

Please note that awards provided under these Calls are contingent upon USDA-NIFA authorizing the funding to our Host Institution, Montana State University.



Farmer/Rancher Grant Program 2027 Call for Proposals

Submission Deadline:

October 28, 2026, 12:00pm (noon) MDT

Submit online at projects.sare.org

Required Project Team: Principal Investigator (producer) + Technical Advisor

Funding Limit: Up to \$35,000

Project Time Limit: Up to 3 years

Funding decisions announced: April 2027

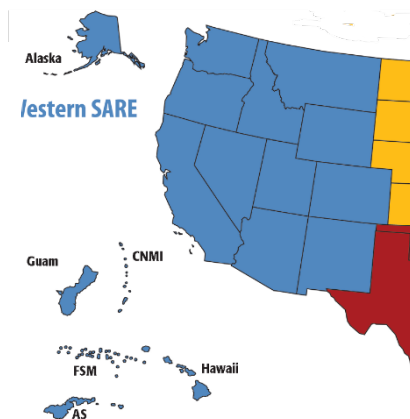
Contact: wsare-fr@sare.org; 406-994-4309

About the Farmer/Rancher Program

The Western SARE Farmer/Rancher Grant Program focuses on advancing on-farm sustainability solutions by funding innovative producer-driven research and outreach. With a Farmer/Rancher Grant, an agricultural producer serving as the main applicant and Principal Investigator (PI) works with a Technical Advisor (TA) to develop a project **(1-3 years in scope)** to conduct *research and outreach* to address social, environmental, and economic aspects of agricultural sustainability.

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The Western region includes:

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

Western SARE
Montana State University
207 Linfield Hall
Bozeman, MT 59717-2840
Westernsare.org

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.



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

About Western SARE

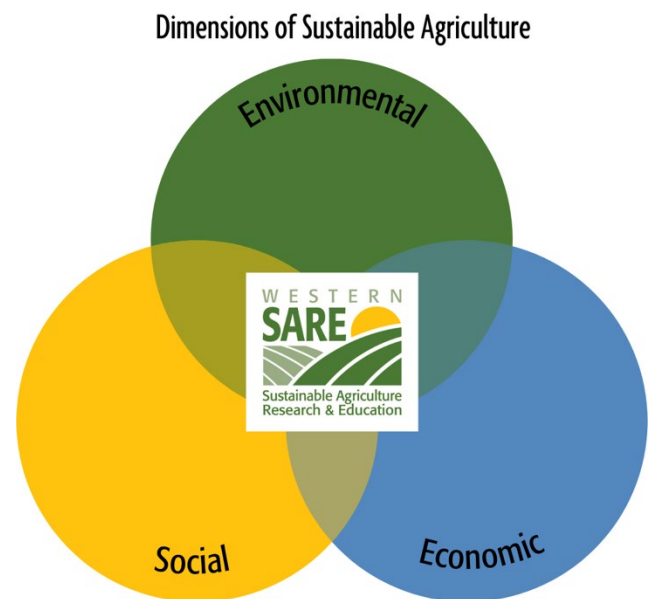
Western SARE is one of four regional SARE programs funded by the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The Western SARE Administrative Council funds grant proposals that include creative and innovative on-farm/ranch research and educational outreach to advance Western SARE goals. All Western SARE Farmer/Rancher projects ***must contain both research and education components.***

What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Congress has defined sustainable agriculture as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will over the long-term: 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 and controls; sustain the economic viability of farm operations; and enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.

Western SARE Goals

- Promote ***good stewardship*** of the nation's natural resources by providing site-specific, regional, and profitable sustainable farming and ranching methods that strengthen 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 or 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, such as profitable self-employment and innovative marketing opportunities in agricultural and rural 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, by optimizing on-farm resources, and integrating, where appropriate, biological cycles and controls.
- Promote crop, livestock, and enterprise ***diversification***.
- Examine the regional, economic, social, and environmental ***implications*** of adopting sustainable agriculture practices and systems.



