



Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SSARE) Sponsorship Policy Guide

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DISCLAIMER: Sponsorships are contingent on annual funding availability at the time of the request. Funds are discretionary and will be awarded at the discretion of Southern SARE. A submission of sponsorship request does not automatically indicate support acceptance. Southern SARE reserves the right to deny sponsorship funding if sponsorship guidelines, allowable budget items (including itemization and justification of budget items), or sponsorship deadlines are not met.

Conference/Event Sponsorships

Each year, the Southern region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SSARE) program provides sponsorship support for conferences, field days, workshops and other educational events organized by universities, community organizations, NGOs, mentor farmers and other ag professionals across the Southern region. The events can be regional events, as well as national events taking place in the Southern region whose main purpose is to further sustainable agriculture for the benefit of farmers, NGOs, community organizations, researchers and other ag professionals.

Such sponsorship seeks to support increased awareness of the SARE program, provides sustainable ag educational resources to farmers, ranchers and ag professionals across the region, provides networking opportunities, and builds partnerships between SSARE and the organizations the program supports.

To be considered for sponsorship support, requests must:

- **Pertain to an event within the Southern region of the U.S.;**
- **Serve domestic audiences (specifically farmers and/or those who serve farmers);**
- **Include a farmer education/outreach component, in the form of a variety of activities, such as field days, farm tours, hands-on workshops, or demonstrations;**
- **Relate to sustainable agriculture.**

Submitting a Conference Sponsorship Request

Organizations, institutions, non-profit organizations, individuals, and other ag professionals submit a sponsorship request for a conference, workshop, or event via SSARE's Conference Sponsorship and Budget Form.

The activities must be educational in nature and support sustainable agriculture. They can be in-person or virtual.

Training activities for Extension agents, ag professionals, and mentor farmers fall under the Professional Development Program and do not qualify for general conference sponsorship support. Travel for conference/event participants falls under the Professional Development Program and does not qualify for general conference sponsorship support.

Application Guidelines

Follow the application guidelines before submitting a sponsorship request:

- Any sponsorship request up to \$3,000 will be considered by the SSARE Administrative Team, and can be submitted at any time of the year. **Your request must be submitted at least 45 days in advance of your event. This provides time to make budget revisions**

and for University of Georgia to process payment for approved sponsorships. Requests received less than 45 days before the event will not be considered.

- If your conference includes a sponsorship/exhibitor package (prospectus), include this information along with your sponsorship and budget form.
- Any sponsorship request greater than \$3,000 must be approved by the Southern SARE Administrative Council, and must be submitted by **January 1** for events ranging from March to August, or by **June 1** for events ranging from September to February in a given year.
- Only ONE sponsorship per institution/organization will be considered per fiscal year. This provides the opportunity for a variety of organizations across the Southern region to be considered for sponsorship support. *Southern SARE may waive this rule at its discretion depending on funding levels for a given fiscal year.*
- Sponsorship must include SSARE representation at the event. This includes, but is not limited to: Website and logo presentation on all marketing materials, including websites, flyers, press releases and social media; the opportunity to exhibit; or the opportunity to be a part of the program's agenda, such as part of a panel discussion on USDA resources, or to provide a brief presentation on the SARE program and what we offer.
- At the completion of the event, organizers are required to submit a brief follow-up ["impact" report](#) as to how the sponsorship helped provide sustainable ag support for the organization or for those who attended. A report must be submitted **within 60 days** of the completion of the event. The report is intended to measure the value of SSARE support in your sustainable ag efforts. **Lack of report submission may impact SSARE's consideration of future sponsorship requests.**

Budget

All items listed in the budget must be itemized and justified as to why they are needed for the event. All budgets are reviewed by the SSARE Administrative Team, and, where necessary, revised to conform to USDA-NIFA's policies on allowable budget items. Any budgets not itemized or justified will be returned for revisions.

Allowable Budget Items

According to the USDA-NIFA, the following items are allowed for general sponsorship purposes:

General event organizing

General event organizing can include, but is not limited to:

Material design and printing for event promotion, such as program, ads, signage/banners, videos, save-the-date cards, program surveys/evaluation, marketing materials, etc.

Postage for event promotion mailings

Supplies to conduct on-site demonstrations and event-related educational

activities, such as seed packets, hand tools, workbooks, course curriculum, training materials, etc.

Meals

Snacks and refreshments, only when the food is part of the costs of the continuity of the event or is part of the educational programming. Is food necessary for continuity to achieve event goals? Are there program speakers, topic sessions, or other educational programming taking place during a meal?

