



Farmer Grant Program 2021 Call for Proposals

Important Dates

The online Grant Management System will open for submissions: **October 1, 2020**

Proposals, with required attachments, are due: November 17, 2020, 5:00 p.m. ET

Proposals are submitted online at: projects.sare.org.

Questions?

Visit the Northeast SARE website at: www.northeastsare.org/FarmerGrant.

Contact grant coordinator Candice Huber at candice.huber@uvm.edu or 802/651-8335, x 554.

About Northeast SARE

The Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program offers competitive grants to farmers, educators, agricultural service providers, researchers, 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.

The program—including funding decisions—is driven by the Northeast SARE **outcome statement**:

Agriculture in the Northeast will be diversified and profitable, providing healthful products to customers. Farmers and the people they work with will steward resources to ensure sustainability and resilience, and foster conditions where farmers have high quality of life and communities can thrive.



The Northeast region includes: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, West Virginia, Vermont, and Washington, D.C.

Inside

About the Grant Program	2
Use of Funds	4
Grant Timeline	5
Preparing Your Proposal	5
Proposal Checklist	6
Navigating the Online System ...	7
Step-by-Step Instructions	8
Funded Proposals	15
Resources	15
Appendix: Budget Guidance and Example Budget	16

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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. Rev.09.3.20

About the Northeast SARE Farmer Grant Program

Overview

Northeast SARE offers grants to farmers to explore new concepts in sustainable agriculture (on production, marketing, labor, farm succession, social capital, and other topics) often through experiments, surveys, prototypes, on-farm demonstrations or other research and education techniques. Farmer Grant projects address issues that affect farming with long-term sustainability in mind. Competitive proposals explore new ideas and techniques or apply known ideas in new ways or to new communities. Reviewers look to fund projects that are well-designed to meet the objectives and promise significant benefit to farming communities.

There are no restrictions on the topics that may be addressed so long as the proposed project leads to new information that enhances Northeast agriculture. You may experiment with a new crop or production method, develop a machine or tool that does something new, try out a pest control or grazing technique, explore new ways of adding value, look at a new way of product marketing, or address issues related to farm management, among other ideas. For guidance on how to design your project, refer to SARE's bulletin, [How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch](#). To see examples of funded Farmer Grant projects, visit the national SARE project database at projects.sare.org/search-projects/.

Eligible Applicants

The Farmer Grant program is open to all commercial farm business owners and farm employees in the Northeast region. As an applicant, you may be farming on a large or small scale, with organic or conventional practices, urban or rural, full- or part-time, etc.; the program accepts all types and scales of farms. Eligible applicants must run commercial operations with an established annual farm income of at least \$1,000 from the harvest and sale of crop, nursery, livestock, greenhouse, or aquaculture products sold on a regular basis. This grant program is not intended for non-commercial gardeners. If you are not sure if you are eligible, please read our document, "[What is a Farm?](#)" found at: www.northeastsare.org/FarmerGrant.

Applicants who are farm employees (versus farm owners) are eligible to apply. If you are applying as a farm employee, you must complete a Grant Commitment Form that includes signatures from both you and the farm owner verifying that they will fiscally administer the project.

Farmers on farms affiliated with an institution or a nonprofit organization are also eligible to apply so long as the farm commercially produces and sells agricultural products. For these proposals, you must use the name of the 501(c)(3) organization in the proposal and complete a Grant Commitment Form.

Northeast SARE encourages projects submitted from or in collaboration with women, LGBTQ+, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers.

Proposals are limited to one per farm per year. If you have several ideas for this grant program, you will need to choose the one you want to submit for this grant cycle.

Current grant recipients who are behind in their reporting cannot apply. If you have a grant project that has ended or is near completion, finish it and file your final report; if your project is still in progress, make sure you have submitted a recent annual report.

Technical Advisor Role

All projects must enlist a technical advisor. The technical advisor can be an Extension educator, NRCS or other government staff, university researcher, nonprofit staff, private consultant, veterinarian, or other technical expert, including another farmer.

Before writing your proposal, it's important to identify a technical advisor and talk your project through with them. The role of the advisor is to provide support to you as the grant applicant. For example, the technical advisor may review the proposal to give feedback, help with the research design of the project, provide technical information on the topic, help troubleshoot any problems that arise during the project, and/or help promote the results of the completed work.

You may select an advisor from within the Northeast or another geographic area if their expertise and willingness to participate is a better fit for your project.

A letter of commitment from your technical advisor is required; it should describe their background, expertise and involvement that confirms their level of commitment to the project. The letter must be uploaded to your proposal.

Although the technical advisor is required for your grant project, **you**, the farmer applicant, must be the one actively in charge of the project. If you find that you prefer your technical advisor be in charge of the project, encourage them to apply for a Partnership Grant with you as a cooperating farmer.

See our "[Guide for Farmer Grant Technical Advisors](#)" for more information about the roles and responsibilities of technical advisors on Farmer Grant projects.

Project Duration

Most projects run for one year, but multiyear projects (up to 3 years) are accepted.

Funding Available

Farmer Grants are capped at \$15,000. Typically, 50 to 65 proposals are submitted per year and 25 to 35 are funded.

Conflict of Interest

Members of the Northeast SARE Administrative Council, SARE staff, and SARE State Coordinators are not permitted to be a part of proposals submitted to this grant program. Members of proposal review teams are not permitted to discuss or vote on proposals that involve organizations they work for, organizations for which they serve as board member or adviser, former graduate student advisees, or close personal friends and family.

Public Domain

Applications 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 access of results of funded projects; therefore, information, exclusive or proprietary processes, procedures or techniques developed with SARE funds, project reports, and related information will be in the public domain.

Acknowledging SARE

All funded projects are required to acknowledge Northeast SARE as the funding source in **all** project publications and outreach materials.

Use of Funds

SARE funding must comply with USDA NIFA and University of Vermont (Northeast SARE's host institution) guidelines. Therefore, there are certain allowable and ineligible expenses for this grant program, listed below. All grant expenses must be incurred during the contract period, which will be defined before the project begins.

Eligible Expenses

Funds may be used for expenses specific to the project:

- **Labor**, including your time and the time your employees or others work directly on the project;
- **Supplies**, specific to the project including research supplies, education and outreach materials, copies, postage, printing, software, etc.;
- **Equipment** that is necessary for, and unique to, the project. Equipment with general uses are not eligible;
- **Equipment rental** or sharing the cost of unusual equipment specifically needed for the project;
- **Services**, like soil testing and consulting; and
- **Travel and per diem necessary for the project.**

Ineligible Expenses

Funds may NOT be used for:

- **Capital costs** including the purchase of land, buildings, livestock, general use machinery, orchards, greenhouses, and major improvements, fixtures or expansion expenses;
- **Normal operating expenses** such as utilities, general maintenance, general supplies, or any other expenses that would be there in the absence of the project;
- **Incentive offers and promotional items**, including items of clothing (hats, tee shirts, aprons, etc.), swag, giveaways, subsidies, raffles, gift cards, and branded promotional material;
- Purchase of **motorized vehicles** and general use equipment;
- **Travel to conferences and meetings** unless essential to the project, such as presentation of project results;
- **International travel** unless integral to the project's success and described in the budget justification (Note: There are certain restrictions on costs and carriers);
- **Cell phone** charges, even if you use your cell phone in the course of the project;
- **Food** expenses unless necessary for the continuity of a training event or project meeting; and
- **Expenses outside of the grant period.** SARE cannot pay for expenses incurred before the award start date or after the end date on the grant contract.

Additionally, it is expected that costs for copiers, cameras, computers, video equipment, and other items that have a wide range of uses beyond the boundaries of the project be provided by the applicant. To be considered as a direct cost, the item must be clearly essential to the project. Contact us if you have questions.

Grant Timeline

Online system opens for submissions.....	October 1, 2020
Proposal submission deadline	November 17, 2020, 5 p.m. ET
Award decisions announced to applicants.....	Late February 2021
Contract start date for awarded projects	March 1, 2021

Preparing Your Proposal

Advanced Planning

You will submit your proposal online at: projects.sare.org. Please prepare your proposal well in advance of the deadline. Successful grantees report that it generally takes 20 to 40 hours to develop a proposal. Work on the budget ahead of time and verify amounts as you go. Take into account the time it takes to receive the signed commitment letter from your technical advisor and prepare other required documents to be uploaded to the proposal. All required documents must be included with your online proposal by the deadline; incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

Text Limits, Formatting, and Writing Suggestions

Keep your writing clear and simple. To the extent possible, avoid scientific jargon and specialized vocabulary--write for a mixed audience that includes farmers, researchers, extension staff and other agricultural service providers. You can assume that grant reviewers have solid agricultural knowledge, but not necessarily deep expertise in your subject area.

Do not include links to external sites, except as needed in the citation list, as they will not be considered by reviewers.

There are word limits for most sections of the proposal. We highly recommend you prepare your proposal offline, completing your responses per the instructions that follow and then copying and pasting your responses into the online system. To that end, we have posted a Word document of the proposal questions, see: www.northeastsare.org/FarmerGrant.

Note that when word count limits are exceeded in the online submission system, the word count font changes to red and you will not be able to save that answer until the word count is at or below the limit. Also note that copying and pasting from some word processing programs may result in the loss of formatting; make any formatting corrections within the online system. Figures, tables and other supporting graphics are allowed only in specified sections.

Ask your technical advisor or someone else to review the draft of your proposal. A fresh set of eyes can help you identify sections that may be unclear, correct errors, and strengthen areas that may need help.

It is advisable to correct any mistakes online before submitting and to print out the final copy of your proposal for your records.

Proposal Outline / Checklist

Components of the proposal and their word limits appear below, listed in the order they appear in the online submission system. Use the outline as a checklist to ensure the proposal is complete before submitting.

- Project Title (150-character limit, including spaces)
- Project Description (160-character limit, including spaces)

General Information

- Project start date
- Project end date
- State
- Primary Commodities
- Primary Practices
- Benefits and Impacts

Verification and Commitment

- Confirm that you represent a farm business and your role as an operator of this farm

These only apply to farm employee applicants:

- Grant Commitment Form (upload) (required of farm employee applicants)
- Institutional Official Information
- FDP Clearinghouse

Proposal Summary and Applicant Information

- Proposal Summary (250-word max)
- Resources, Experience, Skills and Capacity (300-word max)
- Identify and Describe Technical Advisor
- Letter of Commitment from Technical Advisor (upload) (required)
- Identify and Describe Other Key Cooperator(s) (if applicable)
- Letters of Commitment from other Key Cooperator(s) (upload) (required if applicable)

Introduction

- Problem and Solution (750-word max)
- Previous Work (750-word max)
- Citation List (750-word max)

Plan of Work

- Objectives (200-word max)
- Materials and Methods (1200-word max)
- Other Relevant Research Information (upload)

Required Documents

Proposals with missing or incomplete required documents will **not** advance to grant review so be sure the following required documents are uploaded:

- Letter of Commitment from Technical Advisor
- Budget Justification and Narrative Spreadsheet
- Letters of Commitment from other key collaborators (if applicable)
- Grant Commitment Form (if applicable)

- Timeline (500-word max)
- Outreach (250-word max)

Budget

- Budget Justification and Narrative (upload) (required)
- Budget Summary

Human Subjects

- Does this project involve human subjects?

These only apply to projects with human subjects (no word limits):

- Subject Participation
- Data Collected
- Method of Data Collection

Livestock Care

- Does this project involve animals? (vertebrate animals only)

These only apply to livestock projects (no word limits):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kind of Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Number of Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Procedures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Source of Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Other People Handling /Caring for Animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stocking Density | <input type="checkbox"/> Post Project Animal Outcome |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing/Shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaning of Housing/Shelter | <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Slaughter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeding and Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Consumption |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutritional Needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Veterinarian |

Navigating the Online Submission System

Proposals are submitted online at: projects.sare.org

The online submission system will be open for Farmer Grant proposals from October 1, 2020 until the deadline, **5:00 p.m. ET on November 17, 2020**. Staff are available to answer questions until 5 p.m. ET on the due date. Proposals submitted after 5:00 p.m. ET on November 17 will **not** be accepted. We strongly suggest you submit your proposal well in advance of the deadline in the unlikely event you experience technical issues that take time to resolve. The proposal must be submitted by you, the grant applicant and not your technical advisor or other individual.

Getting a User Account

All new users should select “**Create an account**” and complete the registration information. The system will send you an email with instructions to create your password.

If you have previously received SARE grants and submitted reports, you are registered as a user in the system and should use your account to submit your proposal.

Logging In

From the SARE Grant Management System landing page at projects.sare.org, select “**Log in.**” Once logged in, select “**Start a new grant proposal**”. Grant opportunities for all four SARE regions will be listed; scroll down until you see “**Northeast**” and click the “+” button. Under “**2021 Northeast SARE Farmer Grants**” choose “**Begin a New Proposal.**”

Entering Your Proposal

Start your proposal by clicking “**Edit title**” and entering a clear, succinct title of under 150 characters (including spaces) that captures the essence of the project’s intent. Avoid acronyms, jargon and unnecessary words.

Next, provide a brief “**Proposal description**” of 300 characters or less. This is a short description of what the project intends to accomplish and, should your project be funded, will show up as the search result in the SARE database.

Be sure to click “**Save**” after each entry.

Ignore the button that says “**Change PI**”; you, as the grant applicant, should be entering the proposal.

Next, complete the proposal sections. Click on each section and submit responses to the questions. To enter information, click “**Edit Answer**” for each question and be sure to click “**Save**” after each entry. See the Step-by-step instructions below for more guidance on these sections. At any time during the writing of your proposal, you may preview a draft from the Proposal Overview Page by clicking “**View Draft**”. Once there, you can also share the draft of your proposal with collaborators by either sending the “**Link to Share**” found at the top of the draft page (after clicking View Draft) or by creating and sending a PDF of the proposal.

When all proposal questions are answered to your satisfaction and you have uploaded all required attachments, go to the Proposal Overview page and click the “**Submit Proposal**” button at the bottom of the page. The "Submit" button will not appear until you have answered all the required questions. Select “**I understand**” to confirm your submission.

Prior to the deadline, you may unsubmit to revise the proposal, but if you do so, don’t forget to submit it again when you are done, otherwise it will not go forward to review. Each time you submit or unsubmit the proposal, you will receive an email confirmation.

Step-by-Step Proposal Instructions

The online proposal is divided into sections that contain multiple questions to answer. Instructions for questions within all sections are presented below. Review criteria appear next to their associated questions throughout the proposal.

Online, the proposal sections appear in a list in the left sidebar of the Proposal Overview page; clicking on the section heading will open the fields for entering responses to questions. To enter a response, click the “**Edit Answer**” button after each question. Answers should be written per the instructions below and should adequately address the associated review criteria.

After you have logged in and started a new proposal you will be asked to enter the following.

General Information

Project start date. Choose a start date from the calendar pop-up. Projects should not start before March 1, 2021. Contract start dates will be March 1, 2021 but projects may begin after that date. Note: SARE cannot pay for expenses incurred before the contract start date.

Project end date. Choose an end date from the calendar pop-up. Typically projects last for 1-2 years. All projects must be completed no later than November 30, 2024.

State. Select the state where the farm is located and the majority of work will be carried out.

Primary Commodities. Select only the primary production commodities being addressed or investigated by the project, not every commodity that might potentially be affected. If your project is not commodity specific, select “Does not apply to specific commodities”.

Primary Practices. Select only the primary production practices being addressed or investigated by the project, not every practice that might potentially be affected.

Benefits and Impacts. Of the choices listed, how will your project have the most benefit and impact?

Verification and Commitment

Confirm that you represent a farm business and your role as an operator of this farm. Read the eligibility information on page 2 and select your response. Farm employees may apply but are required to complete and upload a Grant Commitment Form, see below.

The remaining questions in this section **only** apply to applicants who work as a farm employee of an institution, organization or private farm. *If you are a farm owner, skip to the next section.*

If you are a farm employee, please complete the next two questions.

Grant Commitment Form. A Grant Commitment Form verifying approval by the farm owner or institution/organization is required. Download the form at: www.northeastsare.org/FarmerGrant. You must sign as the applicant. The owner of the farm, an authorized official of the applicant institutional grants office, or fiscal agent for the organization must sign the bottom section. Upload a pdf or image copy of the fully officiated Grant Commitment form to the online submission system.

Organizational Official Information. If your organization is a nonprofit and is serving as the fiscal agent for the project, provide the name and contact information of the organizational official (usually someone in the grants office or who is otherwise in charge of grants for organizations).

Proposal Summary and Applicant Information

Proposal Summary (250-word limit).

This is a standalone summary of the project. It should briefly describe the issue, the objective(s), key components of your plan of work, and outreach strategy. Since the summary is the first thing reviewers will see, take some time to make it clear and compelling. You may want to compose the summary after you have written the rest of your proposal.

What resources, experience, skills and capacity do you bring to the project? (300-word limit).

Describe the farm operations and your farming experience to give reviewers a picture of your capabilities and insight into the problem to be addressed. Specifically, let reviewers know how long you've been involved in agriculture and the background of the farm, providing a description of the production enterprises (e.g., acres, livestock numbers, etc.) and types of market outlets (wholesale, retail, farm stand, CSA), whether you farm full- or part-time, gross sales, and other key information about the enterprise. If farm resources will be dedicated to this project, describe them here. For example, you may already have access to an essential piece of specialized equipment or may have received other funding to cover related expenses not funded by SARE.

Identify and Describe Technical Advisor.

Select “**Add a cooperator**” to enter the name and contact information for your project’s technical advisor. Use the “**Additional info**” field to describe their background, expertise and role in the project.

Letter of commitment from Technical Advisor, (File upload).

A letter of commitment from your technical advisor is required. The letter should describe their background, expertise and involvement that confirms their level of commitment to the project.

Other Key Cooperators, if applicable.

If other key individuals are integral to the project, select “**Add a cooperator**” and complete the name and contact information for each. In the “**Additional info**” field, describe who they are, their expertise, and the resources they bring, and explain their role. Only include people that have lead roles in the project; you do not need to include your staff.

Letters of commitment from other key cooperators, if applicable (File upload).

Each key individual listed above must provide a letter of commitment. The letters should indicate that each person understands their roles, what they will bring to the effort, and is ready and willing to participate. Letters should be written by the individual team members, not you, the applicant.

*Do **not** upload letters of general support from individuals not involved in your project, curricula vitae, or sample promotional materials about you or your farm.*

Review criteria:

The proposal adequately describes the applicant's experience, time and commitment they will bring to the project. It is clear they have the knowledge and skills needed to see the work through to its conclusion. The applicant and farm have access to resources necessary to support the project.

Review criteria:

The technical advisor and, if applicable, other key people involved are adequately described, including how these team members will support the project and the expertise, skill, and time commitment they will offer. Signed letters of commitment from the technical advisor (and other key individuals as applicable), stating their roles and commitment, are uploaded to the proposal.

Introduction

Problem and Solution (750-word limit). What is the problem or opportunity, why is it important, and what is your proposed solution? Briefly state the problem, issue or opportunity and explain why it matters. Convey how addressing this problem will improve the sustainability of farmers like yourself and extent of the impact (for example, the Rhode Island Seafood Marketing Collaborative or maple sugar producers in the Northeast; adding known numbers of farms in these groups is helpful). If possible, state how and when farmers, farm groups, or others in the field have expressed interest or need for this type of investigation.

Then, state your proposed solution or approach, and how it addresses the above need. Be clear about the expected impact of the solution as relates to at least one of the following aspects of sustainable agriculture:

- reduction of environmental and/or health risks in agriculture;
- improved productivity, reduction of costs and/or increase of net farm income;
- conservation of soil, improvement of water quality, and protection of natural resources;
- enhancement of employment in farm communities; and
- improvement of quality of life for farmers, their employees, and the farming community.

If you reference a study or article, add the full citation in the Citation List.

What efforts have been made by others to solve the problem or take advantage of this opportunity? (750-word limit). Describe the current knowledge and practice on this topic to show your familiarity with what has been tried and how your project builds on existing efforts. If the practice is known but has not been applied in your community, explain why the project is relevant or will be impactful in our region.

Citation List (750-word limit). Cite up to four studies or articles to demonstrate your knowledge of related previous work and/or data. While you can include SARE studies, it is best not to rely solely on the SARE reporting database. Provide a list of citations referenced here and elsewhere in your proposal.

Plan of Work

What is/are your project's objective(s)? (200-word limit). State your project's objective(s) starting with the phrase, "This project seeks to..." or "The question we will answer is ..." List specific objectives by number and include what you will compare, study or accomplish. Include what information you hope to uncover or demonstrate, how it will be useful to other farmers, and what improvement you foresee happening if the project is successful.

Review criteria:

An important problem or opportunity is well described. Addressing it will clearly enhance the sustainability of a specific group of farmers. There is evidence of interest in the proposed solution among those farmers, and that solution will likely impact at least one of the listed aspects of sustainable agriculture.

Review criteria:

Current knowledge and practice related to the project is fully described, and it is clear how the project will build on prior work. Projects that are applying existing knowledge to a new community explain why the work is relevant and will have impact. information based on an understanding of related work; it will build on current knowledge and is clear how the project is relevant or impactful.

Review criteria:

Project objectives are clearly stated and include anticipated results that will lead to useful information for farmers or improvements that will make farms more sustainable.

Materials and Methods (1,200-word limit).

What are your project's planned methods and measurements? For each objective, describe what you will do and how you will do it.

Be very specific in describing the testing, sampling, training, treatments, surveying, etc. you will use. For example, if you plan to compare weed pressure between a control and a treatment, describe how you will count and identify weeds, weigh weeds, and measure weeding time, how often and at what stage of crop growth. Saying only that you will compare the amount of weed growth is not sufficient; you need to be specific as to how you will compare treatments. As another example, if you plan to compare the impact of an organized employee communication system on job satisfaction, specify the survey questions you will ask workers and how/when you will implement the survey.

Inserting URLs of websites into the methods section is ill-advised since reviewers may not have time to investigate all of them; as an alternative, refer to them and place them in your citation list.

While statistical analysis is not required for this grant program, if you do plan to use a statistical model, state the design. For more information on experimental design and statistical analysis, refer to the bulletin, [How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch](#).

Other Relevant Research Information (File upload).

Upload materials that clarify your proposal to reviewers such as a plot or sampling plan, experiment diagram, prototype image or drawing, survey questions, proof of concept for economic analysis, and other supporting research documentation as needed.

Certain situations require additional documents.

- If you are conducting a field trial, attach plot plans or diagrams for experimental design (hand-drawn is acceptable).
- If you are proposing an invention or prototype, attach diagrams, sketches or explanatory images.
- If your project proposes a feasibility or economic viability study, attach a proof of concept or pro-forma budget.
- If your project will measure changes in human learning or behavior, include sample surveys.

Outreach (250-word limit).

What is the outreach plan for the project? Describe how other farmers and other key audiences (eg., agricultural service providers, etc.) will learn about your results.

List specific planned events, media efforts, social media channels (estimated number reached, etc.) and the scope (e.g. number of subscribers) and/or region.

Outreach may take place anytime during the project but the final results and lessons learned must be publicized in some way before your project has concluded to reach farmers who could potentially benefit from the results of your project.

Review criteria:

The methods described will provide the evidence needed to meet project objectives; sufficient detail has been included to leave little/no questions on what will be measured, how, where, and when. There is indication of thoughtful planning and consultation with the technical advisor and collaborators. Planned methods will give results that could be actionable by farmers; if a statistical design is planned, it is the correct one and includes sufficient sample numbers to provide reliable results.

Review criteria:

The outreach plan is clearly described with specific events/activities that have clear deliverables and realistic expectations for reaching farmers and other and other key audiences that could potentially benefit from the results of the project.

