



Hi, I'm Betsy Wieland, Associate Director of NCR-SARE. I manage our Graduate student grant program. I work with NCR-SARE and we are hosted by University of Minnesota, so I'm in St Paul, MN.

This is a quick overview about managing your SARE grant.

Congratulations! You got a grant!

Now what?!
A little nervous?



Hopefully this meeting will take away some of that worry. I'll give you some information and a few tips to help your project go smoothly.

**Let's ease some
worries**



Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **Funds Management**
- **Resources**
- **Reporting**
- **Communications**
- **Making changes to your contract**
- **Questions**

Here is what we will discuss today. I will also record this session and send it to this year's grant recipients.

I'm doing this because in this grant program, while we are interested in the research and education you will be doing on your project, another goal of this grant program is to give you experience managing a grant, and help you to develop as a research/educator in sustainable agriculture.

Your faculty advisor is likely considered by your institution to be the P.I. on this grant, but we consider you the lead. And so we expect you to do the reporting, and work together with your advisor on things like submitting a No Cost Extension requests or rebudgets, as needed.

Log into
projects.sare.org



If you haven't already, take a moment to log into projects.sare.org

Introductions

Type in the chat:

- **Your university/college**
- **Project topic area**
(eg. IPM in grapes, cover cropping for small grains, etc)
- **1 thing you'd like to learn today**



Let's get to know each other a little bit. I'd like to learn more about what questions you have. And thought you might like to meet some colleagues.

Go ahead and type the items listed into the chat. I'll tell you a brief story of my Master's project experience while you're typing.

I got my masters in agronomy while I was an Extension Educator. I started out looking at native legumes to add to prairie grasses for biofuel use. Weeds came up in my beautiful plots, and we sprayed an herbicide we thought was safe for the legumes. It wasn't. It killed my plots and ended that project. So we shifted gears and I finished up a project looking at frost seeding forage legumes into cover crops. It all worked out, I got my degree, we got some useful information.

And in the middle of my defense presentation the projector shut down, and was saved by two colleagues who brought a back-up projector for me. I was a little scarred, but made it.

Point being, we understand if things don't go according to plan. Let us know where you're having problems and we can help you adjust course.



Funds management

You are paid by reimbursement through invoicing.

You can invoice up to monthly.

Check in now with your accounting office:

- **Accounts are getting set up**
- **Get your account numbers**
- **Discuss any needs like paying farmers or purchasing supplies**

Funds are withheld if reporting is not current!



You will have someone from your grants office submitting invoices on a reimbursement basis. Invoices can be submitted as often as once a month, so discuss with them the process to use.

For the most part, we don't need receipts for expenses, but we do sometimes need a description, especially if the charge is in a general category, like "other", or "fee for services".

An exception is that USDA is quite strict about paying for food or meals, and meal costs can only be covered as part of the continuity of a meeting—in other words, it would be disruptive to the program if the meal were not provided, because there is program before and after the meal.

For food charges, we need an itemized receipt, a list of attendees, and a brief justification.

And an important note about reimbursements—**we withhold payment of invoices until reporting is up-to-date.**

Resources

www.northcentral.sare.org

- **Managing your Graduate Student grant webpage:**

<https://northcentral.sare.org/grants/manage-your-grant/graduate-student-grant-2/>

- **SARE materials**
- **Farmer Field Day Toolkit**

projects.sare.org

- **Submitting reports**
- **Updating your information**
 - **Email is our primary communication method**
- **Other project reports**



Bookmark these two websites, so that when you have question down the line you can come back and find the instructions.

Northcentral.sare.org

- Lots of details can be found on the 'Managing your grant' webpage.
- You can order SARE materials to use as educational materials in your events, if you'd like. You can reach out to us for help.
- If you haven't hosted a field day before, our tool kit might be a good resource for you.

Projects.sare.org

- Where you applied, where you will manage the grant too.
- Turn in your reports here
- Make sure to tell us if your information changes
- You can look to see how others have reported their efforts

Reporting - projects.sare.org

Timeline

- **Progressive reporting system**
- **We read and approve**
- **Progress report**
 - **March 2027**
- **Final report**
 - **60 days after your project ends**
- **You get notification when its approved, or if we have questions**



***we will send reminders, but be ready!**



In our project reporting system, we use progressive reporting, so we end with only one final comprehensive report for each project.

If your project ends April 30, 2027 or before—you don't need to file a separate annual update for the previous year, just include everything in the final report. For example, if your project ends April 15, 2027, you wouldn't file a 2026 update on March 1, you'd just file a final report, due 60 days after the end date, so by June 15. We do send out report reminders but you should put your due date on your calendar.

When you come back to report on progress, you'll go into the report system, go to your project, and click on working version, which will be your approved report. You can alter as needed, or just add to the report.

Reporting - cont.

