# 2025 Call for Proposals

Farmer Rancher Grant Program

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| --- | --- |
| Grant Highlights |  |
| Deadline | **Thursday, December 5, 2024 at 4:00 P.M. Central Time** |
| Who's eligible | Farmers and Ranchers in the North Central region |
| Funding amounts | Up to $15,000 or $30,000 |
| Grant goals | This grant helps farmers explore innovative ideas and share what they are learning with others. Farmers and ranchers can explore sustainable solutions to problems through on-farm research or demonstration and education projects. |
| Allowable expenses | Expenses directly related to the research, demonstration, or education project (examples: labor, supplies, travel, data collection, field days, or other costs needed to carry out the project). Details in the Budget section. |
| Unallowable expenses | This grant CANNOT fund day-to-day farming expenses, purchasing land, or business startup costs. Details in the Budget section. |
| Submit | Online at **projects.sare.org** |

# Questions?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Liz Brownlee brow7263[@](mailto:email@umn.edu)umn.edu]  (812) 405-5681  [www.northcentralsare.org](http://www.northcentralsare.org)  [ncrsare@umn.edu](mailto:ncrsare@umn.edu)  612-626-3113  University of Minnesota  1390 Eckles Ave, Suite 120  Saint Paul, MN 55108 | Scan the QR code to more about this grant program, including:   * Frequently asked question * See recently funded projects * Watch a webinar about how to apply * And more | QR code to NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher Grant website. |

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## Background

#### About SARE and NCR-SARE

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program’s Mission is to advance – to the whole of American agriculture – innovations that improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life by investing in groundbreaking research and education.

The SARE program works primarily through competitive grant programs administered by four regions: North Central, Northeast, South, and West.

The 12 states of North Central Region (NCR)-SARE include: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

NCR-SARE’s mission is to strengthen communities, increase farmer/rancher economic viability, and improve the environment by supporting research and education. NCR-SARE is hosted by the University of Minnesota.

#### Equity and Inclusion at NCR-SARE

SARE was created in the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (1990 Farm Bill, Title 16, Subtitle B). It is funded through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).

The North Central SARE program operates under a cooperative agreement between the University of Minnesota (host institution) and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA).  The University of Minnesota provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs, facilities, and employment without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. To learn more about diversity at the University of Minnesota: <http://diversity.umn.edu>

North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (NCR-SARE) recognizes the power and value of diversity in our grantmaking and outreach programs. We recognize that for the greatest and broadest impact when addressing challenges for the whole of agriculture, our programs need to reach many, including those who have been historically excluded. We encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion in our peer grant review teams and in applicants and the audiences applicants are serving in their projects.  We encourage projects that involve minority-serving organizations or in other ways include work with historically underserved audiences. We recognize that this asks for ALL of us to sit in both the discomforts and the possibilities that can come when diverse perspectives are encouraged to participate in finding solutions and expanding access to our programs for all.

**Note**

USDA and NCR-SARE define **historically-underserved audiences** to include socially-disadvantaged producers, limited-resource producers, beginning farmers/ranchers, and veterans. Socially-disadvantaged farmers and ranchers are further defined as belonging to the following groups: American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

## Timeline

* August 2024- Call for Proposals Released (Grant application and instructions are available)
* December 5, 2024- Proposals Due
* Mid-February 2025- Funding Decisions
* April-May 2025- Grants are Awarded and Grant Recipients Receive First 50% of Funding

## Program Goals

Farmer Rancher Grants provide opportunities for farmers and ranchers to use sustainable agricultural practices to solve problems on the farm or ranch and share what they learn through the written grant process and outreach. More about the outreach requirements below.

Sustainable Agriculture is farming and ranching that is ecologically sound, economically viable, and socially responsible. Since the start of the program in 1992, more than 1,300 grants have been awarded to explore topics including (but not limited to):

* Agroecology
* Agroforestry
* Alternative Grains as Animal Feed
* Beneficial Insects, Pollinator Habitat
* Cover Crops
* Crop/Landscape Diversity
* Educating/Mentoring New Farmers/Ranchers
* Farmland Access
* Food Sovereignty
* Holistic Farming & Ranching
* Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
* Labor Needs and Issues
* Organic Agriculture
* Permaculture
* Poultry, Small-Scale Livestock
* Proactive Weed Management
* Quality of Life Issues for Family/Community
* Regenerative Agriculture
* Renewable Energy
* Managed Grazing
* Soil Health
* Value-Added & Direct Marketing
* Water Quality Improvement/Wetland

#### Sharing What’s Learned

SARE Farmer-Rancher Grants require sharing what you learned. Note: the progress you make or things you learn or develop will be considered “open source.” This knowledge or data is not proprietary, and SARE grant recipients are required to share the progress they make via their outreach efforts. This might mean sharing the design plans for a piece of equipment, a floorplan for a wash/pack station, data from a side-by-side trial, etc. These grants are meant to fuel innovation for the whole farming community, and so grantees report on what worked, what didn’t, and what you would recommend for other farmers and ranchers pursuing similar solutions.

