



Sabbatical Research and Education Grant Program 2024 Call for Proposals

Submission Deadline: November 21, 2023, 12:00pm (noon) MST

Submit online at www.projects.sare.org

Project team: Host Researcher, Sabbatical Researcher, and at least one Producer

Project funding limit: \$75,000

Project time limit: one (1) year

Funding decisions announced: March 2024

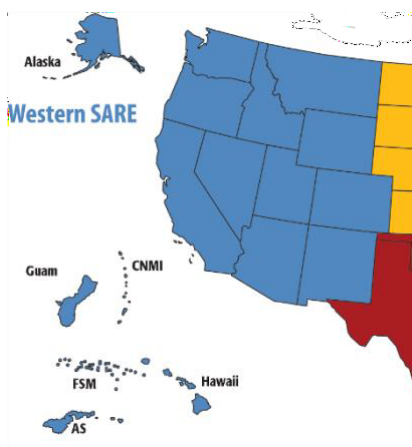
Contact: wsare-sab@sare.org

Sabbatical Research and Education Grant Program

Western SARE funds proposals that present innovative research and educational outreach for advancing sustainable agriculture practices in the Western U.S. Sabbatical projects must contain both research and education components by bringing together a team of local partners (researchers, students, educators, and producers) along with a Sabbatical researcher to develop research, education, and human capacity at the Sabbatical Host Institution location. Sabbatical grants must address local research and education needs with special emphasis on underserved communities, understudied geographic locations, and/or unexplored topics. The goal of this grant program is to obtain results that are applicable to agricultural production, sustain and improve the environmental quality and natural resources upon which agriculture depends, improve the profitability of agricultural producers and associated businesses, and enhance the quality of life of agricultural communities.

Table of Contents:

About Western SARE.....	2
Program Overview	3
Proposal Instructions	3
Review Process	15
Selected Proposals.....	15
How to Apply.....	18
Resources.....	19



The Western Region

Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Micronesia, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

Western SARE
Montana State University
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Bozeman, MT 59717-2840
wsare@montana.edu

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



National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

About Western SARE

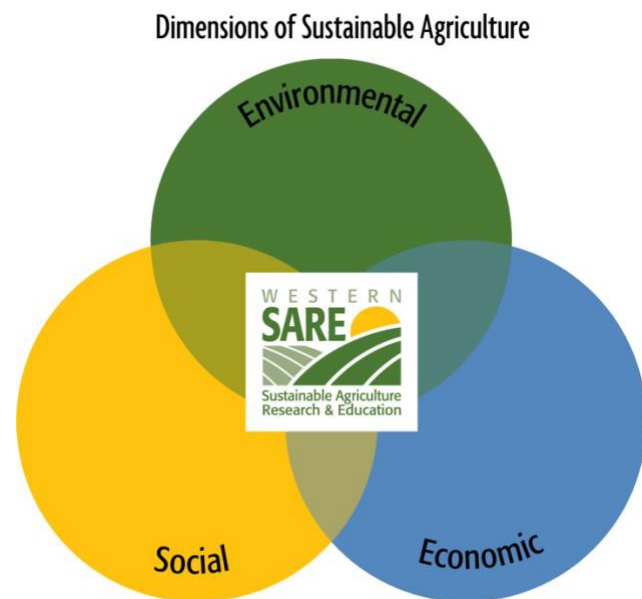
The Western SARE Administrative Council funds grant proposals that include creative and innovative off- and on-farm/ranch research and educational outreach to advance Western SARE goals. All Western SARE projects ***must contain both research and education components.***

What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Congress has defined sustainable agriculture as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will over the long-term will: satisfy human food and fiber needs; enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends; make the most efficient use of non-renewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and enhance the quality of life of agricultural communities and society as a whole.

Western SARE Goals

- Promote ***good stewardship*** of the nation's natural resources by providing site-specific, regional and profitable sustainable farming and ranching methods that strengthen agricultural competitiveness; satisfy human food and fiber needs; maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of soil; conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources and fish and wildlife habitat; and maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground water.
- Enhance the ***quality of life*** of farmers and ranchers and ensure the viability of rural communities, for example, by increasing income and employment, especially profitable self-employment and innovative marketing opportunities in agricultural and rural communities.
- Protect the ***health and safety*** of those involved in food and farm systems by reducing, where feasible and practical, the use of toxic materials in agricultural production, and by optimizing on-farm resources and integrating, where appropriate, biological cycles and controls.
- Promote crop, livestock and enterprise ***diversification.***
- Examine the regional, economic, social, and ***environmental implications*** of adopting sustainable agriculture practices and systems.



Program Overview

Project Team: Western SARE requires that agricultural producers be involved from inception to finish in the planning, design, implementation, and educational outreach of any Western SARE-funded project keeping in mind the inherently interdisciplinary nature of sustainable agriculture.

Western SARE Sabbatical applications should include a Host Institution, a Host Principal Investigator (PI) who is a researcher at the Host Institution, a Home Institution, a Sabbatical Researcher (Co-PI) who is a researcher at the Home institution, and at least one agricultural Producer at the location of the Host Institution. Applications must provide the required documents from the Host Institution, information of the Host PI, and the Home Institution and Sabbatical researcher documentation detailed below.

- Sabbatical Researcher: researchers eligible for a Sabbatical Paid Leave who have the support of their home institution (hereafter Home Institution) and who have demonstrated expertise in sustainable agriculture research and education are eligible to apply for a Western SARE Sabbatical Grant. While applicants for a Western SARE Sabbatical Grant could reside outside the Western region of the United States, including foreign countries, ***all research and education activities should be conducted within the Western U.S. region.*** Applications should be done in association with a primary Host Institution located within the Western region, including universities, federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Having additional collaborating institutions and research sites in the Western U.S. region is allowed.
- Host Principal Investigator: The PI is responsible for coordinating the project and carrying out its contractual provisions, for all expenditures, and for achieving the stated research and education objectives.
- Producer: A person qualifies as an agricultural Producer (farmer/rancher) if they have a for-profit operation and:
 - Their primary occupation is farming or ranching and have a farm/ranch taxpayer identification number (TIN); or
 - They are a part-time producer with at least \$1,000 documented annual income or equivalent from farming or ranching activities.

Project Requirements:

- a) Home Institution requirements: The Sabbatical Researcher will be a Co-PI of the project and should negotiate a Paid Sabbatical Leave for at least 6 months with their home institution in order to be eligible for Sabbatical funding. A letter from the Home Institution indicating approval and support of the Sabbatical or proof that the Sabbatical Leave request was initiated, along with a time frame for its resolution, must be included in the application and should specify the terms of the Sabbatical Leave. If your proposal is selected for funding, no funds will be deployed before having a complete approval of the Sabbatical Leave request.
- b) Sabbatical Researcher requirements: The Sabbatical Researcher should negotiate with their home institution a Sabbatical Paid Leave prior to the release of any Western SARE funds. If applicable, carriers of the appropriate visa for conducting research and educational activities in the U.S. for the period of the project should provide this information to the Host Institution and

must be verified by Western SARE before the Subaward Agreement can be fully executed.

c) Host Institution requirements: All Western SARE Sabbatical applications should be done in association with a Host Institution within the Western U.S. region. The Sabbatical Host Institution is responsible for achieving the research and education objectives of the proposed project and bears the fiscal responsibility of the project through a Subaward Agreement. The Sabbatical Host Institution needs to provide a **Letter of Invitation** including, 1) a Scope of Work describing the activities the Sabbatical Researcher will be conducting at the Host Institution and in the local area (*i.e.*, research, lecturing, outreach activities, etc.), and the expected deliverables, 2) the period of time for which the Sabbatical Researcher is invited, 3) interest in the Sabbatical project and how it will benefit the Host Institution and agricultural producers, 4) the importance of the research and education activities to be conducted by the Sabbatical Researcher and how this project will advance local/regional research, education, and outreach, 5) the resources committed by the Host Institution for this project, 6) the collaboration plans beyond the completion of the Sabbatical project, and 7) any additional information the Host Institution finds relevant for the application. Additionally, the Letter of Invitation must include 8) the total funds requested, and 9) the project timeline.

Applications should be submitted from a Host Institution that 1) supports research and education in sustainable agriculture, 2) has demonstrated fiscal responsibility, 3) is able and qualified to receive funds from the U.S. Government, and 4) has the capability to comply with requirements of Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research that involves human subjects and to comply with the requirements of an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for research that involves animals.

d) Host PI requirements: All activities should be done in close collaboration with production, research, and education partner(s) of the Host Institution, and if applicable with researchers and producers of other organizations in the Western U.S., at the location where the Sabbatical will be conducted.

Project Time Limit: Projects may be between 6 months and 1 year in length. Please choose a start date that corresponds with the first of the month. Start dates must be no earlier than April 1, 2024, and no later than October 1, 2024.

Project Funding Limit: Western SARE Sabbatical Grants provide a maximum of \$75,000 (including Indirect Cost) for up to one year. Funds to support personnel salary, travel, and supplies, where justified, are allowed. Sabbatical grants are non-renewable and non-extendable beyond one-year period. Funds are awarded to the Host Institution. At application time Sabbatical Researchers should include proof that the Sabbatical Paid Leave permission was initiated. However, if the proposal is selected for funding the award will only be deployed if the Sabbatical Leave was granted.

Proposal Instructions

Proposals are submitted online at <https://projects.sare.org>. To strengthen your submission, check the information located in the [Proposal Preparation Documents](#) section of the Western SARE

[website](#). To ensure your submission is complete, please review the submission checklist at the end of this Call of Proposal, on page 18.