Lunch, only when the food is part of the costs of the continuity of the event or is part of the educational programming. Is food necessary for continuity to achieve event goals? Are there program speakers, topic sessions, or other educational programming taking place during a meal?

Dinner, only if there is a speaker or educational program held during the dinner. The dinner must serve the purpose of disseminating educational and technical information.

Travel

Travel is allowed for speakers and presenters only. Travel costs for attendees do not fall under the General Sponsorship guidelines.

Travel covers:

Speaker/presenter fees, including registration

Transportation (airfare, car rental, or mileage of personal vehicle following federal per diem guidelines)

Lodging (**NOTE: Per University of Georgia policy, only hotels/motels are allowable lodging establishments for reimbursement. Businesses, such as Airbnb, Vrbo, HomeAway, condos/townhomes, or similar vacation rentals are not allowable lodging services. International travel is not allowed.**)

Event Facilities/Planning Spaces

Rental of event facilities/planning spaces can include, but are not limited to:

Convention center space

Hotel conference rooms

Community centers

Church spaces for non-religious purposes

On-farm locations or other open-air spaces

Tents/canopies, as long as educational sessions take place under that space

Technical Equipment

Technical equipment, such as audio/visual technologies can be rented.

Other allowable items include online webinar fees, photography, videography, graphic design and computer software needed for the educational event.

Incidentals

Items that do not fall under the above categories, but are needed for the educational event, can be listed here.

Nonallowable Budget Items

According to the USDA-NIFA, the following items are not allowed for general sponsorship purposes:

Breakfasts

Award luncheons

Award dinners; Fundraising events

Dinners, snacks or lunches if they conclude an event. Such activity is considered to be an entertainment cost.

Rental or purchase of general supplies (tables, chairs, port-o-johns, paper products, furniture, pens, notebooks, etc.)

Entertainment, such as social activities/film screenings and banquets

Entertainment venues, such as breweries, eateries or similar

Personal protection equipment (PPE)

Incentives: money/gifts to attend events; cash or cash-value items, such as gift cards, gift certificates, items used for auction, or items for drawings

Promotional or giveaway items (t-shirts, bags, pens, mugs, etc.)

Personal use items. Any item that does not serve as an educational resource is not allowed.

Tents or canopies not used for educational purposes. For example, tents used for registration or to keep food covered is not an allowable expense.

Alcohol

Liability insurance

Labor costs for personnel of the organization/institution

Tickets to shows or sporting events

Miscellaneous expenses not directly related to the program, such as child care services, maintenance fees, clean-up and upkeep, kitchen help for meal preparation, or wages for meal servers.

Lobbying activities/donations/fundraising events

In addition, travel and registration costs for general event attendees do not fall under the general conference sponsorship guidelines. Travel and registration support for attendees is considered through the Professional Development Program.

How Conference/Event Sponsorship is Reviewed and Processed

Conference/Event Sponsorship requests of \$3,000 or less must be submitted at least 45 days in advance of the event in order for support to be considered. This provides time to review sponsorships, and if selected, for payment processing.

Any sponsorship request greater than \$3,000 must be approved by the Southern SARE Administrative Council, and must be submitted by **January 1** for events ranging from March to August, or by **June 1** for events ranging from September to February in a given year.

Conference/Event Sponsorships are emailed to southern-sponsorships@sare.org. Requests are reviewed by the SSARE Administrative Team for relevancy with SARE's goals and sustainable agriculture, and for accuracies with the budget. The SSARE Administrative Team will work with the event organizers if any revisions need to be made. The SSARE Administrative Team includes the Assistant Director, Outreach Coordinator, Associate Accountant and Administrative Associate.

Any amount \$3,000 and under will be considered by the SSARE Administrative Team. If the amount is above \$3,000, the funding request will be considered by either the SSARE Administrative Council or the SSARE Executive Committee.

If the sponsorship request is approved, organizers are contacted via email -regarding confirmation of funding support, and an invoice for the amount is then requested via email. Invoices are to be submitted to the Administrative Associate **within 1 week** of sponsorship notification. SSARE will correspond with the organization/institution regarding this process and this deadline. **Electronic invoices, such as those generated by Quickbooks or Paypal, are not acceptable.**

The sponsorship form and invoice are sent directly to SSARE's Administrative Associate for payment processing through University of Georgia. Payment is issued either via check from University of Georgia, or via ACH direct deposit if the proper forms from accounts payable are completed.

