (5%)

### (2) Context – 25% of total score

- Project Summary (450-word limit)
- Farmer Engagement and Needs (500-word limit)
- Solution and Benefits (500-word limit)
- Previous Work (500-word limit)
- Citation List (no word limit)
- Optional: Farmer Letters of Support (upload)

### (3) Project Team – 15% of total score

- Project Leader (200-word limit)
- Project Team (300-word limit)
- Project Advisory Committee (200-word limit)
- Project Team Commitment (acknowledgement)

### (4) Educational Activities – 20% of total score

- Performance Target (200-word limit)
- Educational Approach (500-word limit)
- Optional: Curriculum/Supporting Document (Upload)
- Milestones (900-word limit)

### (5) Research – 15% of total score

- Research Description (1,200-word limit)
- Optional: Other Relevant Research Information (Upload)

### (6) Budget – 10% of total score

- Spreadsheet / Budget Justification and Narrative Template (Upload)
- 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

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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:
2. 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.
3. **INNOVATION (5%):** Is this project innovative by addressing new practices, improving existing practices, or introducing existing practices to a new farmer audience?
1. **IMPACT (5%):** Will the project have substantive impact on farmer ability to steward resources to ensure sustainability, resilience, economic viability, and a high quality of life in the Northeast?

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

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### 1. Project Summary (450-word limit)

This is a standalone summary of the project that will be made public if the project is funded. The summary has two elements. Include subheadings to identify each element.

- ✓ **Project Focus:** A brief description of the farmers engaged, and need for the project, from the perspective of farmers.
- ✓ **Solution and Approach:** The proposed solution and the approach to engaging farmers to address their needs.

### 2. Farmer Engagement and Needs (500-word limit)

Describe the farmers<sup>1</sup> the project team will engage and their needs. Address the following:

- ✓ Who are the farmers engaged by the project?
- ✓ What specific need will this project address, and why is it a priority for these farmers? How do you know?
- ✓ How have farmers played a role in the project's development?

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<sup>1</sup> Farmers must meet our definition. View Northeast SARE's Definition of a Farm at <https://northeast.sare.org/farmdefinition>.

### 3. Solution and Benefits (500-word limit)

Address the following:

- ✓ What proposed solution(s) will be the focus of the project?
- ✓ How does the solution support farmers to meet their needs?
- ✓ How does the solution contribute to Northeast SARE's outcome statement? (see 'overview')
- ✓ What are the benefits of conducting any proposed research (if relevant)?

The solution must not be contingent on research results. The education component of your project must rely on proven information that can benefit farmers.

### 4. Previous Work (500-word limit)

What efforts have been made by others to address farmer's needs? This section is the place to show reviewers there is a body of knowledge that provides a foundation for the project. It is applicable to projects with and without a research component. 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.

### 5. Citation List (no word limit)

Provide a list of citations referenced in your proposal using the style/format of your choosing.

### 6. Optional: Farmer Letters of Support (Upload)

You have the option to upload a maximum of 5 letters of support from farmers you are partnering with. Letters should include:

- Community role
- Engagement with the project
- Belief in the project's success and community benefit

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 3: Project Team — 15% of total score

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### I. Project Leader or 'PL' (200-word limit)

Clearly state the Project Leader's relevant experiences and skills, their specific role in the project, relationship with the farmers engaged by the project and provide their name, title, and affiliation.

## 2. Project Team (300-word limit)

Demonstrate adequate expertise and capacity for project implementation by describing your project team. Clearly state each team member's name and role, their relevant experiences and skills, relationships with farmers, and identify positions to be hired with required qualifications if team members are not yet identified. Project Team members cannot be advisory committee members.

## 3. Project Advisory Committee (200-word limit)

The committee ensures there is appropriate guidance and oversight from farmers and other experts. Clearly state the name and affiliation of at least two farmers and one other advisor, noting which members are farmers, and confirm no overlap with project team members.

## 4. Project Team Commitment (check box)

- ☐ I certify that every individual named above has agreed to participate in the roles described, and I have completed reasonable due diligence to confirm that commitment. I understand that:
- proposals are reviewed and awards are made based on the qualifications and participation of the team or advisory committee as listed in the application;
  - Northeast SARE may request written proof of each person's commitment at any time;
  - Dropping, substituting, or failing to engage listed team members without prior written approval from Northeast SARE may lead to reduction or forfeiture of award funds, or early termination of the project.

## CRITERION 4: Educational Activities — 20% of total score

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Northeast SARE offers the following resources that may be helpful to you as you develop this section.

- ✓ Guide to Outcome Funding (<http://www.northeastsare.org/outcomefunding>) - Describes outcome funding and provides example performance targets and milestones.
- ✓ Sustainable Agriculture through Sustainable Learning: An Educator's Guide to Best Practices for Adult Learning (<https://www.sare.org/resources/sustainable-agriculture-through-sustainable-learning/>)- Provides information for offering adult education.

### I. Performance Target (100-word limit)

The performance target describes the outcomes farmers will achieve by the end of your project. As succinctly as possible state:

- ✓ What and/or how will farmers change (behaviors, practices, etc.)?
- ✓ How many will do this?
- ✓ What will be the measurable impact of this change by the end of the project?
- ✗ Do not refer to research objectives in the performance target. Research results cannot be guaranteed, so the extent to which participants achieve the performance target must not depend on the findings of proposed research.
- ✗ Do not include educational activities conducted by the project team in the performance target. These should be described in Educational Activities section.