## 

## Eligibility

Any farmer or rancher or team of farmers or ranchers who farm or operate a ranch in the North Central region may apply.

A farmer/rancher is someone who raises crops or livestock, especially as a business. Applicants may be just beginning the transition to a more sustainable operation or may already be using sustainable practices and want to try more. Grants to applicants under 21 need to be signed by a parent or guardian.

Applicants can submit one grant application per year and can participate in one grant per year.

Previous grant recipients are eligible to apply if reports from previous grants are up to date.

Team projects must have at least two farmer/rancher participants from separate and distinct operations. If your situation is unique, contact NCR-SARE to discuss your options. Teams must designate a farmer/rancher project coordinator who will submit and sign the proposal, be responsible for reporting, and assume tax liability associated with the grant, if there is any.

We have a strong commitment to diversity. Proposals that involve farmers, ranchers, or youth from historically-underserved\* populations are encouraged. \*USDA defines historically-underserved audiences to include socially-disadvantaged producers, limited-resource producers, beginning farmers/ranchers, and veterans. They further define socially-disadvantaged farmers and ranchers as belonging to the following groups: American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) that are actively farming can apply for Farmer Rancher Grants. NGOs working with farmers and ranchers should consider applying for Partnership Grants. See: <https://northcentral.sare.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/partnership-grant/>.

## Amount of Funding

There are two types of Farmer Rancher competitive grants:

1. Individual grants ($15,000 maximum)
2. Team grants for two or more farmers or ranchers from separate and distinct operations who are working together ($30,000 maximum).

A total of approximately $720,000 is available for this program. Each year, we typically receive around 120-140 applications. We can typically fund approximately 40 proposals.

## Proposal Sections

The proposal includes the following:

* Project Proposal – Describe your project. Instructions for each question in the Full Proposal (see Appendix).

1) Description

Provide a summary of your project (45 words)

2) People

Who are the people carrying out the project, and what are their roles? (400 words)

3) Problem

What problem are you trying to solve? (200 words)

4) Solution and Objectives

How do you plan to solve the problem using sustainable agriculture practices? What are your objectives? (600 words total)

5) Sustainable Agriculture Benefits

How will your solution benefit other farmers or ranchers in your community and the North Central region economically, ecologically, and socially?

6) Measuring Results

How will you measure the results of your project? (300 words)

7) Contribution to Sustainable Agriculture

How will your project add to sustainable agriculture knowledge? (400 words)

8) Outreach

How will you share the information you learned from your project with farmers and ranchers, educators, and others? (400 words)

* Budget - What items do you need to carry out the project? Details in the Budget section.

* Attachments: Provide supporting documents. Details in the Attachments section.
  + Letter of Support
  + Team Confirmation of Commitment
  + Livestock Care Plan

## Budget

#### Allowable Expenses

Grant funds are for research, demonstration, and education project expenses, not day-to-day farming expenses or farm startup costs. For your budget, show the amount of grant funds you intend to spend on each item. Use accurate figures, rounded to the nearest dollar, and include a brief explanation of how each item listed in your budget relates to your project. For example: Weighing produce for yield comparison – 6 hrs x $25/hr = $150.

#### Unallowable Expenses

Funds are NOT for everyday farming expenses, other than those directly related to the grant project (see Budget instructions and examples in this document). Grant funds cannot be used for planning, construction, repair, or remodeling of buildings, or to buy motorized vehicles. These items may be leased or rented with grant funds, if they are needed for the project. Grant funds cannot be used for permanent installations (e.g., wells or buried irrigation lines). Grant funds cannot be used for insurance, licenses, warranties.

*Investigate “Cost-Share” Programs.* Although this grant cannot fund everyday farming expenses, many of the practices used in sustainable agriculture may be eligible for cost-sharing from other federal or state government agencies or local soil and water conservation districts, local businesses, private non-profit groups, etc. Additionally, the online resource for federal programs, [Grassroots Guide to Federal Farm and Food Programs](https://sustainableagriculture.net/publications/grassrootsguide/), has information about requirements for a variety of programs and grants.

