



**Professional Development Program
Hosted by University of Wyoming
4516 Highway 26/85, Torrington, WY 82240, 307-532-2436**

**Request for Applications - Western Region
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program
Needs Assessment of Sustainable Agricultural Practices in the Western US
Deadline for Receipt of Applications: March 22, 2021**

Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (Western SARE) solicits Requests for Applications to identify a targeted audience, and perform a needs assessment, interpretation, and technical report for: 1) non-profit and non-governmental agencies in the Western region of the US with efforts in sustainable agriculture, and 2) Extension educators in the Western region who have at least a 50% agricultural and natural resources assignment. It is expected that audience identification, needs assessments and reports will be developed with input from, and in partnership with Western SARE. **The budget for this project is not to exceed \$65,000, and will be awarded as a contracted services agreement.**

Western SARE is funded federally through the USDA-NIFA program and strives to advance sustainable agriculture through competitive grant programs. More information about Western SARE can be found on the organizational website: western.sare.org

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this needs assessment is twofold: 1) to better understand information gaps and future directions for research and outreach efforts related to sustainable agriculture in the Western region of the U.S.; and 2) to identify non-profit and non-governmental agencies working in the area of sustainable agriculture in the Western US. Overall research objectives include:

- 1) To identify current and future research and outreach needs related to sustainable agricultural practices and systems among non-profit and non-governmental agencies in the Western US.
- 2) To develop a contact list of organizations (non-profit/non-government) actively working in the area of sustainable agriculture in the Western US.
- 3) To identify current and future research and outreach needs related to sustainable agricultural practices and systems among Extension Educators in the Western US.
- 4) To understand regional differences in needs for outreach and research in sustainable agriculture across the Western US.

- 5) To determine barriers to implementing sustainable agricultural practices among non-profit and non-governmental agencies and Extension Educators in the Western US.
- 6) To determine familiarity and understanding of the Western SARE program among non-profit, and non-governmental agencies and Extension Educators in the Western US.

EVALUATION TIMELINE

Milestones and an estimated timeline of activities include:

- May 5, 2021: Award notification
- May—August 2021: Complete scope of work, develop needs assessment survey and Generate contact list for non-profit/non-governmental agencies. (Including appropriate IRB approvals).
- September—November 2021: Administer needs assessment survey in web-based format or via mail; telephone follow-up, if needed.
- December—February 2021-22: Compile and analyze data from needs assessment survey. Summarize data and prepare preliminary technical reports.
- February—March 2022: Complete final reports and submit them to Western SARE by April 1, 2022.

FORMAT, PROPOSAL SUBMISSION and CONTACT INFORMATION

Applications should be no more than six pages, typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, and single spaced. Each 8-1/2" by 11" page must have a minimum of 1" lateral and vertical margins. The application should include: 1) a proposed strategy for accomplishing outlined goals; and 2) a proposed budget and total project cost. Please use the enclosed scope of work template to develop your application and budget.

An electronic copy, in Microsoft Word or PDF, of the application must be received by Sara Trojan (address below) no later than 4:00pm MDT, March 22, 2021. Questions regarding this Request for Applications or the Western SARE Program can be directed to:

Sara Trojan Phone: 307-752-9458
Western SARE Associate PDP Coordinator Email: strojan@sare.org
5181 Squaw Creek Road
Casper, WY 82604

SCOPE OF WORK TEMPLATE

Cover page: Please include a cover page with application to include PI name, title, affiliation and relevant contact information.

Experience and Qualifications: Applicants must state qualifications, and experience in developing and conducting needs-based surveys. Curriculum vitae for the PI and collaborators must be attached to the application.

Development of Needs Assessment Tool: The selected research team (hereafter referred to as the team), in close cooperation with the associate PDP coordinator and other key representatives of the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program (Western SARE), will finalize one version of a needs assessment survey and the project guidelines. The survey assessment can be delivered in a web-based format or paper copy.