Program Overview

Who can apply as Principal Investigator (PI)?

Agricultural producers in the Western region who qualify under the following USDA definition of a producer, may apply for a Farmer/Rancher grant:

A person qualifies as a 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); and/or
- They are a part-time producer with at least \$1,000 of documented annual income from farming or ranching activities. An equivalent of \$1,000 of agricultural production is acceptable under circumstances where food is not sold for profit, such as through cultural/indigenous farming operations.

Producers on lands affiliated with an institution or a nonprofit organization are eligible to apply as long as the farm/ranch produces and sells agricultural products and meets the above definition.

Farmer/Rancher grants are also open to farmer/rancher organizations such as cooperatives. These organizations must be comprised primarily of farmers/ranchers, and must have majority of farmer/rancher representation on their governing boards.

Project Team

The project team must be a minimum of two (2) people and must include: A producer serving as the Principal Investigator (PI) and a Technical Advisor (TA). The Technical Advisor must be independent of the producer. Project teams may also include additional collaborators, such as researchers, extension agents, educators and outreach representatives, or other specialists.

The role of the Principal Investigator (PI):

- A producer serves as the project lead and Principal Investigator (PI). This person is responsible for coordinating the project and carrying out its contractual provisions, including leading the on-farm research and submitting project reports. The PI is responsible for all expenditures and for achieving the stated research and educational objectives.

The role of the Technical Advisor (TA):

- A technical advisor is a professional that assists the producer(s) with technical expertise for accomplishing their research. A technical advisor is commonly someone that supports producers at the local level such as Cooperative Extension educators/agents or specialists, university faculty or researchers, USDA-NRCS field staff, agricultural consultants, nonprofit organization staff members, etc.

What is the project time limit?

Projects may be 1-3 years in length and cannot exceed 36 months. Project start and end dates are chosen by the PI. Start dates must be no earlier than April 1, 2027 and no later than October 1, 2027.

What is the funding limit?

The Western SARE Farmer/Rancher Grant Program provides a maximum funding of \$35,000 for up to 3 years.

Proposal Instructions

All proposals must be submitted online at <https://projects.sare.org>. Review the submission checklist on page 14. To strengthen your submission, check the information located in the [Proposal Preparation Documents](#) section of the Western SARE [website](#).

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.

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 research and educational objectives
- Proposed starting and ending dates
- The state(s) where the work will be conducted
- A brief description of your agricultural business/operation, including size of your operation, crops or commodities grown/produced. Reviewers use this information to determine eligibility to this grant program (100 words)

Summary (Limit 300 words)

A clear and concise summary is important for the review process. The summary should include a brief description of the problem or need and the creative approach to solving it. ***This summary will be available to the public should the proposal receive funding.*** The summary should include the following:

- Identify a problem and/or research question(s)
- Describe the project's research and explain how it will solve the identified problem
- Identify the potential significance of the project and expected outcomes to advance sustainable agriculture
- Explain how your project will be disseminated among other agricultural stakeholders

Project Narrative

The project narrative includes the following sections: 1) Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Value, and Benefits, 2) Stakeholder Needs and Support, 3) Project Team, 4) Research Plan, 5) Educational Plan, 6) Timeline, and 7) Evaluation and Producer Adoption.

Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Value, and Benefits (15% of review score; word limit: 500)

Explain why this project is necessary and how it addresses a critical need in sustainable agriculture in the Western region. Identify any limitations in the current system(s) or knowledge

base and how your project will address them. Cite evidence of need, including results and recommendations from related SARE projects (sare.org/grants/about-project-reports/) and other studies or reports. ***Your explanation should address the three pillars of sustainability (social, environmental, and economic) described on page 2.***

Describe the potential benefits for producers and sustainable agriculture in general. For example, provide an economic analysis and explain how your project would affect overall agricultural productivity levels, operational profits, soil or water quality or quantity, and rural/agricultural communities. Where possible, use specific estimates of impacts – such as dollars saved per acre, tons of soil protected from erosion, pounds of chemical reduced, number of acres or people affected, markets expanded, jobs created, etc.

Stakeholders Needs and Support (5% of review score; word limit: 250)

Western SARE is committed to addressing the needs of agricultural stakeholders. Proposals must include evidence that identified needs of stakeholders are being addressed and that support for the project exists beyond the team collaborators. Describe and document stakeholder needs and support to demonstrate that the proposed project is relevant and timely. Evidence of stakeholder support may be demonstrated through:

- Letters of support or recommendations from individuals or relevant stakeholder groups/organizations, such as grower cooperatives, commodity commissions, or other agricultural professionals or producer groups. Please describe any letters of support here and upload them under "Letters of Stakeholder Support" in the "Supporting Documents" section in your online application.
- References and citations to other studies and reports that encourage future research or identify gaps in the existing knowledge base.
- Needs assessments that relate to the project topic(s).

Project Team Members and Roles (5% of review score; word limit: 200)

The project team must be a minimum of two (2) people and must include: A Producer (Principal Investigator) and a Technical Advisor. The Technical Advisor must be independent of the Producer. They may not be a family member. ***Producers serve as the principal investigator. Both the PI and Technical Advisor must register in the grant management system (projects.sare.org) to access and manage the project details and reporting requirements.***

- For each project objective, indicate who will be responsible and which team member(s) will be involved in the research and dissemination activities.
- Provide a brief description of each team member's background and expertise to demonstrate that they have the appropriate knowledge and skills to complete the proposed project.
- Detail the specific role of the PI, Technical Advisor, and other project team member(s). ***The lead producer must be involved at all stages of the project.***

Research Plan (30% of review score; word limit: 1000)

Clearly state and define the research objectives. Each objective should be a clear statement describing an intended achievement. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. For more details see [Successful Objectives](#).

For each objective, describe what will be done, including methods and materials.

- Clearly describe the project site, research design, data collection, and methods of analysis. Include sufficient detail so that reviewers can determine if the approaches used are suitable to achieve your objectives.
- Demonstrate awareness of previous work and/or alternative approaches to the problem.
- Describe the tools and materials that will be utilized to conduct your research.
- Explain how the successful completion of your objectives will be measured and evaluated.
- If possible, describe how your research will be conducted in an innovative way or provides an innovative approach to solving the problem.

It is helpful to list the objectives and describe the materials and methods you will use for the achievement of each objective. Please define all acronyms and avoid the use of jargon that may be unfamiliar outside your industry or specialty area.

Education Plan (30% of review score; word limit: 1000)

Clearly state and define the educational objectives, emphasizing how different outreach strategies will be utilized. Each objective should be a clear statement describing an intended achievement. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, 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, community presentations, videos, podcasts, social media, etc.), including dates and locations of events.
- Describe who you will target (e.g., producers, stakeholders, students, agricultural professionals, etc.).
- Provide a list of educational resources (e.g., factsheets, PowerPoint presentations, handouts, brochures, 4-H publications, videos, posters, etc.) you plan to produce.
- Explain how you will communicate your project's findings to producers (specifically) and the general public.
- If possible, explain how your education plan is innovative and engages multiple media outlets for disseminating results.

It is helpful to list the objectives and describe the materials and methods you will use for the achievement of each objective. Multiple communication materials and multiple communication styles are strongly recommended.

Timeline (5% of review score; word limit: 500)

Provide a timeline that outlines the research and educational activities for each stage of your project. Identify the major milestones and activities that will be completed, when each of those milestones/activities will occur, and how they relate back to the objective(s). Timelines must be realistic, and outcomes should be feasible in the amount of time proposed.

Timelines may be entered as text, tables (using the "insert table" feature in the toolbar), or by inserting media such as a [Gantt Chart](#).