Western SARE will disqualify proposals before review if applicants do not follow the instructions of the Call for Proposals or submit incomplete Supporting Documents. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all sections of the proposal are submitted online before the due date.

Multiple submissions are accepted but only one application (from any one individual applicant) can be awarded funding for any of the Western SARE competitive programs in one grant budget cycle. An exception to this rule is proposals submitted to the Graduate Student program, where more than one project can be awarded to a PI who acts as the main advisor of the graduate student(s). Additionally, obtaining Graduate Student awards does not exclude the PI to be awarded in other WSARE Research and Education or Professional Development grant programs for the same budget cycle.

Project Basic Information

This section prompts general information about the project including:

- The **main** subject matter of the project
- The commodities and agricultural practices of the proposed project
- A list of the research and educational objectives
- Proposed starting and ending dates
- The state(s) or protectorates where the work will be conducted
- Additional partner institution(s) or organization(s)
- Whether the current proposal is a resubmission, and if so, it prompts for a resubmission letter.

Summary (Limit 300 words)

A clear and concise summary is important for the review process. The summary must include a brief description of the problem and a creative approach to solving it. In the summary, include the following:

- Identify a problem and research question(s)
- Describe the research and outreach components and explain how your project will creatively address the identified problem
- Explain how your project will disseminate results among agricultural stakeholders
- Enumerate and describe the expected project outcomes.

Project Narrative

The project narrative includes the following sections: 1) Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture and Project Value and Benefits, 2) Collaboration Plan with Host Institution and Local Partners, 3) Project Team Members List, 4) Project team Members' Role, 5) Research Plan, 6) Educational Plan, 7) Timeline, and 8) Building Human Capacity at Host Institution.

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Value, and Benefits (15% of review criteria;

word limit: 1000)

Explain why this project is necessary and how it addresses a critical need in sustainable agriculture. Identify any limitations in the current system and how your project will address them. Cite evidence of need, including results and recommendations from related SARE projects (www.sare.org/Project-Reports) and other studies or reports.

The proposal must address the three dimensions of sustainable agriculture (social, environmental, and economic) defined on page 2 of this Call for Proposals.

Describe the potential benefits for producers (local, state, or regional) and sustainable agriculture in general. For example, provide an economic analysis and explain how your project would affect overall farm/ranch productivity, operational profits, soil or water quality or usage, and rural communities. Where possible, use specific estimates of impacts, such as dollars saved per acre, tons of soil protected from erosion, pounds of reduced chemical inputs, number of acres or people affected, markets expanded, jobs created, etc.

Collaboration with Host Institution and Local Partners (5% of review criteria; word limit 500 words)

The Western SARE Sabbatical Grants' goal is to encourage groundbreaking research and education focused on the needs of underserved communities, and/or understudied geographic locations, and/or unexplored topics. Thus, proposals must include documentation that local agricultural stakeholders and partners identified the needs and knowledge gaps being addressed. Examples of sources of identified needs and knowledge gaps include, but are not limited to:

- Recommendations from stakeholder groups such as grower organizations or commodity commissions. Attach letters of support in the Supporting Documents section.
- Assessment by researchers of the Host Institution.
- Other documented needs' assessments or evaluations.

Project Team Members List

The project team must be a minimum of three (3) people and must include: 1) Host PI, 2) Sabbatical Researcher (Co-PI), and 3) at least one Agricultural Producer located where the Sabbatical will take place. It is encouraged that applications also include other partners, such as Extension Representative(s), and additional Agricultural Producer (s) at each State or Protectorate where the Sabbatical will be conducted. The team may also include the following additional collaborators,

- Extension/Outreach Representative: The outreach representative may be an Extension agent or specialist, educator, or equivalent. This person could be involved in implementing the education plan and outreach activities.
- Agricultural Professionals: An agricultural professional is any professional assisting producers at the local level such as a Cooperative Extension educators/agents or specialists, University faculty or researchers, USDA-NRCS field staff, agricultural consultants, nonprofit organization staff members, etc.
- Researchers, educators, and other collaborators with appropriate expertise for the project scope.
- Producers: If more than one producer is included, each producer must be an independent

and separate operator. Nonprofit farm operations may participate in the project, but do not count as the required Producer.

In the online submission, select the project team members who will be involved in your project from a drop-down list and complete the required information.

Project Team Members Roles (5% of the review criteria; word limit: 600)

Detail the role of the Principal Investigator, the Sabbatical Researcher (Co-PI), Producer(s), and if applicable, other project team members. Clearly indicate their level of involvement at all stages of the project. For each objective and activity, indicate who will be responsible, and which partners will be involved. The application **must** include a Letter of Producer Cooperation for each Producer involved in the project, uploaded in the Supporting Documents section. ***Failure to provide signed letters of producer cooperation will disqualify the proposal before review.***

Research Plan (30% of review criteria; word limit: 2100)

Clearly state and define the **research objectives**. Each objective should be a clear statement describing an intended achievement. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. For more details see [Successful Objectives](#).