Complete the demographic information

Information to gather:

- **Outputs:**
 - Events/activities
 - Participants
 - Products
- **Outcomes**
 - Knowledge gains
 - Behavior change



If you didn't complete the demographic information when you first registered in the SARE system, **you will need to enter demographic info before you are allowed to submit a report.** Your faculty advisor will also need to complete the demographic information before you can submit. Answer options include "prefer not to answer", but you must respond to each question. Your demographic data is maintained separately from any of your proposals or funded projects, and is used in aggregated data only.

It will be helpful for you to **look at the options for reporting information and tracking participation at your outreach events**, so that you know what type of information to track.

Now, you can **log into projects.sare.org**, if you haven't already. You should see your grant project listed. Go ahead and click into it. When you go to do your first report, you'll follow the instructions and choose to "start a new draft report", whenever you come back to add to the report, you'll go to "working version" and it will pull up the info you've already entered and you'll add to it.

Click through the sections. You'll notice that there are a lot of different options under things like project activities and outreach activities—you aren't expected to be doing all of those, you're just reporting against what you said you'd do in your proposal—

having all the options listed helps us aggregate data.

Part of the information is autofilled from your proposal, but can be edited. You'll report on any changes you had to make in materials and methods, provide preliminary results and project and outreach activities and number of participants.

You're **asked to track participation at outreach events by both farmers and ag professionals, and track basic information about knowledge gained or behavior changed or intended behavior change** by those attendees, so again—good to look through the reporting system to see what information you should be tracking.

Make sure you **make plans for gathering the relevant information** as you go through the project.

Communications

- **We can help publicize events**
 - **Reach out to me or Marie Flanagan**
- **Take A LOT of photos**
 - **Great for your reports**
- **Tag us in social media**
 - **We can boost your work**
- **Acknowledge SARE as a funder**
- **northcentral.sare.org**



Promote and publicize grant projects—our communication specialist Marie Flanagan is happy to help you publicize events, field days or fact sheet articles. Her contact info is listed on our website. Send her the info listed and she'll help get the word out. Youtube channel for videos, Facebook, Instagram, Ticktock

Details of how we'd like to be acknowledged are on the Managing your grant webpage.

Logos and acknowledgements for funding. We appreciate you acknowledging funding sources, it helps people know the good work that you are doing that their federal tax dollars are supporting. We know that you are often doing posters/presentations as deadlines approach, so have tried to put the logos and acknowledgement language you can use online.

The Acknowledgment language provided is formal and intended for more formal uses, like for refereed or extension publication. On posters or Powerpoint, please list the project number so people can access more information about your project on our online reporting system, and use the SARE/NIFA logos to acknowledge the funding source.

Making changes to your contract

- **No Cost Extension**
 - Weather
 - Pandemic
 - Illness, etc
- **Change in project scope**
- **Rebudget**
 - Up to 10% can be moved without contacting us
- **Personnel changes**
 - PI change needs extra care
- **Contact information**



The website page contains this specific information about how to request changes to your contract.

We know that during the course of your project, things change, so we allow for changes to original contract. **Changes** like a no cost extension, which provides more time but no additional funding, and major rebudgeting, **must officially be requested and approved between our organization's grants offices**. Write letter addressed to Beth, attached to email, include subaward number, project number and justification and new end date. You should have your **faculty advisor cosign** the letter with you, then route the request through your grants office and they'll send it to Riana Fletcher in the University of Minnesota grants office. She will send it to me for approval.

We realize that your proposed budget is an estimate so there is some flexibility in the contract.

Within a major category, (travel, personnel, materials and supplies), as long as within scope, no authorization needed to make changes.

In addition, **you can change spending between categories up to 10% of the total**

award without official authorization, so in other words, if you have a \$20,000 grant, you can move up to \$2,000 from materials and supplies to travel without requesting a rebudget. If you are making change that exceed that amount, you'll request a rebudget, following a similar procedure to the request for a NCE. Change in scope or change in P.I. need a little more scrutiny and we need to take them to our Executive Committee.

To Do List

Questions?



- Check in with your accounting office
- Bookmark 2 websites
 - Managing your graduate student grant, northcentral.sare.org
 - projects.sare.org
- Gather information as you do the work
- Put report due dates on your calendar
- Contact us with any questions or changes

Check with accounting

- Accounts are set up
- Get account numbers
- Discuss any needs for contracts, etc

Bookmark 2 sites

- northcentral.sare.org - managing your grant - graduate student
- projects.sare.org

Gather information

- Participants
- Outputs
- Impacts

Put report dates on your calendar

- Progress March 2027 (unless ending shortly after that)
- Final report - 60 days after your project ends
 - Can upload academic papers after published.

Contact me with questions or changes needed

- No cost extension
- Rebudget over 10%
- Change in PI

Last thing!

**Are you going to CANVAS
in Salt Lake City?**

I am!



Let me know:

- **Oral presentation time**
- **Poster location**
- **Another time/place to find you**

I'd love to say hello and hear how your projects are going.

Good luck! Questions?

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Follow and tag us!



Reach out. And don't forget to follow NCR-SARE on social media and tag us in your posts about your project.