#### Creating a Budget

Reviewers look for accurate budgets that match the activities in your proposal. For each line of your budget, you will need to provide:

1. Category: Choose from the following categories:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Category | Details |
| Personnel | Use for farmer/rancher labor and hired labor. List everyone who is participating in your project except consultants and service providers who should be listed under Other Direct Costs. Include a realistic estimate of the amount of labor and the cost for each participant being paid with grant funds. NCR-SARE recognizes that farmers and ranchers are skilled workers who should be paid $25 per hour or more for their labor in grant projects. If participants are not being paid with grant funds, include them but enter $0 for the grant request. |
| Materials and Supplies | Use for items you plan to purchase to carry out the project. Explain how they will be used to support the project. |
| Travel | For travel costs, use a mileage rate of $0.67, which covers ownership and operating costs. |
| Other Direct Costs | Use for consultants and service providers. Also use this category for communications, photocopying, conferences-meetings-workshops, speaker/trainer fees, fee for service/stipends, equipment rental, land-use charges, fabrication of equipment, and food and drink expenses.   * Note: Refreshments at field days or group meals for events are allowable if they maintain the continuity of the meeting (meaning: there must be programming before and after the meal). Breakfast meals are generally not allowed because no continuity of the meeting exists. |
| Equipment | Equipment definition: an item that costs $5000 or more with a useful life of more than one year. This includes items like permanent fencing, perennial seeds and plants, or livestock.   * *50% Rule for Equipment, Permanent fencing, Perennial seeds and plants, and Livestock:* Grant funds can only be used for up to 50% of the cost of these items. Include the total cost in the Details/Justification column but enter 50% or less of the total cost in the Amount column. Equipment is defined as items that cost $5000 or more and have a useful life of more than 1 year. |

1. Description:

Provide a brief description of each item you want to purchase that explains why it is needed for the project. For Personnel, briefly list the role each person plays in the project.

1. Amount ($):

Enter the dollar amount you are requesting for each item. Unallowable Expenses: Grant funds cannot be used for planning, construction, repair, or remodeling of buildings, or to buy motorized vehicles. These items may be leased or rented with grant funds, if they are needed for the project. Grant funds cannot be used for insurance or permanent installations (e.g., wells or buried irrigation lines).

1. Budget Justification: The budget must include a “justification” for each section. This simply means that applicants must show their math. List the items you are purchasing, and what each item costs. For example: A grantee is comparing mushroom production options. They are purchasing two packages of wine cap mushroom spawn, and those cost $30 each. The “Budget Justification” for the mushroom spawn would be:

Wine Cap Mushroom Spawn: 2 packages @ $30 each = $60 total

Round to the nearest dollar. For example: 23 hrs. @ $25/hr. = $575, or 87 miles @ $.67/mile = $58.29, rounded down to $58.00.

If you are not asking for the full amount of an item, include a note in the justification explaining that you are only asking for part of the cost.

#### More Details for Drafting a Budget

*Matching funds are not required.* Do not show a match. If outside funds are necessary to carry out your project, note that you have outside resources so reviewers can evaluate your work plan, but do not list the amount.

*Calculating Costs.* Labor, land, equipment, and supplies should be calculated on an annual cost-equivalent basis. (For example, operator labor per year at $25 per hour; $75/acre cash rent equivalent; $10/acre rental of tillage equipment, etc.). Costs vary widely across the North Central region. Use costs that are accurate for your area. If costs are high in your area, provide an explanation.

## Attachments

#### Letters of Support

One letter is required. Support letters must include the contact information of the supporter. People who might write a support letter include Extension educator, banker, co-op or grocery manager, implement dealer, or staff from: farm organizations, Farm Service Agency (FSA), local soil and water conservation district offices, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), or non-profit organizations.

Letters of support should include:

* Contact information of the supporter
* Description of your experience and ability to carry out the project
* Explanation of why the project is needed and how it will benefit the community
* Information that will support the proposal. For example, if the supporter will help you with outreach, ask them to include that information in the letter and provide specifics about how they will help.

Note:

* Contact supporters early and make sure they are familiar with your project so they can write a strong letter.
* The letter should include information that will support the proposal. (For example, if the supporter will help you with outreach, ask them to include that in the letter and provide specifics about their help.)
* You can submit an optional second letter. Do not submit more than two letters.

#### Team Confirmation of Commitment

For Team online proposals, the team members will be sent an email asking them to confirm their participation and role. For hard copy applications, include a brief statement from each Team member confirming their role in the project.

#### Livestock Care Plan

Complete this form if your project involves livestock (vertebrate animals such as cows, fish, pigs, sheep). Bees and other insects and shrimp are not considered livestock for the purpose of this form (since they are invertebrates).

## Review and Selection Process

#### Reviewers

Proposals are reviewed by your peers. Each proposal is reviewed by a committee which includes farmer and rancher members of the NCR-SARE Administrative Council, as well as farmers and ranchers from throughout the North Central region. Funding recommendations are based on how well grant applicants explain the following information in their proposal. Peer reviewers use the following criteria and scoring system. The weight of each criterion is shown in parentheses.