For each objective, describe what will be done including **methods** and **materials**. What treatments or new technique(s) will be tested? What materials will be used? Describe the project site, research design, data collection and analysis methods. Include sufficient detail so that reviewers can determine if the approaches are suitable to achieve your objectives. Avoid the use of jargon that may be unfamiliar outside your industry or specialty area and define all acronyms.

Educational Plan (30% of review criteria; word limit: 2100)

Clearly state and define the **educational objectives**. Each objective should be a clear statement describing an intended achievement. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. For more details see [Successful Objectives](#).

For each objective, describe the **outreach activities** including **methods** and **materials**. Describe how, when, and where you will conduct outreach activities (e.g., field days, demonstrations, workshops, presentations, websites, etc.). Describe who will you target in your outreach activities (e.g., producers, stakeholders, other agricultural professionals, students, etc.). Explain how you will reach and communicate your project's findings to producers (specifically) and the general public. If the people you intend to reach through this project are from underserved communities, please describe how you intend to reach and engage them. (Underserved communities are those that have difficulties accessing opportunities due to language, cultural, location, or resources' barriers.)

Provide a list of educational resources (e.g., factsheets, PowerPoint presentations, video clips, podcasts, handouts, brochures, 4-H publications, surveys, etc.) you plan to produce. Describe plans for any scholarly outcomes (e.g., academic journals and conferences, departmental seminars, capstone projects, classroom presentations). Digital outcomes (e.g., podcasts, videos,

blogs, web-based materials, and social media) are encouraged but should not be the sole outreach approach. Multiple communication materials and multiple communication styles are

strongly encouraged.

Timeline (5% of review criteria; word limit: 500)

Provide a timeline, such as a [Gantt Chart](#) for accomplishing each objective of the Research Plan and Education Plan. Identify the major milestones and activities that will be completed and when each of those milestones will occur.

Building Human Capacity at Host Institution (5% of review criteria; word limit: 500)

Describe your plans for human capacity development at the Host Institution. Explain how the expected knowledge gain and educational outcomes will improve the research and education capacity of the Host Institution and partners, and the production capacity of local growers after the completion of the Sabbatical project. Describe the expected connections and collaborations between the Host and Home Institutions as a result from this Sabbatical project. How will the Host, local partners and the Sabbatical Researcher interact after the completion of this project?

Budget and Budget Justification (5% of review criteria)

Provide a detailed budget that are appropriate to the proposed project using the current [Western SARE Budget Worksheet](#) found on the online application, in the budget section. Applicants must use this document for budget submission; no other document will be accepted. **NOTE:** you need to enter the total funds requested; this amount must match the total funds indicated on the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet* document. A budget justification is also required and should be uploaded in the Budget and Justification section as a separate PDF file.

If the Host Institution will be issuing lower-tier subawards to other institutions or organizations as part of your proposed project, you are required to provide a detailed budget for each lower-tier subaward. Lower-tier subaward budgets **must** be submitted on the [Western SARE Budget Worksheet for Subawards](#). You may ask the lower-tier subrecipient(s) to fill out the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet for Subawards* or you may fill it out on their behalf using details they have provided to you. Be sure to include brief details and budget amounts for each lower-tier subaward on your *Western SARE Budget Worksheet*. As the primary applicant, you must upload both your *Western SARE Budget Worksheet* and those of any lower-tier subawards to be issued. A budget justification for each lower-tier subaward is also required and should be uploaded in the Budget and Justification section as a separate PDF file.

Failure to provide the Western SARE Budget Worksheet for your primary award and, if applicable, all lower-tier subawards will disqualify the proposal before review.

Sabbatical Grant funds may be budgeted in the following categories:

Salaries and Benefits: for compensating researchers or employees (including students) of the Host Institution for performing work directly related to the project. Provide base salary, FTEs, fringe benefit rates, and salary/benefits amounts requested. These awards should not include salary or benefits for the Sabbatical Researcher.

Lower-tier Subawards: for paying project collaborators who are at a partner institution in the Western U.S. region to cover costs associated with their portion in the proposed project.

Indirect Cost (IDC) recovery should be included for each lower-tier subrecipient according to the guidelines noted under the section “Indirect Costs Recovery” of this Call for Proposals (see next page). The Host Institution will be responsible for issuing and administering the lower-tier subawards.

Contracted Services: for paying for professional services. For example, testing and analysis services, survey development and administration, computational services, website development or maintenance, professional production services (videographer, producer of educational digital media, etc.), consultants, honoraria, speaker fees, agricultural producer labor, etc.

Supplies: includes basic supplies and materials needed to carry out the project. Examples include: agricultural supplies (fencing, seeds, plants, fertilizer), field and lab supplies, minor equipment and tools (individual items that cost less than \$5,000), paper/envelopes, in-house photocopying of materials for workshops/meetings, software, books, shipping materials, etc. Any shipping costs associated with the purchase of supplies/materials should be included as supply costs. The purchase of food/refreshments for meetings/field days (must be necessary to maintain meeting continuity) is also considered a supply cost.

Note about Capital Equipment Purchase: The purchase of Capital Equipment (defined as a single, autonomous piece of equipment that costs \$5,000 or more and has a useful life of more than one year) is generally not allowed under the SARE program and should be *essential* for the completion of the proposed activities. Equipment expenses beyond \$5,000 may be leveraged by non-Western SARE funds; thus, up to \$4,999 of the proposed budget may be allocated towards capital equipment purchase. ***Purchasing multiple components of single equipment that cost under \$5,000 in an attempt to circumvent the \$5,000 cap is not allowed.*** Minor equipment that costs less than \$5,000 is allowed. Please include minor equipment and/or leveraged capital equipment purchases in the Supplies budget category.

Communication: includes postage and mailing expenses (including shipping samples for analysis), printed materials (flyers, brochures, posters). This category also includes expenses for publishing articles in scientific journals or other types of field/program publications, or for commercial photocopying (note: in-house photocopying falls under supplies.)

Travel: includes estimated mileage reimbursement, airfare, lodging, meal per diem; car rentals, taxi, bus, shuttle expenses and parking; conference fees and registrations, etc. Travel to Host Institution or place where the Sabbatical will take place is allowed. Please note, travel per diems and mileage need to correlate with the Host Institution’s approved rates. If no rate is available, please use the Federal Government rate listed on the [U.S. General Services Administration \(GSA\) website](#). Additionally, lodging costs for ALL travel must be limited to the Federal Government rates listed on the GSA website. **NOTE**: foreign travel for the Host and local partners is typically NOT allowed under the SARE program, except in cases where sufficient justification has been provided, and requires Western SARE approval. However, if the Sabbatical Researcher resides in a foreign country, travel to and from the place where the Sabbatical takes place will be allowed. All other foreign travel must be directly related to the project, essential for project completion, and well justified (i.e., explain why this activity cannot be done in the USA, relevance to the sustainability of Western agriculture, provide foreign institution and colleagues qualifications, etc.). USDA-NIFA requires that foreign travels must

be done on an U.S. flag air carrier.

Rent: includes fees associated with renting equipment, land, facilities (e.g., meeting rooms, lab space) and user fees. Note: total proposed equipment rental costs may not exceed \$4,999.

Participant / Trainee Support: A participant is defined as a non-employee (of the applicant's institution) who is the recipient, not the provider, of a service or training opportunity as part of a workshop, conference, seminar, symposium or other short-term instructional or information sharing activity to be funded by this award. Participant support may be paid to non-employees to help offset the cost of travel/lodging and meeting/training fees and/or as a stipend for participation in a training. Participant/trainee support should NOT be used: to reimburse or pay employees of the applicant's institution; to pay research subjects/participants (unallowable expense under the SARE program); for honoraria/speaker fees (contracted services expense); or, if travel expenses for a non-employee will be directly reimbursed by the institution (travel expense).

Indirect Costs (IDCs) Recovery: IDC recovery may be requested for the Host Institution according to the following criteria:

Under the SARE program and for projects funded in Calendar Year 2022 and later, NIFA stipulates indirect cost recovery is limited to 10% of the Total Direct Costs requested.

Some institutions may NOT be eligible for IDC recovery or may be limited to the *de minimis* rate of 10% of the *Modified Total Direct Costs* (MTDC) requested.

Applicants should limit their request for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 10% of total direct costs.

Applicants must indicate the IDC rate used on the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet*. Detailed information about IDC rates and calculations can be found on the Western SARE [website](#). More information about each budget category is provided on the *Budget Categories and Guidance* tab found on the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet*. Please note, however, that there are some restrictions on what Sabbatical grant funds may be used. See below.

Sabbatical Grant funds may NOT be used for the following purposes:

Note the below list is not exhaustive – see also the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet* for additional details

- Capital Equipment purchases above \$5,000 (see above for more information).
- Renting equipment for more than \$5,000 (see above for more information).
- Starting or expanding a farm/ranch or farm/ranch operation.
- Major renovations/permanent improvements to a farm or ranch, such as constructing or remodeling a building.
- Repairs/Maintenance of equipment or buildings/facilities.
- Providing meals during events that are not necessary to maintain the continuity of a scheduled meeting/activity; breakfasts and dinners typically do not qualify.
- The purchase and distribution of gift cards for any purpose
- Testing of commercial products.
- Student fees and/or tuition.

- Salary, benefits, and housing for the Sabbatical Researcher.

Additionally, matching funds are not required or requested of Western SARE grant recipients. Please do NOT include matching funds in your budget or budget justification.