Western SARE will provide the team with objectives identified for the needs assessment effort and preliminary questions to be used in the questionnaire. The team will assign a study director to manage the project. The team will submit the study protocol and the questionnaire to Western SARE for final approval. **This assessment is intended for program planning and evaluation, and is not a conventional research project of human subjects. However, internal IRB (Human Subjects) exemption or approval must be obtained from the survey team's institution prior to any survey. Proof of IRB exemption or approval is a requirement of USDA-NIFA and Western SARE and is necessary prior to issuance of the first payment.**

Needs Assessment Sample Size: Western SARE will furnish an electronic copy of contact information for Extension Educators, including updated names, mailing/email addresses and telephone number (if available). In conjunction with Western SARE, the team is responsible for generating a contact list for nonprofit/non-governmental agencies working in the area sustainable agriculture in the Western US.

Survey Implementation: The desired response rate for the needs assessment is 70%. To achieve the targeted response rate the Dillman Total Response Method or equivalent should be implemented. Applicants should describe in detail what combination of e-mail or mail contacts, web-based or mail surveys, phone follow-ups and incentives are necessary to achieve the desired response rate. Western SARE is also interested in legal incentives that applicants can build into the budget of their projects to enhance survey response rate.

Data Coding, Text Entry, and Verification: Questionnaires received by the designated cutoff date will be scanned by trained staff and entered into a computer database. All data will be verified using the same system. **No information will be provided that allows for identification of a survey respondent.**

Data Analysis and Analysis of Error: The team will create databases with the responses to the needs assessment survey. Databases will be stored on a data-jump drive, as well as on the team's network. If needed, the team will maintain coding information and a statistical program to ensure that all data fields are readable and that a data record exists for every completed interview in the sample.

Data Report: The team will prepare one data report, to contain the following information:

- 1) A description of sampling and implementation procedures used in the needs assessment survey.
- 2) A contact list of non-profit/non-governmental agencies working in the area of sustainable agriculture in the Western US.
- 3) A table detailing response rates and demographics for all cases in the sample, including both regional (total) and state-by-state data.
- 4) Outreach and research needs, analyzed by region across the western US.
- 5) A frequency distribution for all closed-ended questions in the survey.
- 6) A description of the statistical analysis program used to analyze the data.
- 7) A sorted and organized file of all open-ended question results.
- 8) A data-jump drive, which will include the survey results and tables and a file with the open-ended remarks in Word format.

Technical Report: The team will provide a technical report in both Word and PDF formats that is a tabular, and a graphical summary of the survey results. The team will interpret the survey results against a framework of objectives for the survey furnished by Western SARE in advance of the survey. Western SARE will be responsible for any additional data analyses and interpretation, unless specifically contracted with the team. **All publication rights for the research information are retained by Western SARE and USDA.**

Deliverables: The team will provide a finalized questionnaire, a contact list of non-profit/non-governmental agencies, a data set in readable format, an open-ended remarks file in Word format, a data report, the technical report, and all completed SARE publication order forms.

APPLICATION BUDGET

Applicants must fill out and include the budget form found below, as well as a detailed budget justification for each budget line item requested. No other template will be accepted.

sare.org/wp-content/uploads/WSARE_BudgetForm_Needs-Assessment.xlsx

Funds may be budgeted in the following categories:

- **Salaries and Benefits:** compensating yourself and/or employees (including students) of your institution for performing work directly related to the project. Provide base salary, FTE's, fringe benefit rates and salary/benefit amounts requested.
- **Subawards:** paying project collaborators not at your institution and/or to cover costs associated with the sub recipient's portion of the proposed project.
- **Contracted Services:** includes paying for professional services.
- **Supplies:** basic supplies and materials needed to carry out the project, minor equipment (individual items that cost less than \$5,000), envelopes/paper, photocopying, shipping costs, etc.
- **Communication:** includes postage and mailing expenses.
- **Travel:** mileage reimbursement, airfare, lodging, meal per diem; car rentals, tax, bus, shuttle expenses. Please note: travel per diems and mileage need to align with your organization's approved rates. If no rate is available, please use the Federal Government rate.

- Rent: includes fees associated with renting equipment, facilities, etc.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Please include the following documents with your grant submission:

Signature Page: Signatures from the PI and Authorized Organizational Representative are required.

Vitae: A brief vita is required for the principal investigator and co-principal investigators. The limit is three pages for each.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Project Title:

Total Funds Requested _____

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:
