Sabbatical Research and Education Grant Program
2025 Call for Proposals

Submission Deadline, November 21, 2024, 12:00pm (noon) Mountain Time

Submit online at www.projects.sare.org
Project team: Host researcher (PI), Sabbatical researcher (Co-PI), and at least one producer
Project funding limit: $75,000
Project time limit: one (1) year
**Funding decisions announced:** March 2025

Contact Program Manager: wsare-sab@sare.org

Sabbatical Research and Education Grant Program

Western SARE funds proposals of innovative research and educational outreach for advancing sustainable agriculture in the Western U.S. Sabbatical projects must contain both research and education components by bringing together a team of local partners (researchers, students, educators, and producers) along with a Sabbatical researcher to develop research, education, and human capacity at the Sabbatical Host Institution. Sabbatical grants must address local research and education needs with special emphasis on underserved communities, understudied geographic locations, and/or unexplored topics. The goal of this grant program is to obtain results that are applicable to agricultural production, sustain and improve the environmental quality and natural resources upon which agriculture depends, improve the profitability of agricultural producers, and enhance the quality of life of agricultural communities.

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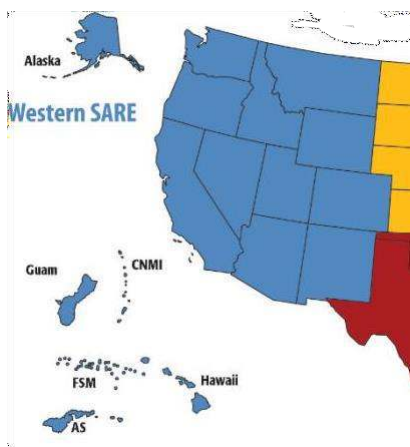
The Western Region
Alaska, American Samoa, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Micronesia, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Northern Mariana Islands, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

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Western SARE, one of four regional SARE programs, is hosted by Montana State University and is funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

About Western SARE

The Western SARE Administrative Council funds grant proposals that include innovative off- and on-farm/ranch research and educational outreach to advance Western SARE goals. All Western SARE projects *must contain both research and education components*.

What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Congress has defined sustainable agriculture as an integrated system of plant and/or animal production practices with a site-specific application that over the long term will: satisfy human food and fiber needs; enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends; make the most efficient use of non-renewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles of control; sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and enhance the quality of life of agricultural communities and society as a whole.

Western SARE Goals

- Promote *stewardship* of the nation's natural resources by providing site-specific profitable sustainable farming and ranching methods for strengthening agricultural competitiveness; satisfy human food and fiber needs; maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of soil; conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources, and fish and wildlife habitat; and maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground water.
- Enhance the *quality of life* of farmers and ranchers and ensure the viability of rural communities, for example, by increasing income and employment, profitable self-employment and innovative marketing opportunities in agricultural communities.
- Protect the *health and safety* of those involved in food and farm systems by reducing, where feasible, the use of toxic materials in agricultural production, optimizing on-farm resources, and integrating, where appropriate, biological cycles of control.
- Promote crop, livestock, and enterprise *diversification*.
- Examine the regional, economic, social, and *environmental implications* of adopting sustainable agriculture practices.

Dimensions of Sustainable Agriculture

Program Overview

Project Team: Western SARE requires that agricultural producers be involved from inception to finish in the planning, design, implementation, and educational outreach of any Western SARE-funded project keeping in mind the inherently interdisciplinary nature of sustainable agriculture.

Western SARE Sabbatical applications should include at least three individuals: a Host Principal Investigator (PI) who is a researcher at the institution hosting (Host Institution) the Sabbatical Researcher, a Sabbatical Researcher (Co-PI) who is a researcher at another institution (Home Institution), and at least one agricultural Producer at the location of the Host Institution. Applications must provide the required documents from the Host Institution, the Host PI, the Home Institution, and the Sabbatical Researcher detailed below.

