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Request for Applications - Western Region
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program Education and Outreach Enhancement Project
Deadline for Receipt of Applications: February 1, 2022

Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (Western SARE) is a federally funded program by USDA NIFA that strives to advance sustainable agriculture through competitive grant programs. Montana State University (MSU) serves as the Host Institution for Western SARE. Please visit the organizational website to learn more about the program: western.sare.org

Western SARE solicits proposals for projects that enhance effective outreach and engagement among the agricultural community of the West and Pacific Islands. Current practices for producer education methods need re-evaluation and improvement to better accommodate learning styles of diverse producer groups. The background of agricultural producer groups represented in the Western SARE region are vast and range from large-scale, advanced production operations to subsistence.

This RFA encourages creative approaches to: 1) identify and synthesize the current state of knowledge and best practices for effective education, outreach, and engagement to reach diverse agriculture producer and stakeholder groups across the Western SARE region, and develop recommendations for improved producer engagement; 2) from outcomes of objective 1, develop an educational resource or best practices guide that can be used to effectively disseminate Western SARE research with producers across the region.

The budget for this project is not to exceed $65,000, and will be awarded as a contracted services agreement from Montana State University.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES
The purpose of this project is to enhance the overall educational impact of the Western SARE sustainable agriculture program through improved engagement and learning among the diverse agricultural producer groups represented throughout the western SARE region. Overall project objectives are to:

1) Evaluate existing learning styles information and develop a white paper or guide that identifies and synthesizes effective methods, best practices, and science-based techniques for producer-relevant outreach and engagement that best serve traditional and underrepresented agricultural producer groups across the West and Pacific Islands. Aside from summarizing published information, this evaluation should

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include innovative recommendations for improved producer engagement and education among the target audiences.

2) Develop an educational resource (such as a handbook and/or web-based program), from findings in objective 1 that can inform SARE projects region-wide. Overall, the final product must:

   a. Be easy to implement for individuals with a broad spectrum of experience and formal educational training.
   b. Enhance the capacity of SARE projects to develop producer partnerships, and to achieve effective education and outreach objectives related to understanding and implementation of research findings among traditional and underrepresented producer groups.
   c. Include science-based and easy-to-follow training and implementation guidelines.
   d. Be published in a print and online format. The online format must be permanently available to the public at no charge.

EVALUATION TIMELINE
Milestones and an estimated timeline of activities include:

Step 1: October 18, 2021—Proposal announcement

Step 2: February 1, 2022—Proposal deadline (4:00pm MST)

Step 3: March 3, 2022—Award Notification

Step 4: June 1, 2022—Learning styles identification and report development

Step 5: July 2022—Share learning styles report (Objective 1) with Western SARE Administrative Council

Step 6: August 2022-January 2023—Educational resource development (Objective 2)

Step 7: February 1, 2023—Complete final report and submit to Western SARE Administrative Council

FORMAT, PROPOSAL SUMISSION 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.

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An electronic copy, in Microsoft Word or PDF, of the application must be received by Clayton Marlow, Western SARE Regional Coordinator no later than 4:00pm MDT, on February 1, 2022. *Please email application materials to cmarlow@montana.edu*

Questions regarding this Request for Applications or the Western SARE Program can be directed to Sara Trojan, strojan@sare.org.

SCOPE OF WORK TEMPLATE
Cover page: Please include a cover page with application to include Project Leader name, title, affiliation and relevant contact information.

Experience and Qualifications: Applicants must state qualifications and experience in ability to synthesize information related to learning styles in agriculture, and the development of educational resources. Curriculum vitae for the Project Leader and collaborators must be attached to the application.

Learning Styles Assessment: The selected research team (hereafter referred to as the team) will identify the learning styles found among diverse agricultural producer groups within the Western SARE region. The fundamental need is for the team to determine if adequate information on producer learning styles already exists and if that information is sufficient to appropriately address this objective.

Development of Educational Resource: Development of the educational resource should be derived from the findings in the learning styles assessment, and in close cooperation with the associate PDP coordinator and other key representatives of the Western SARE program. The team will develop a draft resource for evaluation among a diverse subset of producers. The final educational resource will be used by research teams to enhance the impact of their education and outreach activities funded through Western SARE.

Technical Report: The team will provide a technical report in both Word and PDF formats that includes the learning styles identification, outcomes and implications, and the platform, rationale and training for the educational resource. **All publication rights for the research information are retained by Western SARE and USDA.**

Deliverables: The team will provide a report that identifies the learning styles of agricultural producers in the Western SARE region, including implications and outcomes. The team will also provide an educational resource that can be universally employed among all Western SARE programs to enhance education and outreach activities. The educational resource must be developed to target the previously identified learning styles, and include detailed training for implementation of the targeted methodologies.

<u>*If human subjects are involved in any part of this project, 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.</u>

APPLICATION BUDGET

We work to advance innovations that promote environmental stewardship, enhance quality of life, and improve profitability by investing in groundbreaking agricultural research and education.

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 with be accepted.

Please see the budget form that accompanies this call.

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 subrecipient'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: includes estimated mileage reimbursement, airfare, lodging, meal per diem; car rentals, taxi, shuttle expenses and parking. Please note, travel *per diem,* mileage reimbursement, and meals must follow your organization's approved rates. If no rate is available, please use the Federal Government rate listed on https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates. Additionally, lodging reimbursements for all travel must be limited to the Federal Government rate listed on the U.S. General Services Administration website.
- 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 Project Leader is required.

Vitae: A brief vita is required for the Project Leader and co-Project Leader(s). The limit is three pages for each.

SIGNATURE PAGE

Project Title:

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Total Funds Requested _____

Project Leader

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

_____

Signature: Project Leader   *Date*

Printed Name:

_____