**\*\*Normally a draft verification tool (a survey, spreadsheet, or other tracking tool for verifying the performance target) would be required for this grant application. While we are not requiring it with the application, we will ask all prospective grantees to provide one before awards will be made.**

## **2. Educational Approach (500-word limit)**

Summarize your educational approach so that reviewers have the necessary context for the milestones. Focus on:

- ✓ How will you engage and sustain farmers in your project?
- ✓ What is the educational content and what approaches/methods will you use?
- ✓ How will you evaluate farmer learning and actions? How will you verify that you have achieved your performance target?

## **3. Milestones (900-word limit, suggested limit of 12 milestones, 75-word limit for each milestone)**

Milestones list the sequential project activities that lead to the desired farmer changes. Milestones will only include research activities if farmers participate directly in them as an integral component of their learning experience.

The Performance Target is not a milestone—milestones are the changes or actions that will lead to the Performance Target.

- ✓ For each milestone, select a label that best describes its purpose:
  - Engagement (ex., outreach, recruitment, event participation)
  - Learning (ex., training, knowledge or skill development)
  - Evaluation (ex., data collection, surveys, feedback)
- ✓ Write the milestones sequentially.

Each milestone should include the following elements.

- ✓ Number of participants: A realistic number of farmers (and service providers, if relevant) who will participate.
- ✓ What farmers learn or do.
- ✓ Proposed completion date: If a project activity and resulting participant experience or action will be repeated multiple times during the project, please treat these as a single milestone, describing the pattern of planned occurrence and final completion date of the entire set.
- ✓ How the milestone will be verified.
- ✓ (Optional) Project Team involvement: Include this element in a milestone if relevant--describe how the project team and/or advisory committee will be involved in each milestone.

*The following are examples of milestones for a 2 year project.*

- *Engagement: January 30 (2025 and 2026). 200 farmers learn about the soil health workshop through email newsletters. This will occur each January of the project until the project's end in 2027. This will be tracked by J. Doe (communication specialist) via newsletter open rates.*
- *Learning: June and August 2025, June and August 2026. 50 farmers participate in each soil health workshop (150 individual farmers total--some farmers attend multiple workshops--across 4 workshops) and learn about indicators of soil health and soil health tests. There will be 2 workshops per summer, ending in the summer of 2026. A sign-up sheet will be distributed at each workshop to collect participant contact information for involvement in follow-up focus groups.*

- *Engagement and Evaluation: September 2025 and 2026. Of the 150 farmers who participate in the workshops, 80 participate in at least one annual focus group to support implementation of soil health practices and to plan each year's subsequent workshops to build on participant needs. Evaluation of farmer learning will also occur during annual focus groups. Project Leader, J. Smith will lead focus groups, and a member of the advisory committee will participate each year.*

#### 4. Optional: Curriculum/Supporting Documents (Upload)

- ✓ Upload no more than 5 pages of draft curriculum and/or other types of educational tools to be used in your project here.
- ✗ Do not upload more than 5 total pages- reviewers will not review more than the first 5 pages.

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

### CRITERION 5: Research — 15% of total score

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Research is not a required component of this program. If your project does not include research, you will automatically be given the same score for this section as for the Education Activities section. If your project does include research, you must answer the questions below and reviewers will score your response based on the rubric.

#### 1. Will you conduct research as part of your project? Please answer either yes or no.

- If you answer no to this question, **do not enter** any text in the following questions in this section; move on to the **Budget** section.
  - Any text entered in this section will not be reviewed if you are not conducting research as part of your project.
- If you select yes, your project includes research that is related and complementary to the education program.

#### 2. Research Description (1,200-word limit)

Provide a comprehensive overview of your research hypothesis, methodology and potential farm-level impact. Clearly demonstrate how research activities relate to and will contribute to farmer education, using appropriate subheadings below based on research type. You may include additional optional information describing other relevant features of the proposed research.

##### For field and laboratory research:

- ✓ **Treatments:** Proposed treatments with rationale for selection
- ✓ **Methods:** Experimental design, experimental unit size, and treatment application
- ✓ **Data Collection:** Data to be collected and collection protocols
- ✓ **Data Analysis and Presentation of Results:** Statistical methods to be used and the forms in which results will be presented. Describe plans for peer-reviewed publication during or after the project

##### For social science research:

- ✓ **Study Population(s):** with rationale for selection
- ✓ **Methods:** Experimental design, methods and instruments to be used
- ✓ **Data Collection:** Data to be collected and collection protocols
- ✓ **Data Analysis and Presentation of Results:** Statistical methods to be used and the forms in which results will be presented. Describe plans for peer-reviewed publication during or after the project and/or social science research.

### 3. Optional: Other Relevant Research Information (Upload)

- ✓ You may upload materials that clarify the research plan, such as a plot plan or sampling plan, experiment diagram, outline of focus group or interview guide, etc.
- ✗ Do not upload more than 5 total pages of other research information.

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

## CRITERION 6: Budget — 10% of total score

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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

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.

### 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>.

If you don't have access to Microsoft Excel, you may open and edit the template in Google Sheets. Please contact [northeast-large-grant@sare.org](mailto:northeast-large-grant@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 [section 3j in Appendix C](#).

### 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 [section 4 in 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 4: HOST ORGANIZATION

This section has 3 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](http://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 Large Grant Commitment Form at: [www.northeastsare.org/largegrantcommitment](http://www.northeastsare.org/largegrantcommitment)

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 must 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.

## **PART 6: 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](#)

[Appendix D: Reviewer Rubric for Research & Education Proposals](#)

All links, templates, and appendices for Large Grant Program Materials  
can be found at: [northeastsare.org/LargeGrantCFP](https://northeastsare.org/LargeGrantCFP)