- Sabbatical Researcher: researchers eligible for a Sabbatical Paid Leave who have the support of their home institution (hereafter Home Institution) and who have demonstrated expertise in sustainable agriculture research and education are eligible for a Western SARE Sabbatical Grant. While Sabbatical Researchers could reside outside the Western region of the United States, including foreign countries, ***all research and education activities should be conducted within the Western U.S. region***. Applications should be done in association with a primary Host Institution within the Western region, including universities, federal agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Additional collaborating institutions and research sites in the Western U.S. region are allowed.
- Host Principal Investigator: The PI is responsible for coordinating the project and carrying out its contractual provisions, for all expenditures, and for achieving the stated research and education objectives.
- Producer: A person qualifies as an agricultural Producer (farmer/rancher) if they have a for-profit operation and:
  - Their primary occupation is farming or ranching and have a farm/ranch taxpayer identification number (TIN); or
  - They are a part-time producer with at least $1,000 documented annual income or equivalent from farming or ranching activities.

Project Requirements

Home Institution requirements: The Sabbatical Researcher will be a Co-PI of the project and should negotiate a Paid Sabbatical Leave for at least 6 months with their home institution to be eligible for Sabbatical funding. A letter from the Home Institution indicating approval and support of the Sabbatical or proof that the Sabbatical Leave request was initiated, along with a time frame for its resolution, must be included in the application and should specify the terms of the Sabbatical Leave. If your proposal is selected for funding, no funds will be deployed before having complete approval of the Sabbatical Leave request.

Sabbatical Researcher requirements: The Sabbatical Researcher should negotiate with their home institution a Sabbatical Paid Leave prior to the release of any Western SARE funds. If applicable, carriers of the appropriate visa for conducting research and educational activities in the U.S. for the period of the project should provide this information to the Host Institution and

must be verified by Western SARE before the Subaward Agreement can be fully executed.

Host Institution requirements: All Western SARE Sabbatical applications should be done in association with a Sabbatical Host Institution within the Western U.S. The Sabbatical Host Institution will bear the fiscal responsibility for the completion of the research and education objectives of the proposed project through a Subaward Agreement. The Sabbatical Host Institution needs to provide a *Letter of Invitation* including, 1) a Scope of Work describing the activities the Sabbatical Researcher will be conducting at the Host Institution and in the local area (*i.e*., research, lecturing, outreach activities, etc.) and the expected deliverables, 2) the period of time for which the Sabbatical Researcher is invited, 3) interest in the Sabbatical project and how it will benefit the Sabbatical Host Institution and agricultural producers, 4) the importance of the research and education activities to be conducted by the Sabbatical Researcher and how this project will advance local/regional research, education, and outreach, 5) the resources committed by the Host Institution for this project, 6) the collaboration plans beyond the completion of the Sabbatical project, and 7) any additional information the Host Institution finds relevant for the application. Additionally, the Letter of Invitation must include the 8) total funds requested, and 9) project timeline.

Applications should be submitted from the Sabbatical Host Institution that 1) supports research and education in sustainable agriculture, 2) has demonstrated fiscal responsibility, 3) is able and qualified to receive funds from the U.S. Government, and 4) has the capability to comply with requirements of Institutional Review Board (IRB) for research that involves human subjects and to comply with the requirements of an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for research that involves animals.

Host PI requirements: The host PI should have a demonstrated record of contributions to sustainable agriculture involving production, research, and education partner(s). The PI must develop a research and education plan with the Sabbatical Researcher and engage people from the Sabbatical Host Institution and producers of the area.

Project Time Limit: Projects may be between 6 months and 1 year in length. Please choose a start date that corresponds with the first of the month. Start dates must be no earlier than April 1, 2025, and no later than October 1, 2025.

Project Funding Limit: Western SARE Sabbatical Grants provide a maximum of $75,000 (including Indirect Cost) for up to one year. Funds to support personnel salary, travel, and supplies, where justified, are allowed. Sabbatical grants cannot be used towards salary for the Sabbatical Researcher, are non-renewable, and non-extendable beyond one year period. Funds are awarded to the Sabbatical Host Institution. At application time Sabbatical Researchers should include proof that the Sabbatical Paid Leave permission was initiated. However, if the proposal is selected for funding the award will only be deployed if the Sabbatical Leave was granted.