UGA Vendor Registration System

All organizations/institutions seeking funding support from SSARE are doing business with University of Georgia, and must register in University of Georgia's Vendor Registration System (<https://suppliers.uga.edu>). Payments cannot be processed until registration in the Vendor Registration System is complete. **Payments will not be processed for organizations/institutions who are not registered in the system.**

Organizations/institutions are advised to register in the University of Georgia's Vendor Registration System **within 1 week** of sponsorship approval notification. SSARE will correspond with the organization/institution regarding this process and this deadline. Organizations/institutions will correspond with the SSARE Administrative Associate for questions or concerns regarding Georgia's Vendor Registration System.

Once registered, the vendor will receive an email confirmation that includes the Supplier Name and Supplier ID number. **Be sure to save this information for your records**, as it's needed if future updates to the information need to be made.

The website <https://suppliers.uga.edu> corresponds with new vendors. Vendors that have previously done business with UGA will not be asked to register again. When registering, be sure to include an accurate mailing address and method of payment (check or ACH). **The address on the invoice must match the address in the vendor registration system. If the addresses do not match, the invoice will be rejected.**

Once registered with UGA, a vendor cannot make updates to their information without UGA intervention. If an audit of the information currently in the supplier record needs to be made, the vendor can email OneSource@uga.edu referencing their Supplier Name and Supplier ID number, and the changes requested to be made.

For any questions regarding vendor registration information, email OneSource@uga.edu

Impact Reports

Conference/Event organizers are required to submit a brief follow-up “impact” report at the completion of their event. The impact report describes how the sponsorship helped provide sustainable ag support for the organization or for those who attended.

The impact report must be emailed to the SSARE Administrative Associate **within 60 days** of the completion of the event. The report is intended to measure the value of SSARE support in the organization's sustainable ag efforts. The impact report will be provided to the organizer via email.

Any impact reports not received will impact future sponsorship considerations. SSARE will correspond with the organization/institution regarding this process and this deadline.

In addition to the impact report, the organizer/institution must also provide SSARE a copy of the event agenda or event flyer that acknowledges SSARE representation at the conference/event. This document should be emailed to the SSARE Administrative Associate.

Sustainable Ag Leadership Program

The Sustainable Agriculture Leadership Program, operated by Southern SARE's Equity and Prosperity Committee, champions the leadership contributions of historically underserved farmers and ranchers and non-governmental organizations that serve those audiences within the Southern region. The purpose of the program is to enhance the resiliency and vivacity of historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

In order to recognize those contributions in the sustainable agriculture community across the

Southern region, the Sustainable Agriculture Leadership Program provides a small amount of sponsorship funds to support education and training activities specifically targeted to historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

Application Guidelines

Eligible applicants include:

- Historically underserved farmers and ranchers in leadership positions in their community,
- Farmer groups who have demonstrated leadership contributions for historically underserved farmers and ranchers,
- NGOs or other community groups who have demonstrated leadership contributions for historically underserved farmers and ranchers.

Historically underserved farmers and ranchers include:

- Minority and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers (African American, Asian, Hispanic, Native American),
- Beginning farmers and ranchers,
- Military veterans,
- Women farmers.

Budget

All items listed in the budget must be itemized and justified as to why they are needed for the event. All budgets are reviewed by the SSARE Administrative Team, and, where necessary, revised to conform to USDA-NIFA's policies on allowable budget items. Any budgets not itemized or justified will be returned for revisions.

Allowable Budget Items

- Meals
 - Snacks and refreshments, only when the food is part of the costs of the continuity of the event or is part of the educational programming. Is food necessary for continuity to achieve event goals? Are there program speakers, topic sessions, or other educational programming taking place during a meal?
 - Lunches only when the food is part of the costs of the continuity of the event or if there are speakers leading educational sessions. Is food necessary for continuity to achieve event goals? Lunches must serve an educational purpose.
 - Dinner, only if there is a speaker or educational program held during the dinner. The dinner must serve the purpose of disseminating educational and technical information.
- Travel for event speakers and presenters
 - Registration of event for speakers or presenters

- Airfare or transportation costs of speakers or presenters per federal mileage guidelines
- Lodging for speakers or presenters (**NOTE: Per University of Georgia policy, only hotels/motels are allowable lodging establishments for reimbursement. Businesses, such as Airbnb, Vrbo, HomeAway, condos/townhomes, or similar vacation rentals are not allowable lodging services. International travel is not allowed.**)
- Rental of event facilities or planning spaces. This can include convention center/conference/hotel spaces, community centers, church spaces for non-religious purposes, and on-farm locations. Tents or canopies are allowed as long as educational sessions take place under that space.
- Technical equipment rentals, such as audio visual technologies, online webinar fees, photography, graphic design, etc.
- Speaker or presenter fees
- *Incidental items in support of the event*, such as printing of publications or marketing materials; training materials; books; brochures; posters/flyers; or advertising. Items must be educational resources.

