

2017

Call for Preproposals

NCR-SARE

Research and Education Grant Program

Make sure that you have the **2017 Call for Preproposals**.

To submit, go to:

<http://www.ciids.org/ncsare/repre>

**Preproposals must be submitted on line by
4:00 p.m. CDT, October 20, 2016.**

Copies of these instructions can be downloaded from the North Central SARE web site at www.northcentralsare.org as a PDF file. If you prefer a printed application, call 612.626.3113.

Research and Education grant program preproposals must be submitted on line at <http://www.ciids.org/ncsare/repre>. The system will open for applications August 5, 2016. The online application interface has strict word limits, and we suggest you prepare your preproposal using a word processing program, edit each response to comply with the word limits, and then copy and paste your proposal section by section into the online template, saving as you go.

Online Submission Deadline

4:00 p.m. CDT, October 20, 2016

Who we are

SARE stands for Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education, a competitive grants program funded by USDA-NIFA. The North Central Region (NCR) includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. NCR-SARE strengthens communities, increases farmer/rancher profitability, and improves the environment by supporting research and education.

Learn more about North Central Region SARE at <http://www.northcentralsare.org/>.

Eligibility

The **Research and Education (R&E) Grant Program** provides funds to collaborative teams of scientists, farmers/ranchers, institutions, organizations, and educators who are exploring sustainable agriculture through research projects or education¹/demonstration projects. Preproposals from any location are accepted, but the preproposal must convince reviewers that project results will benefit NCR agriculture. Typically, proposals come from university and extension staff, the agricultural nonprofit sector, and from people who work on research farms and experiment stations. There is no requirement that applicants have a specific affiliation, but awarded entities must complete required federal grant protocols when applicable, for example animal care and use protocol verification. Contact the NCR-SARE office for more information.

Amount of Funding Available

The funding level for the R&E grant program is dependent upon fiscal year 2017 appropriations from Congress and budget decisions by the NCR-SARE Administrative Council, but we anticipate that roughly **\$2.0 million** will be available to fund approximately ten to eleven grant projects, with individual grants not to exceed \$200,000 total for projects lasting up to three years (36 months). In 2016, NCR-SARE received 166 preproposals, invited 33 to be developed into full proposals, and selected 11 R&E proposals for funding. The average size of funded grants was about \$188,000 and grant lengths ranged from 12 to 36 months.

Preproposals will be reviewed by the NCR-SARE Administrative Council during the winter. All preproposal authors will be notified in early February, 2017. Selected project coordinators will be mailed a call for proposals and invited to develop full proposals **due in early April, 2017**. The NCR-SARE Technical Committee will review proposals and funding decisions will be made by the NCR-SARE Administrative Council in late July 2017. We anticipate that **project funds will be available during the fall of 2017**.

¹ Education projects can be extension/outreach or other informal education projects, but SARE cannot fund formal degree or certificate programs

Desired Outcomes for 2017 Research and Education Projects

There are no specific priority areas in the 2017 Call for Preproposals. Preproposals must address issues of sustainable agriculture of current and potential importance to the North Central Region. NCR-SARE is interested in projects that lead to resilient agricultural systems. Successful projects should contribute to the following NCR-SARE broad-based outcomes:

- Improving the profitability of farmers/ranchers and associated agricultural businesses,
- Sustaining and improving the environmental quality and natural resource base on which agriculture depends, and
- Enhancing the quality of life for farmers/ranchers, communities, and society as a whole.

Preproposals should clearly explain:

- Relevancy of the project to sustainable agriculture in the North Central Region, including identifying expected outcomes for the project and how they will assist NCR-SARE in working toward the broad-based outcomes listed above.