Proposal Instructions

Proposals are submitted online at https://projects.sare.org. To strengthen your submission, check the information located in the Proposal Preparation Documents on the Western SARE website. To ensure your submission is complete, please review the submission checklist at the end of this Call of Proposal, on page 15.

Western SARE will disqualify proposals before review if applicants do not follow the instructions of the Call for Proposals or submit incomplete Supporting Documents. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all sections of the proposal are submitted online before the due date.

A Sabbatical Western SARE proposal includes the following sections:

Project Basic Information
This section prompts general information about the project including:
- The *main* subject matter of the project
- The commodities and agricultural practices of the proposed project
- A list of the research and educational objectives
- Proposed starting and ending dates
- The state(s) or protectorates where the work will be conducted
- Additional partner institution(s) or organization(s)
- Whether the current proposal is a resubmission, and if so, it prompts for a resubmission letter.

Summary (Limit 300 words)
A clear and concise summary is important for the review process. The summary must include a brief description of the project. In the summary, include the following:
- Identify a problem and research question(s)
- Describe the research and outreach components
- Explain how your project will disseminate results among agricultural stakeholders
- Enumerate and describe the expected project outcomes.

Project Narrative
The project narrative includes the following sections: 1) Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture and Project Value and Benefits, 2) Collaboration Plan with Host Institution and Local Partners, 3) Project Team Members and their Role, 4) Research Plan, 5) Educational Plan, 6) Timeline, and 7) Building Human Capacity at Host Institution.

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Value, and Benefits *(15% of review criteria; word limit: 1000)*
Explain why this project is necessary and how it addresses a critical need in sustainable agriculture. Identify any limitations in the current system and how your project will address

them. Cite evidence of need, including results and recommendations from related SARE projects (www.sare.org/Project-Reports) and other studies or reports.

The proposal must address the three dimensions of sustainable agriculture (social, environmental, and economic) defined on page 2 of this Call for Proposals.

Describe the potential benefits for producers and sustainable agriculture. For example, provide an economic analysis and explain how your project would affect overall farm/ranch productivity, profits, soil or water quality or usage, and rural communities. Where possible, use specific estimates of impacts, such as dollars saved per acre, tons of soil protected from erosion, pounds of reduced chemical inputs, markets expanded, jobs created, etc.

Collaboration with Host Institution and Local Partners (*5% of review criteria; word limit 500 words*)
The Western SARE Sabbatical grants program aims to encourage groundbreaking research and education focused on the needs of underserved communities, and/or understudied geographic locations, and/or unexplored topics. Thus, proposals must include documentation that local agricultural stakeholders and their partners identified the needs and knowledge gaps being addressed. Evidence of stakeholder-identified needs include, but are not limited to:
- Recommendations from stakeholder groups such as growers' organizations or commodity committees. Please identify stakeholder group(s) or organization(s).
- References and citations to other studies/reports that encourage future research.
- Community support letters from neighboring farmers or local co-ops.
- Needs assessments that relate to the project topic(s) if they are available.

Project Team Members List and Roles (*5% of the review criteria; word limit: 600*)
The project team must be a minimum of three (3) people and must include: 1) Host PI, 2) Sabbatical Researcher (Co-PI), and 3) at least one agricultural producer in the area where the Sabbatical will take place. It is encouraged that applications also include other partners, such as Extension agent(s), additional producer(s), students, etc. The project team may include the following collaborators,
- Education/Outreach specialist: The outreach specialist may be an Extension agent or educator. This person could be involved in implementing the education plan and outreach activities.
- Researchers, educators, and other collaborators with appropriate expertise for the project scope.
- Producers: If more than one producer is included, each producer must be an independent and separate operator. Producers associated with the same nonprofit farm operations may participate in the project but do not count as the required producer.

Detail the role of the Principal Investigator, the Sabbatical Researcher (Co-PI), the Producer(s), and if applicable, the role of other project team members. Indicate their level of involvement at all stages of the project for each activity. The application *must* include a Letter of Producer Cooperation for each producer involved in the project uploaded in the Supporting Documents section.

Failure to provide signed and dated letters of producer cooperation will disqualify the proposal before review.

Research Plan (30% of review criteria; word limit: 2100)
Clearly state and define the **research objectives**. Each objective should be a clear statement describing an intended achievement. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. For more details see [Successful Objectives.](#)

For each objective, describe what will be done including **methods** and **materials**. What treatments or new technique(s) will be tested? What materials will be used? Describe the project site, research design, data collection, and analysis methods. Include sufficient detail so that reviewers can determine if the approaches are suitable to achieve your objectives. Avoid the use of jargon and define all acronyms.

Educational Plan (30% of review criteria; word limit: 2100)
Clearly state and define the **educational objectives**. Each objective should be a clear statement describing an intended achievement. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound. For more details see [Successful Objectives.](#)

For each objective, describe the **outreach activities** including **methods** and **materials**. Describe how, when, and where you will conduct outreach activities (e.g., field days, demonstrations, workshops, presentations, websites, etc.). Describe who will you target in your outreach activities (e.g., producers, stakeholders, other agricultural professionals, students, etc.). Explain how you will reach and communicate your project's findings to producers and the general public. If the people you intend to reach through this project are from underserved communities, please describe how you intend to reach and engage them. (Underserved communities are those that have difficulties accessing opportunities due to language, culture, location, or resource barriers.)

Provide a list of educational resources you plan to produce (e.g., factsheets, PowerPoint presentations, videoclips, podcasts, handouts, brochures, 4-H publications, surveys, etc.). Describe plans for any scholarly outcomes (e.g., academic journals and conferences, departmental seminars, capstone projects, classroom presentations). Digital outcomes (e.g., podcasts, videos, blogs, web-based materials, and social media) are encouraged but should not be the sole outreach approach. Multiple modes and styles of communication are strongly encouraged.

Timeline *(5% of review criteria; word limit: 500)*
Provide a timeline, such as a *Gantt Chart* for accomplishing each objective of the Research Plan and Education Plan. Identify the major milestones and activities that will be completed and when each of those milestones will occur.

Building Human Capacity at Host Institution *(5% of review criteria; word limit: 500)*
Describe your plans for human capacity development at the Host Institution. Explain how the expected knowledge gain and educational outcomes will improve the research and education capacity of the Host Institution and partners, and the production capacity of local growers after the completion of the Sabbatical project. Describe the expected connections and collaborations between the Host and Home Institutions because of this Sabbatical project. How will the Host, local partners, and the Sabbatical Researcher interact after the completion of this project?

Budget and Budget Justification (5% of review criteria)

Provide a detailed budget that is appropriate to the proposed project using the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet* found on the online application, in the budget section. Applicants must use this document for budget submission; no other document will be accepted. **NOTE**: you need to enter the total funds requested on the online submission site; this amount must match the total funds indicated on the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet* document. A Budget Justification is also required and should be completed in the space provided on the online site.

If the Host Institution will be issuing lower-tier subawards to other institutions or organizations as part of your proposed project, you are required to provide a detailed budget for each lower-tier subaward. Lower-tier subaward budgets *must* be submitted on the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet for Subawards*. You may ask the lower-tier subaward recipient(s) to fill out the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet for Subawards* or you may fill it out on their behalf using details they have provided to you. Be sure to include brief details and budget amounts for each lower tier subaward on your *Western SARE Budget Worksheet.* As the primary applicant, you must upload both your *Western SARE Budget Worksheet* and those of any lower-tier subawards to be issued. A budget justification for each lower-tier subaward is also required and should be uploaded in the Budget and Justification section as a separate PDF file.

Failure to provide the Western SARE Budget Worksheet for your primary award and, if applicable, all lower-tier subawards will disqualify the proposal before review.

Sabbatical Grant funds may be budgeted in the following categories:

Salaries and Benefits: for compensating researchers or employees (including students) of the Sabbatical Host Institution for performing work directly related to the project. Provide base salary, FTEs, fringe benefit rates, and salary/benefits amounts requested. These awards should not include salary or benefits for the Sabbatical Researcher.

Contracted Services: for paying for professional services. For example, testing and analysis services, survey development and administration, computational services, website development or maintenance, professional production services (videographer, producer of educational digital media, etc.), consultants, honoraria, speaker fees, agricultural producer labor, etc.