#### Selection Criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Criteria(with Weight for Scoring) | Examples Questions Peer Reviewers Consider |
| Project Leader or Team (10%) | * *Do the people involved have the experience and skills to successfully carry out the project?* |
| Project Design (30%) | * *Is the problem clearly explained so someone unfamiliar with the project can understand it?* * *Is there a well-thought-out, detailed plan to solve a problem on the farm or ranch using sustainable agriculture practices?* * *For education and demonstration projects, is there a well-thought-out, detailed plan to provide potential solutions for other farmers or ranchers through information sharing?* * *Does the project have the potential to help farmers and ranchers in the North Central region produce positive environmental, economic, and social benefits?* |
| Contribution to the growth of sustainable agriculture (15%) | * *Does the project build on and add to existing sustainable agriculture knowledge?* |
| Outreach (20%).  All projects must share their results with others. | * *Are there specific plans to share project information and results with other farmers or ranchers?* * *Some options for information sharing include workshops, field days, publications, written materials, social media, a web page, radio, television, videos, presenting a poster or giving a talk at a conference or other event.* |
| Results (15%)  Your project may not produce the results you expect, but if you learn something from the project and share the information, we consider it a success. | * *Is there an effective plan to measure the results of the project?* * *What will be measured and how will it be measured to determine if there are environmental, economic, and/or social (family/community) benefits from the project?* |
| Appropriate budget (10%). | * *Are grant funds used for project expenses only?* * *Do budget descriptions explain how items will be used in the project?* |

## Reporting Expectations and Funds Distribution

As you plan your proposal, note these reporting requirements and when funds will be distributed. They may impact your plan.

* March 2025: Grant project budgets are reviewed and approved. Contracts are prepared for grantees to sign and return to the NCR-SARE office.
* March 15, 2025: This is the Project Start Date. Work on funded projects can begin. Any items purchased before this start date cannot be paid for with grant funds.
* April-May 2025: 1st payment checks (50% of the grant) are mailed after the signed contract and other paperwork is approved. Typically, this is between April 15 and May 15. A 1099 form is automatically filed with the IRS with each payment for tax purposes. You must keep receipts for project expenses for a period of three years.
* January 15, 2026: A Progress report and budget update are due. The 2nd grant payment (35% of the grant) is released after the progress report and budget are approved.
* January 15, 2027: Contract end date and Deadline for submitting a final report with budget. The final payment (15% of the grant) is mailed after the final report and budget are approved. The final payment is a reimbursement. All funds should be spent, and the grant project completed by this date.
* Date to be decided: If funded, you may receive an on-site visit from NCR-SARE representatives.

## Grant Writing Help

#### Tips

To increase your chance of success:

#### Clearly define a problem and propose a solution that will work for other farmers and ranchers, and that fits the amount of funding and time frame available for the grant project.

#### Involve cooperators who assist with project planning and measuring and sharing project results. Cooperators may include Extension educators; staff of local, state, or regional non-profit groups, local conservation districts, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS); or others.

#### Have a plan to measure and document project results throughout the project.

#### Emphasize outreach such as field days, workshops, publications, social media, videos, websites.

#### Demonstrate a good fit with SARE’s mission by explaining how your project will benefit other farmers and ranchers economically, ecologically, and socially.

#### Address reviewer concerns and explain revisions for proposals that are being resubmitted.

#### Example Budget

The budget that follows shows examples of line items from different projects. Choose the budget categories that apply to your project, add item descriptions, and list the amounts you are requesting.

Use the Details/Justification column to show how you came up with the cost of each item (show your math). This is usually expressed as some per-unit cost multiplied by the number of units. Use rounded numbers. For example: 23 hrs. @ $25/hr. = $575, or 87 miles @ $.67/mile = $58.29, rounded down to $58.00. Reviewers look for accurate budgets that match the activities in your proposal.

If you are not asking for the full amount of an item, include a note in the justification explaining that you are only asking for part of the cost.