Example of timeline inserted using the "table" icon in the text box toolbar:

Date	Activities	Team members
April 2027	Soil samples taken for baseline data; pictures taken for educational materials to demonstrate before/after	PI (name), TA (name) supports with soil sampling and analysis
May-June 2027	Establish cover crop plots, seed cover crop, and apply biochar	PI (name)
July-August 2027	Monitor growth and conduct first field day (Aug. 18th)	PI (name), TA (name) organizes and supports field day demonstration
September 2027	Pictures from field day demonstration shared on social media; terminate cover crops using roller crimper and evaluate crop residue	PI (name)

Evaluation and Producer Adoption (5% of review score; word limit: 200)

Explain how the project's research and educational objectives will be evaluated for completion and impact on agricultural communities in your region. For example, describe how changes in producers' knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and adoption of practices will be measured (e.g., a pre-post survey).

An approved [Western SARE Survey](#) is expected to be filled out by participants at each outreach activity. Western SARE requires evaluation results from the Western SARE survey as part of the required reports. If using an additional evaluation tool, applicants should describe their survey development process and methods for analysis.

If the evaluation will include additional surveys or forms that obtain social science information (such as personal, demographic, or other identifying information), applicants must include the [Human Subjects Research Determination Worksheet](#) to evaluate whether review and approval or exemption from an Institutional Review Board (IRB) is needed to complete your project.

Budget and Budget Justification (5% of review score)

Provide a concise budget and justification for each budget item that is appropriate to the proposed project.

Farmer/Rancher grant funds must be budgeted in the following categories:

Personnel – Salaries and Benefits: Includes paying the PI and/or employees of the farm/ranch business for work *directly related to the project*. Provide hourly rates, FTEs (estimated number of hours devoted to the project), fringe benefit rates (if applicable), and the total pay/benefits amounts requested per employee.

Contracted Services: Includes paying an organization/business or individual for goods, services, and/or consulting; fee-for-service work; honoraria; paying individuals providing professional services related to the project, e.g., survey development and administration, testing and analysis services, etc.

Supplies: Includes basic supplies and materials needed to carry out the project. Supplies must be project-specific and can be tracked as being used for the project. Examples include agricultural supplies (temporary fencing, seeds, plants, fertilizer), field and lab supplies, minor equipment and tools (individual items that cost less than \$5,000), paper/envelopes, photocopying of materials for workshops/field days, software, books, shipping materials. Any shipping costs associated with the purchase of supplies/materials should be included as supply costs. The purchase of food, snacks, or refreshments for meetings/field days (must be necessary to maintain meeting continuity) is also considered a supply cost.

Special note about Capital Equipment Purchases: The purchase of capital equipment (defined as a single, autonomous piece of equipment that costs \$5,000 or more and has a useful life of more than one year) is generally NOT allowed under the SARE program. The purchase of capital equipment of \$5,000 or more may be leveraged by non-Western SARE funds; thus, up to \$4,999 of the proposed budget may be allocated towards the purchase of capital equipment. This expense must be well-justified. Purchasing components of equipment that individually cost under \$5,000 to circumvent the \$5,000 cap is not allowed. Minor equipment that costs less than \$5,000 is allowed. Please include minor equipment and/or leveraged capital equipment purchases in the Supplies budget category.

Communication: Includes postage, mailing expenses (including shipping samples for analysis), professionally printed materials (flyers, brochures, posters), and commercial photocopying.

Travel: Must be directly related to the project and includes mileage reimbursement, airfare, lodging, meal per diem, ground transportation, parking, and conference fees and registrations. Please note, mileage rates and meal per diem must follow the Federal Government rates listed on the [U.S. General Services Administration \(GSA\) website](#). Additionally, when using Western SARE funds for lodging, nightly, pre-tax rates may not exceed the rate listed for the location on the U.S. GSA website.