Supplies: includes paying for basic supplies and materials needed to carry out the project. Examples include agricultural supplies (fencing, seeds, plants, fertilizer), field and lab supplies, minor equipment and tools that cost less than $5,000 (see the note below regarding Capital Equipment), paper/envelopes, in-house photocopying of materials for workshops/meetings, software, books, shipping materials, etc. Any shipping costs associated with the purchase of supplies/materials should be included as supply costs. The purchase of food/refreshments for meetings/field days is only allowed if it is necessary to maintain the continuity of the project activity and is considered a supply cost.

Note on Capital Equipment: capital equipment is defined as a single autonomous piece of equipment that costs $5,000 or more and has a useful life of more than one year. Capital equipment purchases are generally not allowed under the SARE program and should be ***essential*** for the completion of the proposed activities. Equipment expenses beyond $5,000 may be leveraged by non-Western SARE funds. ***Purchasing multiple components of single equipment that cost under $5,000 in an attempt to circumvent the $5,000 cap is not allowed.*** Purchases of equipment under $5,000 are allowed. Please include minor equipment and/or leveraged capital equipment purchases in the Supplies budget category.

Communication: includes postage and mailing expenses (including shipping samples for analysis), and printed materials (flyers, brochures, posters). This category also includes expenses for publishing articles in scientific journals or other types of field/program publications, or for commercial photocopying (note: in-house photocopying falls under supplies.)

Travel: must be directly related to the project and includes mileage reimbursement, airfare, lodging, meal *per diem*, car rental, taxi, bus, shuttle expenses and parking, conference fees and registrations, etc. Please note that travel *per diems* and mileage must comply with your organization's approved rates. If no rate is available, use the Federal Government rate listed on the U.S General Services Administration (GSA) website. Additionally, lodging costs/reimbursements must be limited to the Federally approved rate listed on the GSA

website for the travel destination. Note: international travel is typically NOT allowed under the SARE program except in cases where sufficient justification has been provided and requires pre-approval by the Western SARE Regional Coordinator. Pre-approval is not given at the submission stage. If international travel is included, it will be considered as part of the entire proposal. If the proposal is selected for funding, the PI will be informed at that time as to whether the international travel is approved. All international travel must be directly related to the project, be essential for project completion, and be well justified (e.g., explain why this activity cannot be done in the U.S., relevance to sustainable agriculture in the Western U.S., foreign institution's/ colleague's qualifications, etc.). International travel includes any travel outside North America and/or U.S. Possessions. The Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau are foreign countries. USDA-NIFA requires that international travel be done on a U.S. flag air carrier.

Rent: includes fees associated with renting equipment, land, facilities (e.g., meeting rooms, lab space), and user fees. Renting of equipment is capped at $5,000 for the total period of the project.

Participant / Trainee Support: for participant support costs associated with conferences, workshops, or symposia for attendees who are NOT employees of the Host Institution, the Home Institution, or of the lower tier sub-award recipient institution(s). Participant/Trainee Support costs are associated with educational activities. Participants/Trainees can receive a set amount for participation in the above stated functions. Itemized participant/trainee travel expenses should be included in the Travel budget category.

Subawards: for paying project collaborators who are at a partner institution in the Western U.S. region to cover costs associated with their portion of the proposed project. Indirect Costs Recovery (IDCs) should be included for each lower-tier subrecipient according to the guidelines noted under the section "Indirect Costs Recovery (IDCs)" of this Call for Proposals (see below). The Host Institution will be responsible for issuing and administering the lower-tier subawards.

Indirect Costs (IDCs) Recovery: IDC recovery may be requested for the Host Institution according to the following criteria:

Under the SARE program and for projects funded in Calendar Year 2022 and later, NIFA stipulates indirect cost recovery is limited to 10% of the Total Direct Costs requested.

Some institutions may NOT be eligible for IDC recovery or may be limited to the *de minimis* rate of 10% of the *Modified Total Direct Costs* (MTDC) requested.

Applicants should limit their request for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 10% of total direct costs.