###### Example budget:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Description | Amount ($) | Details/Justification |
| Personnel | Estelle Koski, Farmer and project coordinator. Set up blueberry trials, keep records, organize field day workshops | $1725 | 69 hrs @ $25/hr = $1725 |
| Personnel | Ruby Farmer, college student. Conduct surveys to determine public interest in new direct marketing techniques. Compile results. | $1168 | 73 hrs x $16/hr = $1168 |
| Materials and Supplies | Flexible water pipe for portable solar-powered pasture watering system | $196 | 200 feet of 1.25 inch flexible water pipe x .98 per foot = 196 |
| Materials and Supplies | Cover crop soil builder seed mix (15 species) to prepare area for alternative grain crop planting | $956 | 10 acres x 65 lbs/acre x 1.47/lb = $955.50 rounded up to $956 |
| Travel | Abe Lee, cooperating farmer. Travel to 3 farms in different parts of the region to learn holistic planning techniques | $492 | 734 miles x .67/mile = $491.78 rounded up to $492 |
| Travel | David Hay, farmer. Pick up Teff grass seed for pasture planting. | $10 | 157 miles x .67/mile = $105.19 rounded down to $105 |
| Other Direct Costs | Lease 2 acres of land from neighbor to provide buffer for organic amaranth planting. | $294 | 2 acres x $147 per acre = $294 |
| Other Direct Costs | Lunch for day-long farmer training with financial expert speakers before and after lunch. | $495 | 20 participants x $15/ meal = $495 |
| Equipment, Permanent fencing, Perennial seeds and plants, or Livestock | Woven wire fence to contain orchard hogs; permanent boundary fence needed since orchard is by highway | $746 | 3 330-foot-rolls woven wire fence @ $209.99 each = $629.97 + 123 t-posts @ $5.79 each = $712.17 + 1 gate @ $150 = $1492.14 total cost x 50% = $746.07 rounded down to $746 |
| Equipment, Permanent fencing, Perennial seeds and plants, or Livestock | 24 native shrubs and perennial wildflowers (8 each): American plum, Rose mallow, False wild indigo for border to attract beneficial insects | $380 | 24 shrubs x $25 per gallon pot = $600 + $159.48 shipping/handling = $759.48. Total Cost = $759.48 x 50% = $379.74 rounded up to $380 |
| Equipment, Permanent fencing, Perennial seeds and plants, or Livestock | 50 chicks, Buff Orphington breed, females | $117 | 50 chicks @ $3.87 ea = $193.50 + $40 shipping = $233.50 Total Cost of Item = $233.50 x 50% = $116.75 rounded up to $117. |
| Total |  | $6,672 |  |

#### Contacts Who Can Help

There are several options for seeking help as your ideas and prepare your proposal, including:

##### 

##### Farmer Rancher Grant Program Coordinator

Liz Brownlee, Farmer Rancher Grant Coordinator at 812-405-5681 or brow7263@umn.edu.

##### State SARE Coordinators

Your NCR-SARE State Coordinator for grant writing support. See the list in the appendix or see:<https://northcentral.sare.org/state-programs/state-coordinators/>.

##### Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI) provides free Grants Advising services to farmers, ranchers, and youth educators applying for NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher and Youth Educator Grants. MFAI Grants Advising services are open to all Midwestern farmers, agricultural entrepreneurs and institutions and include help applying to non-SARE grant programs, as well as loan, and cost-share programs of state, federal, and private sources. For more information see: [https://www.michaelfields.org/grants-advising-resources](https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.michaelfields.org%2Fgrants-advising-resources&data=05%7C01%7CBenjaminJ%40lincolnu.edu%7C7905f15ea2f045debb3308db81a9de59%7C3ef6ab5c7a0442d08c5fd7df3c090faa%7C1%7C0%7C638246338833519758%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Us975PuqG7V1UxV%2B9nckZbHqQTcF0qKz1rIISlxgy18%3D&reserved=0). For help, contact MFAI Grants Advisor, Wren Almitra at: grants@michaelfields.org or 719-318-7936.

##### Others Who Might Be a Resource

Consider talking with trusted “agricultural professionals” in your area, such as staff at your Natural Resources Conservation office, the local Soil and Water Conservation District, or your Extension agent. They may be able to help you think through your idea or review a draft of your grant proposal.

##### Publications

If you are looking for resources to distribute or use as part of your curriculum, the following have many helpful print and online materials available and may have something you can use.

* **SARE** has many publications that are available, some at no cost to educators. The full list can be found at <https://www.sare.org/resources/>. Or contact the NCR-SARE office for assistance.
* **Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas (ATTRA)** will provide information packets on various agricultural issues. If you are contacting ATTRA via email, 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](http://www.attra.ncat.org/).

## Submitting Your Proposal

Proposals are due by 4:00 p.m. Central Time on Thursday, December 5, 2024.

#### 

#### Applying Online

We use an online submission process. To get started, go to<https://projects.sare.org/> and make a free account. The online submission system opens in August 2024. If you need assistance, please ask. NCR-SARE staff are ready to walk you through how the system works and can share video tutorials about how to draft your online application.

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#### Applying By Mail

If you are unable to use the online system, email your proposal to ncrsare@umn.edu or mail proposals to: NCR-SARE Farmer Rancher Grant Program, 1390 Eckles Ave, Saint Paul MN 55108.

Proposals that are typed should use a font no smaller than 12-point, similar to the text in this document. Handwritten proposals in dark ink are acceptable if they are legible.

Mailed proposals should be printed single-sided. Faxed proposals will NOT be reviewed.