Nonallowable Budget Items

According to the USDA-NIFA, the following items are not allowed for general sponsorship purposes:

Breakfasts

Award luncheons

Award dinners

Dinners, snacks or lunches if they conclude an event. Such activity is considered to be an entertainment cost.

Rental or purchase of general supplies (tables, chairs, port-o-johns, paper products, pens, notebooks, etc.)

Entertainment, such as social activities/film screenings

Entertainment venues, such as breweries, eateries or similar

Personal protection equipment (PPE)

Incentives: money/gift for attending event; cash or cash-value items, such as gift cards, gift certificates, items used for auction, or items for drawings.

Promotional or giveaway items (t-shirts, bags, pens, mugs, etc.) Any item that does not serve as an educational resource is not allowed.

Tents or canopies not used for educational purposes. For example, tents used for registration or to keep food covered is not an allowable expense.

Alcohol

Liability insurance

Labor costs for personnel of the organization/institution

Tickets to shows or sporting events

Miscellaneous expenses not directly related to the program, such as child care services, kitchen help for meal preparation, or wages for meal servers.

Lobbying activities/donations

In addition, travel and registration costs for general event attendees do not fall under the general conference sponsorship guidelines. Travel and registration support for attendees is considered through the Professional Development Program.

How Sustainable Ag Leadership Program Applications are Reviewed and Processed

Sustainable Ag Leadership applications are submitted by the nomination deadline, which is solicited by SSARE on an annual basis.

Southern SARE releases the application for the Sustainable Ag Leadership Program in October for consideration of activities to be conducted summer through winter the following year. The application deadline is generally early January. Sustainable Ag Leadership applications are emailed to southern-sponsorships@sare.org by the nomination deadline. Applications are reviewed by the SSARE Administrative Team for relevancy with SARE's goals and sustainable agriculture. Budgets are reviewed by the SSARE Administrative Team for accuracy based on allowable and nonallowable expenses. Applications are then submitted and reviewed at the winter Administrative Council meeting, and applicants are notified of funding shortly thereafter, by February 28. Activities must be conducted between June 1 and December 31 of the year funded.

The next step in the process is the review and correction of budgets. The SSARE Administrative Team will work with the event organizers if any budget revisions need to be made. The SSARE Administrative Team includes the Assistant Director, SSARE Outreach Coordinator, Associate Accountant and Administrative Associate. **Budget revision deadline is April 1. Any budget revisions not received by April 1 forfeit the funds.**

Once budgets are revised and approved, an invoice for the funded amount is requested via email. Invoices are submitted to the SSARE Administrative Associate **within 1 week** of request. SSARE will correspond with the organization/institution regarding this process and this deadline. **Electronic invoices, such as those generated by Quickbooks or Paypal, are not acceptable.**

The sponsorship form and invoice are sent to SSARE's Administrative Associate for payment processing through University of Georgia. Payment is issued either via check from University of Georgia, or via ACH direct deposit if the proper forms from accounts payable are completed.

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Organizations/institutions are required to register in the University of Georgia's Vendor Registration System **by April 1. Any vendor registrations not completed by April 1 forfeit the funds.** SSARE will correspond with the organization/institution regarding this process and this deadline. Organizations/institutions will correspond with the SSARE Administrative Associate for questions or concerns regarding Georgia's Vendor Registration System.

Once registered, the vendor will receive an email confirmation that includes the Supplier Name and Supplier ID number. **Be sure to save this information for your records,** as it's needed if future updates to the information needs to be made.

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Impact Reports

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The impact report must be emailed to the SSARE Administrative Associate **within 60 days** of the completion of the event. The report is intended to measure the value of SSARE support in the organization's sustainable ag efforts.

Any impact reports not received will impact future sponsorship considerations. SSARE will correspond with the organization/institution regarding this process and this deadline.

In addition to the impact report, the organizer/institution must also provide SSARE a copy of the event agenda or event flyer that acknowledges SSARE representation at the conference/event. This document should be emailed to the SSARE Administrative Associate.

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