How to Prepare Your Proposal

On the following pages you can see all the questions you will be asked on the Online Submission website at <http://www.ciids.org/ncsare/repre>. Once you have read through this call for preproposals, click on that site, follow the directions and begin your preproposal. If you would like additional information about preparing a proposal, you can view a presentation at <https://umconnect.umn.edu/repre/>. We suggest you complete a draft proposal in a word processing document and edit to meet word limits, then cut and paste into the online system. Note that tables and images cannot be pasted into the text boxes in the online system.

Demographic information:

The North Central Region SARE program is committed to an ethic of openness, inclusiveness, and diversity in all of its programs, policies, and procedures. To monitor our performance in these areas, **we collect demographic information** from grant applicants. Demographic information is not linked to your proposal and is compiled in a separate database.

Your Race:

- American Indian or Native Alaskan
- Asian

- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White
- More than one race
- Undetermined
- Prefer not to answer

Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

Your Age:

- 18 and younger
- 19-25
- 26-34
- 35-50 years old
- 51 years or older
- Prefer not to answer

Your Gender:

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

Are you a military veteran?

- Yes
- No

Cover:

Title of Preproposal

Start and End Dates, Project Duration. Indicate the proposed length of your project in years or months up to a maximum of three years (36 months) and indicate the proposed start and end dates; start date cannot be earlier than October 1, 2017.

Resubmission? Did you submit this project as a full proposal in a previous year?

Will your proposed research/outreach primarily focus on socially disadvantaged² or limited resource³ farmers/ranchers?

Project Categories.

-Please select the ONE Systems category that best represents the project from the following: Animal Production—including aquaculture and apiary; Community Development; Crop Production; Economic/Marketing; Education & Training; Energy Conservation & Renewable Energy; Integrated Crop & Livestock System; Natural Resources/Environment; Pest Management; Quality of Life; Soil Management; Other

-Indicate the ONE crop or animal enterprise category that best represents the project from the following: Beef; Dairy; Swine; Sheep & Goats; Poultry; Oil Crops; Grain Crops; Hay & Forage Crops; Silage Crops; Vegetable Crops; Tree Fruits; Sugar Crops; Small Fruits; Nuts; Ornamentals & Turf; Trees—Forest & Christmas; Other

-Indicate whether your preproposal is primarily a Research project or an Education Outreach/Demonstration project - **check only one.** All Research projects should include some outreach effort.

² For USDA programming, a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher is a member of a socially disadvantaged group, including American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans, African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics.

³ The USDA defines a Limited Resource Farmer or Rancher or Forest Owner as: a person with direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than \$172,800 (for FY2013) in each of the previous two years AND a person with a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years.

Project Funding Request

An itemized budget is no longer required at the preproposal stage, only an estimate of your total funding request. You will be asked to mark your proposed request as:

- Less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 to \$99,999
- \$100,000 to 149,999
- \$150,000 to \$200,000

In estimating your request, keep in mind:

SARE does not limit personnel costs, but reviewers do not like to see budgets that are primarily personnel costs.

Capital expenses for things like land purchases, general farm improvements, and construction of buildings, greenhouses, and laboratories are NOT allowed. Equipment is rarely allowed.

SARE allows up to 10% indirect costs (IDC) of total federal funds for R&E projects.

Your total budget for an R&E grant cannot exceed \$200,000.

Project Coordinator Information:

List contact information for the person who will be NCR-SARE's primary contact for the project. **If there are people from the Institution's contracts and grants office, accountants, or co-workers who need to be informed about this grant, it is the Project Coordinator's responsibility to communicate with those individuals.** The Project Coordinator is the person who manages the project and provides reports to NCR-SARE. Some organizations use the term Principal Investigator instead of Project Coordinator, but we use the term Project Coordinator because in some cases, that person is not eligible to be a Principal Investigator, as defined by their organization.

Organization Name. This is the organization that will administer the project budget if your proposal is funded. The Primary Grantee will send invoices to NCR-SARE, receive funds from NCR-SARE, and disburse funds to any Partner Organizations. NCR-SARE does not require an institution representative's signature at the preproposal stage, but your institution might require that you submit your preproposal through your grant administration office. Check with your grant office, because we no longer require a budget at the preproposal stage.