Supporting Documents

All supporting documents must be attached to the Supporting Documents section of the online application site. PDF documents are preferred but images in jpg format is accepted. ***Failure to provide all the required supporting documents will disqualify the proposal before review.***

Signature Page: This form affirms that the PI (the Host Researcher) is responsible for all contractual commitments and expenditures. This form must be signed by the PI and the PI's Authorized Organizational Representative. For a college or university, this person is usually the Director of the Sponsored Programs Office. For non-profits or other organizations, this is typically the Executive Director, CEO, or CFO. This form may be downloaded from the online application site and is also included in the following section of this Call for Proposal.

Current Vita: The PI, Co-PI(s), and all other project team members who are not producers or students must submit a current vita (maximum 2-pages for each member).

Letter of Invitation from the Host Institution: The application ***must*** include a letter of commitment from the Host Institution. The Letter of Invitation is an expression of interest from the Host Institution to host the Sabbatical Researcher and must include: 1) a Scope of Work describing the activities the Sabbatical Researcher will be conducting at the Host Institution and in the local area (*i.e.*, research, lecturing, outreach activities, etc.), and the expected deliverables, 2) the period of time for which the Sabbatical Researcher is invited, 3) interest in the Sabbatical project and how it will benefit the Host Institution, 4) the importance of the research and education activities to be conducted by the Sabbatical Researcher and how this project will advance local/regional research, education, and outreach, 5) the resources committed by the Host Institution for this project, 6) the collaboration plans beyond the completion of the Sabbatical project, and 7) any additional information the Host Institution finds relevant for the application. Additionally, the Letter of Invitation must include 8) the total funds requested and 9) the project timeline.

Letter of Sabbatical Paid Leave from the Home Institution: A letter from the Home Institution indicating Sabbatical approval and support on behalf of the Sabbatical Researcher, or proof that such process was initiated along with a time frame for the resolution of the Sabbatical Paid Leave request ***must*** be included and should specify the terms of the Sabbatical Paid Leave.

Letter of Commitment from Partner Institutions: If your proposal includes issuing lower-tier subawards to partner institutions, attach a letter of commitment from each institution. The letter of commitment must be dated and signed by the subaward's PI (usually listed as a Co-PI of the project) and include the following information: period of performance, total funds requested, and

a Scope of Work outlining activities to be performed, the deliverables created, and the project timeline.

Letters of Cooperation from Producer(s): Each producer who is part of the project team must send a dated and signed letter of cooperation to be included in the submission. This letter should verify their willingness to participate, indicate the resources and time committed to this project, and describe their role in the project.

Letters of Support from Stakeholders: Attach letters of support from stakeholder individuals and/or organizations that support the proposed research and education activities.

Current and Pending Support: The PI and Co-PI(s) *must* submit a Current and Pending Support form. This form may be downloaded from the online application site and is also included in the following section of this Call for Proposals.

Institutional Review Board Approval Document for Working with Human Subjects: For guidance on what meets the requirements for Human Subject Research please see [here](#).

If your project meets the definition of Human Subjects Research, you will need to provide documentation from the Host Institution Institutional Review Board (IRB) demonstrating you have received approval or exemption for your project, or at a minimum, you have submitted your protocol for review by your IRB. At the time of submission, proof that you initiated the IRB process is acceptable; however, if awarded, the Subaward Agreement will not be executed until IRB approval/exemption documentation is provided.

If your project meets the definition of Human Subjects Research, but you **do not have access to an IRB**, contact Irene Grimberg, Sabbatical Program Manager, at grimberg@montana.edu for a letter to include in your proposal submission in which you acknowledge that if your proposal is selected for funding you will work with Montana State University, Western SARE Host Institution, to complete your project's IRB requirement. An IRB is not required to be in place before the proposal submission, but if selected for funding, documentation of IRB approval must be complete before recruiting or interacting with human subjects.

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Document for Working with Animals: For guidance on what meets the requirements for the care and use of agricultural animals in research and teaching please see [here](#). If your project involves vertebrate animals and you do not have access to an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), please complete the [Animal Care Plan Questionnaire](#), which will be used to evaluate whether review and approval or exemption from an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) is needed to complete your project.

If your proposal involves vertebrae animals, you must provide documentation from the Host Institution Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) demonstrating you have received approval or exemption for your project or at a minimum you have submitted your protocol for review by your IACUC. An IACUC is not required to be in place before the proposal submission, but if selected for funding, documentation of IACUC approval must be complete before the subaward agreement will be executed.

Citations: A list of cited sources must be attached in the Supporting Documents section of the online submission and is not part of the word number limit.

Other Documents: (Optional): Here you will be able to attach any other document that you think might strengthen your proposal. These documents may not be used to lengthen your proposal under the Project Narrative.



Signature Page

Please print this document, obtain **BOTH** required signatures and upload into the Supporting Documents section of your online grant application.