This call for proposals is available on the North Central SARE web site at<https://northcentral.sare.org/>. If you need a printed application, call 612-626-3113 or email ncrsare@umn.edu.

## 

## Checklist

**STOP!** Before you begin submitting your proposal, make sure you have all required documents and information.

* Proposal text in a word processing document
* Budget including justification (showing your math)
* Letter(s) of support
* Team Confirmation of Commitment (if applicable)
* Livestock Care Plan (if applicable)

|  |
| --- |
| **Deadline**  **Thursday, December 5, 2024**  **4:00 p.m. Central Time** |

# Appendix

## 2024 NCR-SARE State Coordinator Contact Information

**ILLINOIS**

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## Miscellaneous Questions

*Can I use drones in my project?*

Projects involving drones must have an operator with an FAA approved operating license in place before the project starts.

*Can I grow hemp in a trial?*

Projects involving industrial hemp must comply with applicable state and USDA regulations. See:<https://nifa.usda.gov/industrial-hemp>.

*What rules are there around livestock in on-farm research or trials?*

Livestock projects need to must comply with reasonable animal care requirements to ensure that animals are properly cared for. See the Livestock Care form on pages 17 - 19.

## 

## Full 2024 Proposal Form

*On the following pages you will see the questions you will be asked on the online application. Before applying, note:*

* *Read through this Call for Proposals first.*
* *To apply, go to the online system using the link:* [*https://projects.sare.org/*](https://projects.sare.org/)*.*
* *If you are unable to use the online system, complete your proposal using a computer or typewriter, or print legibly in dark ink and mail to NCR-SARE. Do not exceed word limits. Extra words will be removed.*
* *For additional information about preparing a proposal, you can view a presentation at:* [*https://northcentral.sare.org/Grants/Apply-for-a-Grant/Farmer-Rancher-Grant/*](https://northcentral.sare.org/Grants/Apply-for-a-Grant/Farmer-Rancher-Grant/)*.*

#### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The first time you register in the SARE projects system you will be asked to provide demographic information. Demographic information is not linked to your proposal and is compiled in a separate database. Individual demographic information will not be shared or made public. The North Central SARE program uses this information to increase accountability. NCR-SARE 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. Providing this information is optional. Choose “Prefer not to answer” if you don’t want to answer any of the questions.

Ethnicity: Hispanic or Latino; Not Hispanic or Latino; Prefer not to answer

Sex: Male; Female; Other; Unidentified (prefer not to identify)

Race: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; Black or African American; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; White; Other; Unidentified (prefer not to identify)

Year of Birth (optional) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Farmer/Rancher Name:

*This person serves as Project Coordinator. If funded, the grant contract will be in this person’s name.*

Farm Business Name, Address, City, State Zip Code, County, Phone, and E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Are you a Farmer or Rancher? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

*You must be a farmer or rancher to apply. A farmer/rancher is someone who raises crops or livestock, especially as a business. Beginning farmers/ranchers are eligible to apply. Most Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) should apply for Partnership Grants for projects working with farmers and ranchers. See:* [*https://northcentral.sare.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/partnership-grant/*](https://northcentral.sare.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/partnership-grant/)*. NGOs that are actively farming can apply for Farmer Rancher Grants. The NGO farmer must be the applicant, but payments can go to the NGO.*

Is this an Individual \_\_\_\_\_\_, or Team (2 or more farmers or ranchers) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Project? *For Team projects, list all members of your team and their contact information.*

Start Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *(no later than January 15, 2026)*

*If funded, you have up to 23 months to complete your project. The Start and End Dates help reviewers evaluate if you are allowing enough time to complete your project.*

*Your budget must be approved before you can spend grant funds. This will likely be by March 15, 2024, but may be later. You can start your project before that date but will not be able to use grant funds for expenses incurred before your budget is approved.*

Have you submitted this, or a similar proposal, to NCR-SARE before? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

Have you previously received a SARE Farmer/Rancher Grant? Yes\_\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*If you received a SARE grant(s) in the past or have a current grant, list the project number(s) on a separate page along with a summary of your results or progress (for current projects). Use 100 words or less for each grant summary.*

*If the project was not completed, explain why not in the summary.*

Does this project involve livestock (vertebrate animals only)? Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_.