Body of the Preproposal

Project Abstract (250 word limit)

A brief summary of the contents of your preproposal. The Abstract should include a brief description of the problem and of the approach/methods proposed. It should include an abbreviated version of your proposed project outcomes, and a statement about how the outcomes are relevant to farmers and ranchers in the North Central Region.

Project Description (75 word limit)

Provide a one or two sentence description of the project. This will be used to summarize your project for reviewers.

Project Outcomes (100 word limit)

List learning and action outcomes expected from your project activities. Learning outcomes are changes in the knowledge, awareness, skills, and attitudes of participants. Action outcomes include changes in the behavior or practices of the intended audience. You may also list system or condition change outcomes, which will eventually result from your project, even though those outcomes are longer-term outcomes and would be unlikely to occur within the one- to three-year period of your project. Specify the audience that will be involved in the project or that will use project results.

For more information about defining outcomes, see <https://umconnect.umn.edu/repre/>

Relevance (300 word limit)

Explain how your project will solve a problem or address an issue significant to agricultural sustainability in the North Central Region. Explain how your project is relevant to NCR-SARE's broad-based outcomes (listed near the beginning of this call for preproposals). Who will benefit? Tell how your approach is different from or superior to other ways to reach your objectives or proposed outcomes, as well as how it is different from or complementary to other projects that SARE has funded on this subject. (You can use the national projects database on the SARE website <http://www.sare.org> to search for information on other SARE-funded projects.) If your project will use genetically engineered varieties or organisms, state how their use will contribute to your project and make agriculture more sustainable.

Method/Approach (300 word limit)

Briefly describe how your project will be implemented, including your general approach, activities, methods, and project inputs. In research preproposals, specify experimental treatments or other methods only to the extent needed to give a general idea of the work to be done and findings it will yield; if you are invited to submit a full proposal, you will be able to provide more specific information there. Similarly, education project preproposals may offer general descriptions of educational activities and intended audience; invited full proposals will be expected to identify specific groups, processes, relationships, etc.

Team Members (250 word limit)

List team members who are committed to the project. Include name, affiliation, and area of expertise. No CVs are needed at the preproposal stage.

Farmer Rancher Involvement and Compensation. (200 word limit)

NCR-SARE strongly encourages having farmers, ranchers, local organizations, or others who will use or benefit from the project involved in its planning, design, and implementation. This participation often enhances the relevance and impact of a sustainable agriculture research or education project. Describe how farmers, ranchers, or others will be engaged in your project—for example, in defining the research problem, conducting on-farm research, etc. It is helpful to provide names of specific farmers or ranchers if you can. If you can't name specific individuals at the preproposal stage, explain why the names aren't available and give your plan for identifying specific individuals if you are invited to submit a full proposal.

Statement Regarding Resubmitted Ideas. (100 word limit)

Indicate whether you have submitted this idea to NCR-SARE before, and if so, when and in which grant program. Also, please indicate how you responded to reviewer comments. Resubmission does not guarantee success, but it can be helpful to show reviewers how you have responded to previous reviewer suggestions.

Post Submission Survey:

After the application is closed, registrants will be directed to a survey seeking feedback about the application process. We appreciate your time to let us know what works and what needs to be improved. Your comments are compiled separately from your proposal and are not connected to your contact information.

Preproposal and Proposal Evaluation

Review of NCR-SARE preproposals and proposals is a multi-stage process. Members of the NCR-SARE Administrative Council (AC) and a few members of the Technical Committee review preproposals in subgroups during the winter. The NCR-SARE AC then notifies applicants and invites full proposals in early February, due in April, for review by the Technical Committee and by external reviewers. The Technical Committee provides a list of technically acceptable proposals to the Council for its consideration at its late summer meeting. The AC decides final awards for funding and all proposed project coordinators are notified. Funds for projects recommended for funding are expected to become available in fall of the decision year.