Timeline (500-word limit).

Outline the project activities in a chronological timeline that state the steps you will take, including planned outreach activities. Starting with the project start date, specify in a month/year format (e.g., March 2021) when key activities and events happen. Include how long each step will take and who will do them.

Keep in mind that SARE funds will not cover any work or expenses incurred prior to March 1, 2021 and that the timeline should align with your budget justification spreadsheet in terms of personnel time, testing, etc.

Review criteria:

The timetable is complete and realistic, and includes descriptions of who will do what, when and how long each step will take. The timetable is aligned with the project's budget and plan of work.

Example timeline in table form.

Time Period	Activity	Personnel involved/time allotted
March 2021, first 2 weeks	Prepare beds and plant seeds for control and treatments	Chris De Campo and Taylor Allende. Estimated 16 hours per person.
March - June 2021	Take measurements weekly	Taylor Allende, estimated 2 hours /week for 18 weeks
July 2021	Analyze results	Chris De Campo, estimated 8 hours/week for 3 weeks
August-September 2021	Twilight meetings to present results	Chris De Campo and Taylor Allende, 2 hours/person per meeting, 3 meetings

Budget

Both a summary and a detailed justification and narrative of the budget is necessary to establish the specifics of your request for funding.

The funding request is defined by the project budget that provides your best estimate for the expenses you expect to encounter. All expected expenses should be itemized in the Budget Justification and Narrative. Calculate your costs as precisely as possible to show reviewers what funds are needed to carry out your project, and why they are needed.

The budget should be realistic and complete. A budget lacking sufficient detail, containing grossly over- or under-estimated expenses, or including unallowable expenses will decrease the chances for funding.

[See the Appendix](#) for a sample Budget Justification and Narrative and Budget Summary.

Review criteria:

A clear and sensible budget is proposed. The budget is internally consistent (units provided and math is correct) and justifies how the funds will be spent. Budget items are allowable and reasonable; the overall budget request is appropriate to the scale, scope, and expected results of the project.

Budget Justification and Narrative (File upload).

Download and complete the Budget Justification and Narrative Template (Excel spreadsheet) provided at: www.northeastsare.org/FarmerGrant.

Use only the funding categories provided in the template (i.e., personnel, materials and supplies, travel, publications/printing, and other direct costs), adding rows or expanding row heights as needed to accommodate your narrative and justification. For all items, give brief, clear descriptions of their purposes. Justify each expense with narrative description. Show how each requested amount was determined by itemizing the quantity and per-unit cost of each expense.

Take time to calculate your expenses for this project—the budget submitted is what reviewers will consider and requests for changes after submission may not be approved. Only include funds requested from SARE in this budget justification. When complete, upload the Excel file (do not convert to a pdf format) to the online submission system.

Budget Summary.

Enter the summed subtotals for each major budget category from the completed Budget Justification and Narrative into the Budget Summary. Click “**Add a budget item**” and select the appropriate funding category (i.e., personnel, materials and supplies, travel, printing and publication costs, other direct costs, subawards, and indirect costs). In the “**Item Description**” box, type “**See budget narrative**”.

Skip and leave the “**Details/Justification**” section blank as that information has been provided in the completed Budget Justification and Narrative spreadsheet.

Click on “**Add another budget item**” to enter summed subtotals from more categories.

Human Subjects Research

Does your project involve human subjects? Requires a yes or no response.

If your project will solicit data from people using surveys, interviews, or observational studies in order to make generalizable conclusions, it is likely human subjects research. Please select “yes” and answer the following questions so that Northeast SARE can verify that this project is implemented safely and in accordance with human subjects protections as is required by USDA NIFA for research projects.

If you select “no”, save your response and move on to the next section.

Subject participation (no word limit). Who will be participating in your human subjects research?

Data collected (no word limit). What information will be collected from the participants?

Method of data collection (no word limit). What are your methods for data collection (surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.)? How will you protect anonymity for collection of sensitive information? Sensitive information could include income, demographics, etc. Examples of protecting information could be to code responses or remove names.

Livestock Care

Does this project involve animals (vertebrate animals only)? Requires a yes or no response.

If your project will work with livestock or other vertebrate animals, select “yes” and respond to the following questions; these responses help Northeast SARE verify that this project’s handling of animals complies with the Animal Welfare Act, as is required by USDA NIFA for research projects.

If you select “no”, save your response and skip the following questions.

Kind of animals (no word limit). What kind of animals will be involved in your project?

Number of animals (no word limit). Please indicate how many of each animal will be involved in your project.

Source of animals (no word limit). The source (name and location) from which you plan to obtain animals for your project. If you already own the animals and they are already at the project site, where did you obtain them and how long have you had them?

Stocking density (no word limit). What is stocking density (space per animal)? Please provide a response for all forms of housing (pens, feedlots, pastures, etc.) that will be used in this project.

Housing/Shelter (no word limit). Describe the housing or shelter available for the animals in normal and inclement weather.

Cleaning of housing/shelter (no word limit). For the period of the study, how is the housing/shelter cleaned? How often?

Feeding and water (no word limit). Describe how feed and water is provided, how often it is provided, and how often the feed and water containers are checked and cleaned.

Nutritional needs (no word limit). Describe how the nutritional needs of the animals in this project will be met.

Health management (no word limit). Describe the vaccination program and the routine procedures used to minimize disease and manage parasites. Include what the animals are vaccinated against and provide common names of the products that are used. Include a description of routine worming or parasite management.

Procedures (no word limit). What procedures will the animals undergo during course of this project? Will these procedures induce or potentially induce distress or pain in the animal and if so, how will you manage or minimize the potential for pain and distress?

Other people handling/caring for animals (no word limit). Please indicate if other individuals will participate in handling and or caring for the animals in this project. If other individuals will be involved, please describe their expertise with animal care. If individuals need to be trained to perform the procedures described in this project, please indicate how they will be trained to do the procedures properly.

Post project animal outcome (no word limit). At the end of the project--what happens to animals? Please indicate if they will remain at the project site, be sold, or be slaughtered.

Transportation (no word limit). If animals are transported off-site, please describe how they will be transported.