*If yes, fill out the Livestock Care form at the end of the application.*

#### CHOOSE YOUR TOPIC

*Select ONE item from the Farming System list and ONE item from the Crops list that best represents your project. They should show the primary focus of your project. This is for sorting proposals for review. It is for SARE use only and will not affect your proposal review.*

##### Farming System

* Animal Production (includes aquaculture, grazing)
* Crop Production (includes agroforestry, beekeeping, pollination)
* Education & Training
* Energy
* Farm Business Management (includes marketing)
* Natural Resources/Environment
* Pest Management
* Production Systems (includes agroecosystems, aquaponics, holistic management, hydroponics, integrated crop and livestock systems, organic agriculture, permaculture, etc.)
* Soil Management
* Sustainable Communities

##### Crops

* This project is not crop specific or doesn't apply to crops
* Agronomic
* Fruits
* Nuts
* Vegetables
* Additional Plants (herbs, native plants, ornamentals, trees)
* Animals (includes bees, fish)
* Animal Products (includes honey)
* Other (Fill in the blank. Use for mushrooms, syrup, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

#### EXPLAIN YOUR PROJECT

Project Title: This lets reviewers know what your project is about. Use words that are useful for finding your project in a website search. Use 25 words or less—about 150 characters including spaces.

1. Description: For search results if funded: Provide a summary of your project in 45 words or less—about 300 characters—including spaces. *This tells reviewers what your project is about and may be used for publicity if your project is funded.*

2) People:

Describe the people carrying out the project and their role. (400 words)

*Individual proposals: Describe your background and experience so reviewers know what skills and knowledge you bring to the project. Explain your role. Describe your farm or ranch and include the size of your operation, crops grown, etc.*

*\*Team proposals, provide names and background of all Team members, a description of their farms or ranches, and their role in the project. At least two members of the team must be farmers or ranchers. (Once the farmer or rancher requirement is met, feel free to add participants who are not farmers or ranchers.)*

*\*Team Confirmation of Commitment – For Team proposals, the team members will be sent an email asking them to confirm their participation.*

3) Problem:

Describe the research or education problem you are trying to solve. (200 words)

4) Solution and Objectives

Describe in detail how you plan to solve the problem using sustainable agriculture practices and list your objectives. (600 words total)

*Solution (500 words): If this is a research project, describe how the trial will be set up, the materials and methods you will use, and what sustainable agriculture practices you will try. If this is a demonstration and education project, explain the teaching methods and materials you will use and the sustainable practices that you will demonstrate.*

*Objectives (100 words): Objectives are the major things you plan to accomplish during the project by carrying out research activities or demonstration and education activities. Focus on what you can complete during the 23 months of the grant, even if major objectives will take longer than 23 months.*

*Example objectives:*

* *Evaluate the usefulness of 5 cover crops through field testing*
* *Identify 3 cover crops for potential use in intensive vegetable production*
* *Plant 3 cover crop demonstration plots on 3 separate vegetable farms to use during summer field days.*
* *Share findings through 2 field days, and a conference presentation*

*\*Optional drawing or image. You may include one drawing or image to help explain your project to reviewers. This could be a drawing or photo that shows the plot layout for a crop trial or demonstration, the design for a new piece of equipment you want to build, a sample page of a curriculum you are developing, or another aspect of your project. (Limited to one page, single sided.)*

*Label the upload or attachment so reviewers know what it is. Online attachments can be in these formats: PDF, JPEG, GIF and PNG. Note: once you upload the optional attachment in the online system, you must save it to add it to your application.*

5) Sustainable Agriculture Benefits

How will your solution benefit other farmers or ranchers in your community and the North Central region economically, ecologically, and socially?

*From the list that opens when you click on "Edit Answer," choose one or more of the benefits you expect your project will provide, and that you intend to measure. Be realistic and do not take on too much. These are small grants. You will be asked to report on these benefits in your project reports.*

*To see suggestions of items that you can measure to show benefits, go to:* [*https://projects.sare.org/benefits-and-impacts.*](https://projects.sare.org/benefits-and-impacts/)

6) Measuring Results

How will you measure the results of your project? (300 words) *List your answers from the Sustainable Agriculture Benefits question and explain what and how you will measure results for each one. Documenting the results of your project may involve recordkeeping, taking photos, surveys or other methods.*

*Examples of what you will measure: increased use of more sustainable farming practices, yield changes, increased income, increased access for growers and eaters to traditional foods, increased crop or landscape diversity, improved farmer and farm worker labor conditions, improved farm management decision making.*

*If your project focuses on one part of sustainability (ecological, economic, or social), that is what you should measure. For example, if you are experimenting with cover crops, your main focus may be ecological (preventing erosion) and you can measure soil loss with a soil erosion measurement stick. If you have an education project, you may measure learning through interviews, by surveying participants, or holding discussion groups.*

*A table works well for answering this question. Create a table by clicking on "Edit Answer," then selecting the Table icon. Use your mouse to choose the number of rows and columns you want. Here is an example.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Benefits** | **What will be measured** | **How you will measure results** |
| Improved Soil Quality/Health | Soil nutrients available to microbial life | Haney Test (which measures soil biological health by looking at nutrient availability and microbial activity) before and after grazing cover crops. |
| Improved Quality of Life | Increase in knowledge and intention to use cover crops by farmers who attend field day workshops | Surveys and discussion held before and after field day workshops. |