Project Title:

Total Funds Requested: _____

Requested Project Period:

Start Date (MM/DD/YYYY): _____ End date (MM/DD/YYYY): _____

Principal Investigator

USDA defines a Principal Investigator as one who has the authority to write and submit a proposal and carry out its contractual provisions.

As the project PI, I affirm I am responsible for all expenditures and achieving the stated research and education objectives of the proposal.

Signature: Principal Investigator

Date

Printed Name: _____

Authorized Organizational Representative

USDA defines the Authorized Organizational Representative as one who has authority to enter into contractual agreements with the Western SARE Host Institution, Montana State University.

As the AOR for the institution/organization project of the PI submitting this proposal, I affirm that [enter institution/organization name here] has authority to enter into a contractual agreement with Montana State University.

Signature: Authorized Organizational Representative

Date

Printed Name and Title: _____



Current & Pending

Project Team Member Name: _____

How this template is completed:

- Record information for active and pending projects, including this proposal.
- All current efforts to which PD/PI(s) and other senior personnel have committed a portion of their time must be listed, whether or not the salary for the person involved is included in the budgets of the various projects.
- Provide analogous information for all proposed work that is being considered by, or which will be submitted in the near future to, other possible sponsors, including other USDA programs.
- For concurrent projects, the percent of time committed must not exceed 100%.

Note: Concurrent submission of a proposal to other organizations will not prejudice its review by CSREES.

NAME (List/PI first)	SUPPORTING AGENCY AND AWARD/PENDING PROPOSAL NUMBER	TOTAL \$ AMOUNT	EXPIRATION DATES	% OF TIME COMMITTED	TITLE OF PROJECT
	Active				
	Pending				

This document MUST be converted to PDF prior to attachment in the electronic application package.



Animal Welfare Assurance Statement

The applicant acknowledges that work may require Institutional Animal Care and Use Oversight and that Montana State University (MSU), and thus Western SARE, is subject to the [Guide for the Care and Use of Agricultural Animals in Research and Teaching](#). This includes, but is not limited to: beef, swine, poultry, fish, etc. If awarded the applicant acknowledges that it is his/her responsibility to ensure that a USDA-acknowledged IACUC reviews, approves, and oversees the animal welfare issues of the project.

Signature: Applicant

Date: _____

NOTE: If animal welfare is NOT applicable, check and sign below:

Not Applicable [☐] _____ Date: _____
Signature: Applicant

Review Process

Eligible proposals received by the due date with all supporting documents will be evaluated by a Technical Review Panel, a diverse group of reviewers from the Western SARE region with broad agricultural production, scientific, and educational expertise. The Technical Review Panel evaluates the proposals based on the review criteria stated below and meets to discuss and appraise the merits of each proposal. Their recommendations are forwarded to the Western SARE Administrative Council for additional review and final selection. Reviewers' and Western SARE Administrative Council recommendations are then shared with the applicants.

Proposals are evaluated based on the following criteria:

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Value and Benefits	15%
Collaboration with Host Institution and Local Partners	5%
Project Team	5%
Research Plan	30%
Educational Plan	30%
Timeline	5%
Building Human Capacity at Host Institution	5%
Budget & Justification	5%
Total	100%

Selected Proposals

If the Western SARE Administrative Council selects your project for funding, you may expect the following:

Public Domain: While proposals and reviews will remain confidential, the Western SARE program considers all funded proposals, subsequent reports, and related information to be in the public domain. See details of this stipulation in the Public Access of Research Data section in [USDA Grant Policies](#).

Notification: The Western SARE Administrative Council will select proposals for funding in early March 2024. The Administrative Council reserves the right to restructure or reduce the budget of any grant proposal before final approval. Western SARE staff will notify applicants of the status of their proposals by March 2024. If the PI of a new Western SARE grant proposal has an active Western SARE award, funding decisions will be contingent upon fulfillment of reporting requirements of the active award as specified in the Subaward Agreement.

Award: If your proposal is selected for funding, the Office of Sponsored Programs at Montana State University will initiate a Subaward Service Agreement to you. The Subaward Service Agreement will identify all Terms and Conditions for the award, including reporting requirements. Acceptance of the initial payment is the recipient's acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant. *Note: All proposals from Micronesia (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae,*

Marshall Islands and Palau) are required to have the College of Micronesia (at Pohnpei) act as their fiscal agent in the disbursement of funds.

Funds: All Subawards are cost-reimbursable. Subrecipients will be responsible for invoicing MSU for all expenses to be reimbursed. Invoices are to be submitted according to the guidelines in the Subaward Agreement. 10% of the awarded amount will be withheld pending receipt and approval of the final report.

Photographs and Videos: Grant recipients are invited to document their project with photographs and/or videos, which can be useful to them and helps Western SARE highlight and promote their work on our website and publications. Digital photographs and videos are preferred. It is expected that the outreach/educational material produced by Western SARE supported projects will be ADA compliant. Thus, including closed captions to visual and audio deliverables is strongly encouraged.