Animal slaughter (no word limit). If animals are slaughtered, please indicate if this will occur at a commercial licensed slaughter facility. If it is not done at a commercial licensed slaughter facility, describe where and how slaughter will be conducted.

Human consumption (no word limit). Please indicate if the animals or products from these animals will be used as food for humans and, if so, confirm that withdrawal times for medications will be followed before allowing the animals or products from the animals to enter the food chain.

Veterinarian (no word limit). Identify the veterinarian (name, address, and contact information) who will provide routine and emergency care of the animals used in this project.

Funded Proposals

Proposals are evaluated based on the review criteria listed by independent review teams made up of farmers and agricultural service providers from across the region. Grants are awarded by Northeast SARE's Administrative Council based on review team rankings. The Administrative Council may give additional consideration to states, audiences and topics that are underrepresented in the Northeast SARE portfolio. If the Northeast SARE Administrative Council selects your project for funding, you may expect the following.

Notification

The Northeast SARE Administrative Council will select proposals for funding by the end of February 2021 and Northeast SARE staff will notify applicants of the status of their proposals soon after that.

Contracting and Disbursement of Funds

Farmers or farm owners of projects selected for funding will sign a contract called a "service agreement" to access the funds approved for the project. Before a contract is issued, Northeast SARE staff will send information detailing the next steps, including any proposal or budget revisions that need to be made.

Funds are released on a reimbursement basis. As such, you need to have the financial capacity to pay project expenses up front and be reimbursed for invoices submitted on a net 30-day term. SARE will hold the last 20 percent of the total award until the project work, including outreach, have been completed and the final project report has been received and approved. For more information, please refer to, "Managing Your Northeast SARE Farmer Grant," at: www.northeastsare.org/ManageFarmerGrant.

Required reporting

Northeast SARE requires annual progress reports and a comprehensive final report for all projects. All reports will be submitted in our online system using our reporting template. Reports should describe the progress made on the research project, detail the findings observed, and document any outputs and impacts. All outreach and educational activities should be reported as well as any measured changes in knowledge or awareness, attitudes and opinions, and/or the adoption of new practices. Publications, photos, and other documentation should be added to the report as attachments to help document and promote the project. Progress reports are due each January 15 for the previous calendar year activity and final reports are due within 30 days of the project's end date. The final report should include full, detailed results of the project and outreach activities conducted.

Northeast SARE asks that farmer grant recipient provide contact information for at least two years after the project has ended to allow for follow-up and response to inquiries about the project. For more information about the types of information SARE collects post-project, please visit:

www.northeastsare.org/logicmodels.

Resources

The following resources may help you as plan and write your proposal.

- Refer to the SARE bulletin, "[How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch](#)".
- See the "[Guide for Technical Advisors](#)".
- Visit SARE's national database to learn about funded projects: projects.sare.org/search-projects/.
- The Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC) at the National Agricultural Library specializes in identifying resources about sustainable food systems and practices: www.nal.usda.gov/afsic. Information specialists can share resources and search techniques relevant to your proposal.

Appendix: Budget Guidance--Explanation of Expense Categories and Examples

Use the Northeast SARE budget justification and narrative templates (Excel spreadsheet) provided at: www.northeastsare.org/FarmerGrant. List each item and provide a narrative description that explains the need for and use of each expense. Itemize each expense with the quantity and per-unit cost; the template will then calculate the total for each category (Personnel, Materials and Supplies, Travel, Publications and Other Direct Costs). These are the totals to enter into your online budget summary. While descriptions of budget items are provided in the template, see below for more explanations of some budget categories. Save and upload the budget justification in a spreadsheet format (.xlsx only).

Personnel

Show personnel costs – your time or the time of other employees – as an hourly rate multiplied by anticipated time needed to complete the project, or, if salaried, the percentage of time (FTE) and salary rate. Only people employed by your organization should be listed in this section. Use your timeline section to help you estimate the hours worked. Note: If you are paying a consultant or providing payments to people who are not your employees, these expenses should be put under “other direct costs.”

Non-Personnel Expenses

Non-personnel expense categories include: materials and supplies, travel, publications/printing, and other direct costs (communications, photocopying, speaker/trainer fees, consultants, services, conferences/meetings/workshops, trainee support, off-site office rental, purchase of equipment, rental of equipment or land-use charges, and other/miscellaneous). Under each category, name each expense, provide narrative justifications of the expense, and provide information on units, quantities, and per unit costs. See “[Use of Funds](#)” (page 4) for a general list of allowable and ineligible expenses.

Materials and Supplies. Be sure to itemize the quantity and per-unit cost of each expense. As an example, if you are proposing to buy cover crop seed, your budget line should list the item, specify why they are needed, how many are needed, and the cost per unit (“Cover crop seed for 10 acres, 12 lbs. per acre = 120 lbs. @ \$4 per pound = \$480.”).

Perennials and livestock may be considered within the materials and supplies expense line. Perennial crops or livestock are generally unallowable expenses when used for the purposes of establishing a commercial enterprise. However, if you are conducting a variety trial, or testing a crop that is new to your region, and the amount is clearly what would be sufficient for plot trials and not to establish commercial production, the purchase of perennial plants is allowable. The purchase of bees for research is also allowable when the numbers are in accord with creating a common basis for treatment comparison. The introduction of smaller, shorter-lived animal species as a treatment of a study can be an allowable expense if the cost is low, an example being the use of ducks or chickens as pest or weed control. Feed during the study period is allowed and housing or fencing investments are treated as equipment expenses, as described above on page 4. If the livestock are a normal part of your farm operation, only request the cost of the livestock if they are in addition to the numbers you usually carry and the study involves a loss of income. SARE funds are not meant to subsidize farm expansions.

Travel for Personnel. Include who is traveling, where they are going, the purpose of the trip, and the distance per trip (“Mary Sanchez, project leader, car travel to experiment station for insect identification training, one 62-mile round trip @ 0.575/mile = \$35.65”). International travel is discouraged and, if proposed, must be integral to the project’s success and described in your budget justification. There are certain restrictions on costs and carriers; contact SARE staff for details. Travel expenses for technical advisors, consultants and other collaborators are listed in sections under “Other Direct Costs.”