Special Note on International Travel: 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 proposal stage. Included international travel 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., international institution's/ colleague's qualifications, etc.). International travel includes any travel outside North America and/or U.S. Possessions. Travel to the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, and Palau is considered international. USDA-NIFA requires that international travel be done on a U.S. flag air carrier.

Rent: Only includes the rental of capital/major equipment which is capped at \$4,999 for the entire duration of the project. For other rental costs, e.g., facilities, meeting space, land, etc., please budget for those costs under supplies.

Farmer/Rancher Grant funds may NOT be used for the following purposes:

- Overhead costs, i.e., indirect costs (IDCs) or facilities and administrative costs (F&A).
- Capital equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more – see “Supplies” section above.
- Starting or expanding a farm or farm operation.
- Major renovations/improvements to a farm or ranch, such as constructing or remodeling a building, construction of permanent structures, fencing, and underground irrigation, etc.
- Repairs/maintenance of existing equipment and buildings/facilities.
- Providing meals/refreshments during events that are not necessary to maintain the continuity of a scheduled meeting/field day; breakfasts and dinners typically do not qualify.
- Testing of commercial products.
- The purchase and/or distribution of gifts, gift cards, etc. for any purpose.
- Incentives: providing cash or cash value items to individuals to incentivize behavior.
- Promotional items to give away: e.g., swag, mugs, clothes, bags, pens, pencils, etc.

Funding is paid as a fixed-price contract via a Subaward Service Agreement, with 40% of the award being paid upon execution of the Agreement. The remainder is paid in fixed increments after submission and approval of progress and final reports. The submission of receipts and invoices is not required to receive payments; however, keeping detailed financial records is required. Montana State University may, at any time, request receipts and backup documentation to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the Subaward Service Agreement and that project related expenses correspond with the proposed budget. Farmer/Rancher grants can be funded for up to three years.

Farmer/Rancher funds are only issued to the producer PI and cannot be issued to a fiscal sponsor. Matching funds are not required or requested of Western SARE grant recipients. Please do NOT include matching funds in your budget or justification.

Other Funding Sources (optional; word limit: 150)

If other resources are necessary for the success of the project (not requested in SARE budget), how will they be provided? Note: Your proposal will not be scored based on outside funding. This information helps our grant review panel determine the feasibility of proposed project outcomes.

Any entity or individual receiving Federal Funds is required by the Federal Government to obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from the System for Award Management (SAM). A UEI can be obtained at no-cost by visiting <https://www.sam.gov>. Should your proposal be selected for funding, a UEI will be required to establish your award (note: full registration is not required). To avoid delays in establishing the Subaward Service Agreement, Western SARE strongly encourages applicants who do not already have a SAM UEI to begin this process after submitting their proposal or immediately upon learning their proposal has been selected for funding. Please note that in some cases, obtaining a SAM UEI can take several weeks. Western SARE is unable to assist with this process.

Supporting Documents

All supporting documents ***must*** be included in the Supporting Documents section of the online application. PDF documents are preferred but images in .jpg and .png formats are accepted.

Failure to provide all required supporting documents will disqualify the proposal before review.

Technical Advisor Resume: The applicant must submit a maximum 2-page resume of the Technical Advisor, demonstrating their ability to assist with the technical capacities of this project. A resume is not needed for the Producer(s).

Letters of Cooperation: Each project team member (with exception of the Applicant/PI) ***must*** submit a signed and dated Letter of Cooperation. At minimum, you should provide one Letter of Cooperation from your project's Technical Advisor. This letter should verify their willingness to participate, explaining their commitment (resources, time, etc.) and their role in the project at the time of submission.

Institutional Review Board Approval or Statement (if applicable): If your project will involve research with humans such as interviews, tasting sessions, or surveys that obtain social science information, such as personal, demographic, or other identifying information, you will need to provide evidence of acceptance or exemption by an Institutional Review Board (IRB) before a Subaward Agreement will be executed. For guidance on what meets the requirements for Human Subject Research, please see [here](#). If your technical advisor works with a university or college and has access to an IRB, please work with them to provide documentation.