Applicants must indicate the IDC rate used on the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet.* Detailed information about IDC rates and calculations can be found on the Western SARE website. More information about each budget category is provided on the *Budget Categories and Guidance* tab found on the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet.* Please note, however, that there are some restrictions on what Sabbatical grant funds may be used. See below.

Sabbatical Grant funds may NOT be used for the following purposes:
This list is not exhaustive – see also the *Western SARE Budget Worksheet* for additional details
- Capital Equipment purchases above $5,000 (see above for more information).
- Renting equipment for more than $5,000 (see above for more information).
- Starting or expanding a farm/ranch or farm/ranch operation.
- Major renovations/permanent improvements to a farm or ranch, such as constructing or remodeling a building.
- Repairs/Maintenance of equipment or buildings/facilities.
- Providing meals during events that are not necessary to maintain the continuity of a scheduled meeting/activity; breakfasts and dinners typically do not qualify.
- Testing of commercial products.
- Student fees and/or tuition.
- Salary, benefits, and housing for the Sabbatical Researcher.

Additionally, matching funds are not required or requested of Western SARE grant recipients. Please do NOT include matching funds in your budget or budget justification.

Supporting Documents
All supporting documents must be attached to the Supporting Documents section of the online application site. PDF documents are preferred but images in jpg format are accepted. ***Failure to provide all the required supporting documents will disqualify the proposal before review.***

Signature Page: This form affirms that the PI (the Host Researcher) is responsible for all contractual commitments and expenditures. This form must be signed by the PI and the PI's Authorized Organizational Representative. For a college or university, this person is usually the Director of the Sponsored Programs Office. For non-profits or other organizations, this is typically the Executive Director, CEO, or CFO. This form may be downloaded from the online application site and is also included in the following section of this Call for Proposals.

Current Resume: The PI, Co-PI(s), and all other project team members who are not producers or students must submit a current 2-page Resume.

*Letter of Invitation from the Host Institution***:** The application must include a letter of commitment from the Host Institution. The Letter of Invitation is an expression of interest from the Host Institution to host the Sabbatical Researcher and must include: 1) a Scope of Work describing the activities the Sabbatical Researcher will be conducting at the Host

Institution and local area (i.e., research, lecturing, outreach activities, etc.), and the expected deliverables, 2) the period of time for which the Sabbatical Researcher is invited, 3) interest in the Sabbatical project and how it will benefit the Host Institution and regional producers, 4) the importance of the research and education activities to be conducted by the Sabbatical Researcher and how this project will advance local/regional research, education, and outreach, 5) the resources committed by the Host Institution for this project, 6) the collaboration plans beyond the completion of the Sabbatical project, and 7) any additional information the Host Institution finds relevant for the application. Additionally, the Letter of Invitation must include 8) the total funds requested and 9) the project timeline.

Letter of Sabbatical Paid Leave from the Home Institution: A letter from the Home Institution indicating Sabbatical approval and support on behalf of the Sabbatical Researcher, or proof that such process was initiated along with a time frame for the resolution of the Sabbatical Paid Leave request *must* be included and should specify the terms of the Sabbatical Paid Leave.

Letter of Commitment from Partner Institutions: If your proposal includes issuing lower-tier subawards to partner institutions, attach a letter of commitment from each institution. The letter of commitment must be dated and signed by the subaward's PI (usually listed as a Co-PI of the project) and include the following information: period of performance, total funds requested, and a Scope of Work outlining activities to be performed, the deliverables created, and the project timeline.

Letters of Cooperation from Producer(s): Each producer who is part of the project team must send a dated and signed letter of cooperation to be included in the submission. This letter should verify their willingness to participate, indicate the resources and time committed to this project, and describe their role in the project.

Letters of Support from Stakeholders: Attach letters of support from stakeholder individuals and/or organizations that support the proposed research and education activities.

Current and Pending Support: The PI and Co-PI(s) must submit a Current and Pending Support form. This form may be downloaded from the online application site.

Institutional Review Board Approval Document for Working with Human Subjects: For guidance on what meets the requirements for Human Subject Research please see here.