Publications/Printing. Include relevant outreach expenses, like the cost of commercial printing of workshop flyers. Note that photocopies belong under “Other Direct Costs”.

Other Direct Costs

This budget category includes communications, photocopying, speaker/trainer fees, consultants, services, conferences/meetings/workshops, trainee support, off-site office rental, purchase of equipment, rental of equipment or land-use charges, and other/miscellaneous. See examples below for communications, photocopying and consultants.

Farmer Grants typically don't include trainee support and off-site office rental; if you are considering these expense categories, contact the Northeast SARE office for further clarification.

Conferences/Meetings/Workshops-Expenses. This section is for events that you will be hosting. **Food expenses** are typically **not** allowed unless clearly justified as light refreshments or working lunches necessary for the continuity of a training or meeting. Events you are attending should be listed under Travel.

Equipment. Equipment refers to tangible, nonexpendable property having a useful life beyond the project period. Farmer Grant applicants are expected to possess the equipment needed for normal farming operations such as tractors, tillage implements, and product handling equipment. Applicants are also expected to have essential equipment such as copiers, cameras, computers, video equipment, and other items that could have a wide range of uses beyond the boundaries of the project, so any requests for these items must be clearly justified and the equipment must be essential and directly related to the project activities.

Any requests for funds to rent or purchase equipment should describe why the equipment is not part of a farm's normal inventory and why it is essential to the project. When possible, equipment should be rented, but if the equipment is relatively inexpensive or not available for rent, an applicant can propose to buy the equipment and request that SARE share the cost based on the time it will actually be used for the project. The allowed expense would be calculated as the purchase price divided by expected useful life times the number of years used on the project. Choose a useful life that is appropriate for the equipment and how it will be used. Equipment purchase costs are entered in the budget under "other direct costs," along with any delivery or shipping costs.

The following are some examples of allowable equipment expenses:

- A \$6,000 scale (plus a shipping fee of \$200) is needed to weigh cattle being raised under different feed regimens and one is not available for rent (www.cattlescales.com, Model AP600). It will be used over two years in the project with a useful life of 10 years, the allowable SARE portion of the purchase price would be $\$6,200/10 \text{ years} = \620 per year . $\$620 \text{ times two years} = \$1,240$. This is the allowable expense charged to the SARE grant; the \$4,960 balance would be paid by the farm.
- A microscope is needed to identify insects for a two-year study. It has a useful life of 10 years (www.microscopes.com, model GW168, The Microscope Store.). The purchase price (including shipping) is \$1,600. The useful life is 10 years so the per year price is \$160. For a two-year project, the amount allowed to be charged to the SARE grant is \$320 and the balance of \$1280 would be paid by the farm.
- Ten electric netting rolls are needed to keep sheep in a hops yard. The netting has a useful life of three years. The equipment is Electro Net 35, 164-foot length each (www.premier1supplies.com) and costs \$112 per roll. 10 rolls are needed: $10 \text{ times } \$120 = \$1120 \text{ plus } \$50 \text{ shipping} = \text{total cost of } \1170 . $\$1170/3 \text{ years} = \390 . Since this is a one-year study, \$390 may be charged to the grant.
- Insect screening is needed as a control method vs. spray for a two-year study. Insect Mesh, 13 feet X 328 feet (www.americannettings.com). costs \$612 plus \$28 shipping. Assuming the screening has a five-year useful life, $\$640/5 \text{ yr.} = \$128/\text{year}$. For this two-year project, \$256 may be charged to the grant.

Indirect Costs

For-profit businesses like commercial farms (as well as veterinary services, private consultants, farm service and product suppliers) will receive vendor service agreements as a contract from the Northeast SARE host institution, The University of Vermont and State Agricultural College. Vendor service agreements **cannot include indirect costs**, though any overhead expenses that can be directly attributable to the grant project may be included in the direct costs of the budget.

Farms associated with non-profit organizations should contact the Northeast SARE office for details on allowed indirect costs. Proposals from farms owned by nonprofit organizations receive funds through a subaward agreement that flows down through the University of Vermont from USDA NIFA, together with federal regulations and compliance requirements.

Example of Budget Justification and Narrative

The following sample budget is provided so you can see how one fits together. Please note: every budget is different—yours should reflect how your project is designed and what you plan to do. Provide enough detail so that reviewers will understand the need for each requested item.