If your project meets the definition of Human Subjects Research and you do not have access to institutional IACUC review, please complete the [Human Subjects Research Determination Worksheet](#) to evaluate whether review and approval or exemption from an IRB is needed to complete your project. Attach the completed worksheet to your online submission. If your proposal is selected for funding, approval or exemption by an IRB will be needed before the execution of the subaward agreement.

Animal Care Plan (if applicable): If your proposal involves vertebrate animals and is selected for funding, review and approval or exemption from an Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) must be documented before a Subaward Agreement will be executed. For guidance on what meets the requirements for the care and use of vertebrate animals in research and teaching, please see [here](#). If your technical advisor with a university or college and has access to an IACUC, please work with them to provide documentation.

If you do not have access to institutional IACUC review, please complete the [Animal Care Plan Questionnaire](#), which will be used to evaluate whether IACUC review and approval or exemption is needed to execute a Subaward Agreement, if awarded. MSU's Office of Research Compliance and IACUC staff will review Animal Care Plans and work with awardees to comply with animal oversight requirements.

Letter(s) of Stakeholder Support (optional): Letter(s) of support from individuals and/or organizations supporting the research/educational activities are not required but are encouraged.

Citations (Optional): Citations should be attached in the Supporting Documents section of the online submission and are not part of the word number limitation. Attach a list of cited sources.

Other Documents (Optional): You may attach other document(s) that strengthen your proposal. These other documents may not be used to lengthen your proposal under the Project Narrative.

Multiple submissions are accepted. Only one application (from any one applicant) can be awarded for any Western SARE competitive programs in one grant budget cycle. *Multiple simultaneous projects corresponding to different grant cycles may be funded, conditional upon fulfillment of all reporting expectations, including yearly objectives and milestones being met (as listed in the approved proposal or a Project Modification).*

Review Process

Eligible proposals received by the due date with all supporting documents will be evaluated by a Technical Review Panel, a 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 presented to the Western SARE Administrative Council for final selection.

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 that all sections of the proposal are submitted before the due date.

Review Criteria	
Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Value and Benefits	15%
Stakeholder Needs and Support	5%
Project Team Members and Roles	5%
Research Plan	30%
Education Plan	30%
Timeline	5%
Evaluation and Producer Adoption	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 reporting requirements of the active award as specified in the Subaward Agreement.

If the Western SARE Administrative Council selects your project for funding, you may expect the following:

Learn more about the Western SARE subaward process [here](#).

Public Domain: While proposals and reviews will remain confidential, Western SARE considers all funded projects, subsequent reports, and related information to be in the public domain. See details of this stipulation in the Research Results section in [the NIFA Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#).

Notification: The Western SARE Administrative Council will select proposals for funding during March 2027. 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 their proposal's status by April 2027.

Contract: If your proposal is selected for funding, the Office of Sponsored Programs at Montana State University (MSU) will initiate a *Subaward Service Agreement* to you. The *Subaward Service Agreement* will identify all Terms and Conditions for the award, including reporting requirements. *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.*

Financial Disclosure: In order to receive funds as an awardee of Western SARE, federal rules require awardees to demonstrate that they can comply with fiscal requirements that accompany the receipt of federal funds. If your proposal is awarded, you will be required to complete a financial mini-audit questionnaire as part of the subaward process. To view an example of the questionnaire, please visit the Western SARE website.

Funds: Upon execution of the *Subaward Service Agreement*, an initial payment of 40% of awarded funds will be released. 40% of awarded funds will be paid incrementally each year upon receipt and approval of progress reports. The amount of these disbursements will depend upon the length of your project. The final 20% of the awarded funds will be retained, until receipt and approval of the final report.