Proper Citation: The Western SARE program must be credited as the funding source in any publications or outreach materials generated by the funded project. Please refer to the Western SARE [website](#) for complete guidelines for acknowledging funds. Information pertaining to citing Western SARE will be included in the Subaward Agreement.

Site Visits: Western SARE recognizes that there are limits to what can be accomplished, measured, and reported during the life of a project. As a result, along with your reporting, Western SARE staff may visit ongoing or finalized projects to assess the impact of Western SARE grants.

Project Modifications and Changes: Request for significant changes to the project as originally proposed, such as a change in PI, Co-PI, institution, objectives, timeline, budget, etc. should be submitted to the grant Program Manager via email with a complete [Project Modification Form](#) attached for consideration and approval by Western SARE Regional Coordinator. Upon approval of the requested changes, Western SARE staff will notify the PI and update the SARE project profile at SARE's online portal.

Learn more about the Western SARE subaward process [here](#).

Reporting Requirements for Awarded Proposals

An annual report will be required for each year of your project. Progress and final reports should describe the progress made on the project, detail the obtained results, describe the educational outreach activities and material produced by the project, and document impacts. All educational outreach activities should include an evaluation component that measures changes in knowledge or awareness, attitudes, and opinions, and/or the adoption of new practices by producers or other agricultural professionals. If your project is a one-year project or less, only a final report should be submitted. Approved project reports will be posted on the national SARE website, and be shared with producers, interested policymakers and community, state, regional and national leaders. All educational materials and products must have an electronic version and be included in your reports. ***The PI will have up to 60 days from the Period of***

Performance's end date to submit the Final Report.

Grantees must maintain up-to-date contact information (e.g., address, phone number, email, etc.) for all project team members in the online submission portal. Please review the documents located in the Western SARE [Reporting Documents for Grantees](#) section to understand what will be expected if your project is awarded.

How to Apply

<https://projects.sare.org>

Look for programs under “Western” [region]

Proposals are due by 12:00 pm (noon) MST – November 21, 2023

Sabbatical Grant Program Schedule
November 21, 2023 – Proposals are due by 12:00 PM (noon) Mountain Time.
January 2024 – A Technical Review Panel reviews and recommends proposals for funding.
March 2024 – WSARE Administrative Council selects proposals for funding.
March 2024 – Applicants are informed about their proposal status

Online Submission Checklist

Project Basic Information

- ☐ Project Subject Matter
- ☐ Project Start Date
- ☐ Project End Date
- ☐ Primary State
- ☐ Project Commodities
- ☐ Project Practices
- ☐ Project Objectives
- ☐ How did you learn about this CFP?
- ☐ Usefulness of Western SARE Resources

Summary

- ☐ Summary

Narrative

- ☐ Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Value and Benefits
- ☐ Collaboration with Host Institution and Local Partners
- ☐ Project Team Members List
- ☐ Project Team Members Roles
- ☐ Research Plan
- ☐ Education Plan
- ☐ Timeline
- ☐ Building Human Capacity at Host Institution

Budget and Budget Justification

- ☐ Total Budget Amount

- ❑ Budget Worksheet Budget Justification for Awarded Institution
- ❑ Budget Worksheet and Budget Justification for Lower-Tier Subawards
- ❑ Authorized Organizational Representative Information

Supporting Documents

- ❑ Signature Page
- ❑ Curriculum Vitae for all team members BUT producers
- ❑ Current and Pending for PI and Co-PI(s)
- ❑ Letter of Invitation from Host Institution
- ❑ Letter of Sabbatical Leave Approval from Home Institution
- ❑ Letter of Commitment from Partner Institution(s) (if applicable)
- ❑ Letters of Cooperation from Producer(s)
- ❑ Letters of Support from Stakeholders
- ❑ Animal Welfare Assurance Statement
- ❑ Animal Care Plan Questionnaire (if applicable)
- ❑ IRB Statement (if applicable)
- ❑ Citations

Resources

Check the resources in the [WSARE Proposal Preparation Documents](#) section. If you have further questions, please contact the Sabbatical Program Manager, wsare-sab@sare.org or 406-994-4789.

Information on past projects including summaries and reports can be found [here](#). We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about sustainable agriculture and the Western SARE program. Tips for writing proposals are available [here](#).

The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library specializes in locating, collecting, and providing information about sustainable agriculture. Information specialists can answer questions, highlight resources, and share search techniques for literature reviews and background research. AFSIC resources are available at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/> or by e-mail, or 301-504-6559.

In compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, this material can be made available in other formats upon request.

Western SARE is committed to diversity. We encourage proposals that involve producers and other stakeholders of socially disadvantaged, beginning, limited resources, and veteran communities. For more details, please visit this [USDA website](#).

The United States Department of Agriculture and Montana State University are equal opportunity providers and employers.

The mission of Western SARE is to advance innovations that increase environmental stewardship, profitability, and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education.