Budget Detail, Justification and Narrative					
Applicant's name and institution: Maria Sanchez, Five Oak Farm					
<i>Item name</i>	<i>Narrative justification of expense</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>\$ per unit</i>	<i>Quantity x \$ =</i>
PERSONNEL					
<i>Only people employed by the recipient organization or farm should be listed in this category. Those employed elsewhere should be listed under "Other direct costs," or, if individuals are to be paid by another institution via a subaward to that institution, they should be included in a separately detailed subcontract budget and the subcontract total should be listed below under "Subcontracts" in "Other direct costs."</i>					
Salaries and wages.					
<i>Provide narrative detail of each person's role in the project or the services they are providing through their work on the project. Show full-time equivalency as a percentage and salary for each year, or provide hourly wage times number of hours, to equal total \$ requested.</i>					
Project leader(s).					
Maria Sanchez	Manage grant, data collection and analysis, outreach and reporting	hrs	150	\$ 30.00	\$ 4,500.00
					\$ -
Student wages.					
					\$ -
Support staff.					
David Potter, farm employee	Plant and manage crops within trial plot	hrs	100	\$ 15.00	\$ 1,500.00
					\$ -
Other hired labor.					
					\$ -
Subtotal: Salaries and wages (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 6,000
Fringe benefits.					
<i>If applicable, provide the fringe rate that will be applied to wages above and the total for each wage line or category.</i>					
SS, Medicare, FUTA	Employers match portion	percent	0.0825	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 123.75
					\$ -
Subtotal: Fringe benefits (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 124
PERSONNEL TOTAL (salaries, hourly labor, and fringe benefits)					\$6,124
NON-PERSONNEL		<i>Unit</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>\$ per unit</i>	<i>Quantity x \$ =</i>
Materials and supplies.					
<i>Indicate each item with quantity and estimated cost. Include narrative justification on how the item fits the project, its direct need and why not otherwise available through the organization. Items must be project-specific and able to be tracked as being used for the project. General-use items such as office supplies are not allowable unless the items can be tracked and itemized for a project-specific purpose.</i>					
Cover crop seed	Cover crop seed for 10 acres, 12 lbs/acre	lbs	120	\$ 4.00	\$ 480.00
Flags	Flags for marking plots, 25 per bundle	bundle	4	\$ 8.99	\$ 35.96
Zip-loc bags	For collecting soil samples, 1 box of 50 bags	box	1	\$ 3.99	\$ 3.99
					\$ -
Subtotal: Materials and supplies (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 520
Travel.					
<i>For travel of employees/personnel only; list consultant travel under consultants and list conference attendee travel under trainee support. Provide detail as to the destination, purpose of the travel, who is traveling, number of travelers. If a mileage reimbursement, provide miles x rate (not more than federal rate). If lodging, provide rate x number of nights. If travel meals, specify the per diem or allowance to be used.</i>					
Maria Sanchez, project leader	Travel to experiment station in Morgantown, WV for insect identification training over 3 days; 3 round trips at 62 mile round	mile	186	\$ 0.575	\$ 106.95
Maria Sanchez, project leader	Travel to regional crop meeting in Charleston, WV, to present project results; round rtrip is 290 miles	mile	290	\$ 0.575	\$ 166.75
					\$ -
Subtotal: Travel (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 274
Publications/printing.					
<i>Publishing of an article in a scientific or technical journal or other type of field/program related publication or for commercial printing of brochures and program materials. Photocopying costs should be included under "Other direct costs."</i>					
Printing at QuikPrint	Reports to demonstrate growth comparisons, to be distributed through local extension office. 8 pages each.	each	50	8	\$ 400.00
					\$ -
Subtotal: Publications (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 400

Example budget, continued on next page

Example budget justification and narrative, continued

Other Direct Costs		Unit	Quantity	\$ per unit	Quantity x \$ =
Communications. Mailings, postage, conference calls. Cell phone charges are not allowable.					
Postage for outreach	Mailings of flyers to announce Twilight Meetings, \$0.50 each	each	300	0.5	\$ 150.00
					\$ -
Photocopying. In-house photocopying.					
					\$ -
Speaker / trainer fees.					
Include name, fee, and description of the services they are providing, expenses to be reimbursed, including travel.					
					\$ -
Consultants.					
Name of those receiving stipends or payments for services and their organization or farm, statement of work or description of what will be done to earn the payment, and breakdown of number of days or hours of service and rate of pay. Provide detail of consultant expenses to be reimbursed such as travel. Add attachment if needed to define the scope of work.					
Dr. Mary Greene, Entomogist	To provide training in insect identification at Morgantown Experiment Station, 4 hours per day for three days	hrs	12	75	\$ 900.00
					\$ -
Services. For services rendered for the project. Provide details (fees or hired payments, purpose and quantities).					
LabTech, LLC	Soil analysis, sampled twice per summer	samples	4	120	\$ 480.00
					\$ -
Conferences/meetings/workshops.					
Expenses of hosting/conducting meetings and training events. List expenses for a project leader or staff attending a conference under Travel . List presenter expenses under Consultants or Speaker/Trainer fees . List trainee-participant expenses under Trainee support .					
					\$ -
Trainee support (participant support costs).					
A subsidy payment to or on behalf of those who receive training , usually for registration fees, lodging, and associated travel expenses. (N.B. Payments for services rendered should be listed above in speaker / trainer fees or consultant payments. Other Conference/meeting/workshop expenses may be listed in that category above.)					
					\$ -
Off-site office rental.					
Only allowable if necessary for a project specific purpose.					
					\$ -
Purchase of equipment (or the cost of fabrication of equipment)					
Only project specific research equipment with clear justification of need and full use in the project is allowable. General use equipment is not allowed..					
Microscope for insect identification	Purchased from The Mocoscope Store (www.microscopes.com, Model GW168). Needed to identify insects. Cost is \$1565 plus \$35 shipping. Useful life of 10 years, \$1600/10= \$160. For two year project = \$320. Farm will pay	prorated cost	1	\$ 320.00	\$ 320.00
					\$ -
Rental of equipment or land-use charges rental.					
Extra land rental for experimental plots	8 acres for two years, being rented from Captain Frank's Farm	acre	16	100	\$ 1,600.00
					\$ -
Other / miscellaneous. These costs must always be identified in order to be allowed.					
					\$ -
Subtotal: Other Direct Costs before subcontracts/subawards (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 3,450
Subcontracts/Subawards.					
List the institution, organization, or farm, the project leader's name, and amount of subaward. For each subaward, attach a proposed plan of work and include a spreadsheet for Budget Detail, Justification and Narrative. It is expected that the prime recipient is taking the lead on the effort with full responsibility for reporting, and each subaward must be less than 50% of the overall project funding request.					
				Total from separate spreadsheet:	
Sum of all subcontracts					\$ -
Other Direct Costs total (rounded to the nearest dollar)					\$ 3,450
NON-PERSONNEL TOTAL					\$ 4,644
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS					\$10,768
Indirect costs.					
Complete the check-off below as to the basis for the amount being requested. Enter total indirect request amount on this line. Farms and other private businesses should leave the indirect cost amount blank or enter \$0 (see below).					
					\$ -
TOTAL SARE REQUEST					\$ 10,768

Example of Budget Summary

The subtotals are taken from the budget justification and narrative above and entered online.

Category	Description	Amount
Personnel	Subtotal from budget justification and narrative template	\$6,124
Materials and supplies	Subtotal from budget justification and narrative template	\$520
Travel	Subtotal from budget justification and narrative template	\$274
Printing and publications	Subtotal from budget justification and narrative template	\$400
Other direct costs	Subtotal from budget justification and narrative template	\$3,450
Total grant funds requested (rounded to nearest dollar)		\$10,768