7) Contribution to Sustainable Agriculture

How will your project add to sustainable agriculture knowledge? (400 words) E*xplain how your project builds on past research or education efforts – including SARE and non-SARE research. What makes your project innovative and different from what has already been done?*

*Resources for finding previous work done on your topic:*

*Review reports from previous SARE grants at:* [*https://projects.sare.org/search-projects/*](https://projects.sare.org/search-projects/)*.*

*Contact ATTRA, the National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service, to speak to an Ag Expert about work done on your topic. Call 1-800-346-9140 or see:* [*https://attra.ncat.org*](https://attra.ncat.org)

*Search the Internet for previous solutions to the problem you are trying to solve.*

8) Outreach

How will you share the information you learned from your project with farmers and ranchers, educators, and others? (400 words)

*All projects must include outreach. For Research Projects, explain how you will share what you discovered from your trials. For Education Projects, explain how you will share the results of your education efforts. (This is different from the outreach activities you hold for your project participants. These are presentations on what you learned from your education and demonstration efforts.) Outreach can include: articles, conferences, field days, social media, website, etc. List your outreach plans and provide details about when and where you will provide outreach, any educational materials you plan to produce, and the audience and numbers of people you hope to reach. Include Date, Outreach Activity, and Who Participates. See the example below.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| DATE | OUTREACH ACTIVITY | WHO PARTICIPATES |
| Mid-May – August 2024 | Document progress of research trials by taking photos weekly and posting them with descriptions on Freeman Farm website and Facebook page. Develop and post 2 YouTube videos on planting and working with cover crops. | Eliza Freeman and son, Terrance Freeman. Current number of Facebook followers is 389. Will work with Extension agent to get videos and postings out to a wider audience. |
| Early-August 2024 | Give a presentation at a regional Sustainable Ag Conference on our education project, explaining the methods we used to demonstrate new livestock fencing techniques to farmers statewide. Provide results of surveys showing which demonstration techniques worked best and the level of interest shown by participants. | Pauline Holtzburger, farmer presents at regional What is Sustainable Ag conference for an audience of 50 to 100 participants. |
| Late August 2024 | Hold field days at each of the 3 participating farms. Give participants pre- and post-test surveys about using cover crops. | Project coordinators: Jan Wiggins, Eliza Freeman, Edgar Holtzburger. Extension educator, Nadia Terrell. Expect 20 or more farmers at each field day for a total of 60 or more. |

9) Budget:

Before you complete your budget, review the Budget section and example budget in the Call for Proposals. Here is an example of a budget entry.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Category | Description | Amount | Details/Justification |
| Materials and supplies | Cover crop seed for test plots that will be used for grazing | $1980 | Custom mix at $3.30/pound spread at 30 lbs/acre over 20 acres = $1980 |

#### 10) Attachments

* Letter of Support - Applicants must submit one letter of support. You can submit an optional second letter. Do not submit more than two letters. The letter(s) must be PDF files to attach them to the application.
* Livestock Care Plan – Projects that include “livestock” must fill out this section. Details below.

## 

#### LIVESTOCK CARE PLAN

*All applicants must answer the first question. Complete the rest of the form only if your project involves livestock. For this program, only animals with a backbone or spinal column (vertebrate animals) are considered livestock. These include cows, fish, goats, pigs, sheep, etc. Bees, other insects, and shrimp are not considered livestock for the purpose of this form (since they are invertebrates).*

*If you will use a less-common species (fish for example), answer the question relative to your species. For example, for #6, stocking density for fish would be the number of fish per tank, pond, etc. Some questions in this section might not apply to your project. If so, simply record “not applicable” or “NA” as your response. However, we expect to see specific responses to most, if not all, of the questions.*

1. Does this project involve livestock (vertebrate animals only)? \_\_\_\_ Yes, \_\_\_\_ No
2. Please indicate what kind of animals will be involved in your project.
3. Please indicate how many of each animal will be involved in your project.
4. Please indicate 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?
5. Will you be using money from NCR-SARE to purchase animals?
6. 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.
7. Describe the housing or shelter available for the animals in normal and inclement weather.
8. How is the housing/shelter cleaned? How often?
9. Describe how feed and water is provided, how often it is provided, and how often the feed and water containers are checked and cleaned.
10. Describe how the nutritional needs of the animals in this project will be met.
11. 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.
12. What procedures will the animals undergo during the 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?
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. If animals are transported off-site, please describe how they will be transported.
16. 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.
17. 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.
18. Identify the veterinarian (name, address, and contact information) that will provide routine and emergency care of the animals used in this project.