If your project meets the definition of Human Subjects Research, you will need to provide documentation from the Host Institution Institutional Review Board (IRB) demonstrating you have received approval or exemption for your project, or at a minimum, you have submitted your protocol for review by your IRB. At the time of submission, proof that you initiated the IRB process is acceptable; however, if awarded, the Subaward Agreement will not be executed until IRB approval/exemption documentation is provided.

Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee Document for Working with Animals: For guidance on what meets the requirements for the care and use of agricultural animals in research and teaching please see [here](#).

If your proposal involves vertebrae animals, you must provide documentation from the Host Institution's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) demonstrating you have received approval or exemption for your project or at a minimum you have submitted your protocol for review by your IACUC. A complete IACUC approval is not required by the proposal submission, but if selected for funding, documentation of IACUC approval must be complete before the subaward agreement will be executed.

Citations: A list of cited sources must be attached in the Supporting Documents section of the online submission and is not part of the word number limit.

Other Documents: (Optional): Include any other document that you think might strengthen your proposal. These documents may not be used to lengthen the Project Narrative.

Multiple submissions are accepted but only one application (from any one individual applicant) can be awarded funding for any of the Western SARE competitive programs in one grant budget cycle. An exception to this rule is proposals submitted to the Graduate Student program, where more than one project can be awarded to a PI who acts as the main advisor of the graduate student(s). Additionally, obtaining Graduate Student awards does not exclude the PI to be awarded in other WSARE Research and Education or Professional Development grant programs for the same budget cycle.

Review Process

Eligible proposals received by the due date with all supporting documents will be evaluated by a Technical Review Panel, a diverse group of reviewers from the Western SARE region with broad agricultural production, scientific, and educational expertise. The Technical Review Panel evaluates the proposals based on the review criteria stated below and meets to discuss and appraise the merits of each proposal. Their recommendations are forwarded to the Western SARE Administrative Council for additional review and final selection. Reviewers' and Western SARE Administrative Council recommendations are then shared with the applicants.

Proposals Evaluation Criteria	
Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Value and Benefits	15%
Collaboration with Host Institution and Local Partners	5%
Project Team	5%
Research Plan	30%
Educational Plan	30%

Timeline	5%
Building Human Capacity at Host Institution	5%
Budget & Justification	5%
Total	**100%**

Selected Proposals

If the PI of a new Western SARE grant proposal has an active Western SARE award, funding decisions will be contingent upon fulfillment of the reporting requirements of the active award as specified in the Subaward Agreement. Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding may expect the following:

Public Domain: While proposals and reviews will remain confidential, the Western SARE program considers all funded proposals, subsequent reports, and related information to be in the public domain. See details of this stipulation in the Public Access of Research Data section in [USDA Grant Policies](#).

Notification: The Western SARE Administrative Council will select proposals for funding in early March 2025. The Administrative Council reserves the right to restructure or reduce the budget of any grant proposal before final approval. Western SARE staff will notify applicants of the status of their proposals by March 2025.

Award: If your proposal is selected for funding, the Office of Sponsored Programs at Montana State University will initiate a Subaward Service Agreement to you. The Subaward Service Agreement will identify all Terms and Conditions for the award, including reporting requirements. Acceptance of the initial payment is the recipient's acceptance of the terms and conditions of the grant.

Note: All proposals from Micronesia (Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, Marshall Islands and Palau) are required to have the College of Micronesia (at Pohnpei) act as their fiscal agent in the disbursement of funds.

Funds: The Subaward Agreement is cost-reimbursable. Subrecipients will be responsible for incurring approved project-related costs and subsequently invoicing Western SARE/MSU for all expenses to be reimbursed. Invoices are to be submitted according to the guidelines in the Subaward Agreement. 10% of the awarded amount will be withheld pending receipt and approval of the final report.

Photographs and Videos: Grant recipients are invited to document their project with photographs and/or videos, which can be useful to them and helps Western SARE highlight and promote their work on our website and publications. Digital photographs and videos are preferred. It is expected that the outreach/educational material produced by Western SARE-supported projects will be ADA-compliant; including closed captions to visual and audio deliverables is strongly encouraged.

Proper Citation: The Western SARE program must be credited as the funding source in any publications or outreach materials generated by the funded project. Please refer to the Western SARE website for complete guidelines for acknowledging funds, adapt this language to your material. Information pertaining to citing Western SARE will also be included in the Subaward Agreement.