The Administrative Council will consider the following factors in evaluating preproposals:

- **Relevance:** Will the outcome of the project contribute to meeting NCR-SARE sustainability goals (listed below)? Does it attempt to solve a problem or address an issue significant in the region?
 - Improving the profitability of farmers and associated agricultural businesses,
 - Sustaining and improving the environmental quality and natural resource base on which agriculture depends,
 - Enhancing the quality of life for farmers/ranchers, communities, and society as a whole.

If applicable, was use of genetically engineered organisms addressed in terms of relevance to sustainable agriculture?

- **Method/Approach:** Is the proposed approach/method likely to achieve the objectives or lead to the outcomes proposed? Did they address previous work, and how the proposed work differs from, or will build upon previous work?
- **Farmer/Rancher or other end-user involvement:** Are farmers engaged in the project as advisors, collaborators? Did farmers/ranchers identify the need for the research/extension-education? Farmers and/or other end-users should be appropriately compensated for their involvement in the project.
- **Project Team:** Does the project team include the disciplines and expertise necessary to carry out the project?
- **Project Coordinator's reporting history for previous NCR-SARE grants:** The Administrative Council may choose to reject preproposals from Project Coordinators who have delinquent reports for previous NCR-SARE projects.

Help with Proposals

The **NCR-SARE office** can share information and resources from SARE Outreach, plus contact information for state SARE Coordinators. Contact info for State Coordinators can also be found on the NCR-SARE website at: www.northcentralsare.org/About-Us/Advisory-Leadership-Committees/State-Coordinators

Contact: North Central Region SARE, 120 BioAgEng, UMN, 1390 Eckles Ave, Saint Paul MN 55108, phone: 612-626-3113, e-mail: ncsare@umn.edu, web: www.northcentralsare.org.

The **Alternative Farming Systems Information Center (AFSIC)** at the National Agricultural Library specializes in locating, collecting, and providing information about sustainable agriculture. Information specialists can answer questions, help you with literature reviews and background research, and identify experts and pertinent researchers and projects in the USDA. In addition, AFSIC has a number of documents on its website that may be relevant to your proposal. Contact: AFSIC, National Agriculture Library, USDA, 10301 Baltimore Ave., Room 132, Beltsville MD 20705-2351, phone: 301-504-6559, fax: 301-504-6927, e-mail: afsic@nal.usda.gov, web: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/>.

Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA) will provide information packets on various agricultural issues. If you are contacting ATTRA via e-mail, please provide your role in sustainable agriculture. By mail or fax, please include "ATTRA Information Request" near the top of the correspondence. (Preferred method of contact is telephone.) Contact: ATTRA, P.O. Box 3657, Fayetteville AR 72702, phone: 800-346-9140 (7 am to 7 pm, Central Time), fax: 501-442-9842, web: <http://www.attra.ncat.org>.

Contact Beth Nelson, NCR-SARE Coordinator, with questions (e-mail: bethnelson@umn.edu or phone: 612-626-4436).

Special Notes

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact NCR-SARE at 612-626-3113 or ncsare@umn.edu.

Distribution of preproposals is limited to people involved in the review process, but note that the NCR-SARE program considers all funded proposals and subsequent reports and related information to be in the public domain. A prime directive from Congress in the SARE enabling legislation ensures that results from all studies be provided to farmers, ranchers, and other interested parties in a timely and effective manner. All reports related to funded projects will be made available to all interested parties in printed, electronic, or other means of communication, without discrimination. Names, addresses and telephone numbers of Project Coordinators (from funded projects) may be provided to interested news entities, farmers, ranchers, or organizations for subsequent inquiries. Preproposals and proposals are used in the peer review process and submission to the program establishes consent by the author for appropriate distribution to fulfill review requirements.