Site Visits: Western SARE recognizes that there are limits to what can be reported during the life of a project. As a result, along with your reporting, Western SARE staff may visit ongoing or finalized projects to assess the impact of Western SARE grants.

Project Modifications and Changes: Request for changes to the project as originally proposed, such as a change in PI, Co-PI, institution, objectives, timeline, budget, etc. should be reported to the grant's Program Manager via email with a complete Project Modification Form for consideration and approval by Western SARE Regional Coordinator. Upon approval of the requested changes, Western SARE staff will notify the PI.

Learn more about the Western SARE subaward process here.

Reporting Requirements for Awarded Proposals

A report will be required at the end of the project. Reports should describe the progress made on the project, detail the results, describe the educational outreach activities and material produced by the project, and document its impacts. All educational outreach activities should include an evaluation component that measures changes in knowledge or awareness, attitudes, and opinions, and/or the adoption of new practices by producers or other agricultural professionals. Approved project reports will be posted on the national SARE website, and be shared with producers, policymakers, and other stakeholders. All educational materials and products must have an electronic version and be included in your reports. Please review the documents located in the Western SARE Reporting Documents for Grantees section to understand what will be expected if your project is awarded. ***The PI will have up to 60 days from the Period of Performance's end date to submit the Final Report.***

Grantees must maintain up-to-date contact information (e.g., address, phone number, email, etc.) for all project team members in the online submission portal.

How to Apply

Go to ***https://projects.sare.org***
Look for programs under "Western" [region]

Proposals are due by 12:00 pm (noon) MST – November 21, 2024

Sabbatical Grant Program Schedule
November 21, 2024 – Proposals are due by 12:00 PM (noon) Mountain Time.
January 2025 – A Technical Review Panel reviews and recommends proposals for funding.
March 2025 –WSARE Administrative Council selects proposals for funding.
March 2025 – Applicants are informed about their proposal status
April 1, 2025 – First allowed project start date

Online Submission Checklist

Project Basic Information
- ☐ Project Subject Matter
- ☐ Project Start Date
- ☐ Project End Date
- ☐ Primary State
- ☐ Commodities
- ☐ Practices
- ☐ Project Objectives
- ☐ How did you learn about this CFP?
- ☐ Usefulness of Western SARE Resources

Summary
- ☐ Summary

Narrative
- ☐ Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Value and Benefits
- ☐ Collaboration with Host Institution and Local Partners
- ☐ Project Team Members List and Roles
- ☐ Research Plan
- ☐ Education Plan
- ☐ Timeline
- ☐ Building Human Capacity at Host Institution

Budget and Budget Justification
- ☐ Total Budget Amount
- ☐ Budget Worksheet and Budget Justification for Awarded Institution
- ☐ Budget Worksheet and Budget Justification for Lower-Tier Subawards
- ☐ Authorized Organizational Representative Information

Supporting Documents
- ☐ Signature Page
- ☐ Curriculum Vitae
- ☐ Current and Pending for PI and Co-PI(s)
- ☐ Letter of Invitation from Host Institution
- ☐ Letter of Sabbatical Leave Approval from Home Institution
- ☐ Letter of Commitment from Partner Institution(s) (if applicable)
- ☐ Letters of Cooperation from Producer(s)
- ☐ Letters of Support from Stakeholders

- ☐ Animal Care Plan Questionnaire (if applicable)
- ☐ IRB Statement (if applicable)
- ☐ Citations

Resources

Check the resources in the WSARE Proposal Preparation Documents section.

If you have further questions, please contact the Sabbatical Program Manager, wsare-sab@sare.org or 406-994-4789; or e-mail our office at wsare@msu.edu

Information on past projects including summaries and reports can be found here . We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about sustainable agriculture and the Western SARE program. Tips for writing proposals are available here.

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, highlight resources, and share search techniques for literature reviews and background research. AFSIC resources are available at http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/ or contact AFSIC at 301-504-6559 or by e-mail, afsic@nal.usda.gov.

The mission of Western SARE is to advance innovations that improve profitability, stewardship of natural resources, and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education.