Financial Records: Detailed financial records are required, but do not need to be submitted to Western SARE or MSU. However, MSU may, at any time, request receipts and backup documentation to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions of the *Subaward Service Agreement* and that project-related expenses correspond with the proposed budget.

Photographs and Videos: Grant recipients are invited to document their project with photographs, which can be useful to them and help us highlight and promote their work on our website and in publications. Digital photographs and videos are preferred. It is expected that the outreach material produced by Western SARE-supported projects be ADA compliant. Including closed captions with visual and audio deliverables is required.

Proper Western SARE Citation: The Western SARE program must be credited as the funding source in any publication or outreach material generated by this project. *Information pertaining*

to citing Western SARE will be included in the Subaward Service Agreement and can be found [here](#) under “Guidelines for Acknowledging Funds.”

Site visits: Western SARE recognizes that there are limits to what can be accomplished, measured and reported during the life of your project. As a result, along with your reporting, Western SARE staff may visit ongoing or finalized projects to measure the impact of Western SARE grant programs.

Project Modifications and Changes: Significant changes to the project as originally proposed, such as a change in PI, stated objectives, timeline, budget, etc. should be submitted to the Farmer/Rancher Program Manager via email with a completed [Project Modification Form](#) attached for consideration and approval by Western SARE’s Regional Coordinator. Western SARE staff will notify the PI of approval of aforementioned changes and update the SARE project profile at projects.sare.org.

Reporting Requirements for Awarded Proposals

An annual report will be required for each year that your project is ongoing. Progress and final reports should describe the progress made on the project, detail the observed results, describe the educational outreach events, include materials produced by the project, and document 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. If your project is a one-year project, only a final report should be submitted. Approved project reports will be publicly accessible and may be viewed and shared with producers, interested policymakers and leaders at community, state, regional and national levels. All educational materials and products must have an electronic version to be included in your reports. ***Annual Reports are due on March 15th of each year of the project. You will have up to 30 days from the Period of Performance 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 Grant Management System.

Please review the documents located on the Western SARE website under [Documents for Managing a Grant](#) and [Criteria for Approving Project Reports](#) to understand what will be expected if your project is awarded.

How to Apply

We strongly encourage applicants to read the entire Call for Proposals before beginning to write the proposal and refer to it regularly during proposal development.

*** It takes time to enter your proposal in the GMS and upload documents and such. Plan for extra time. The GMS system “locks” at the stated deadline date/time. ***

**Proposals are due by 12 pm (noon) MDT – October 28,
2026 Go to <https://projects.sare.org>**

Farmer/Rancher Grant Program Schedule

October 28, 2026 – Proposals are due by 12:00 PM (noon) Mountain Daylight Time

January 2027 – A Technical Review Panel reviews and recommends proposals for funding

March 2027 – WSARE Administrative Council selects proposals for funding

April 2027 – Proposal status is announced to applicants and projects may begin

Submission Checklist

Basic Requirements

- ☐ I have read the full CFP
- ☐ I am a Farmer or Rancher

Project Basic Information

- ☐ Project Subject Matter
- ☐ Project Practices
- ☐ Project Commodities
- ☐ Research and Educational Objectives
- ☐ Proposed Start Date
- ☐ Proposed End Date
- ☐ Primary State
- ☐ Description of your agricultural business/operation

Narrative

- ☐ Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture, Project Values, and Benefits
- ☐ Stakeholder Needs and Support
- ☐ Project Team Members and Responsibilities

- ☐ Research Plan
- ☐ Education Plan
- ☐ Timeline
- ☐ Evaluation and Producer Adoption

Budget and Justification

- ☐ Detailed Budget Expenses
- ☐ Budget Justification

Supporting Documents

- ☐ Technical Advisor Resume
- ☐ Letter(s) of Cooperation
- ☐ Animal Care Plan Questionnaire (if applicable)
- ☐ Human Subjects Research Determination Worksheet (if applicable)
- ☐ Letters of Stakeholder Support (optional)
- ☐ Citations (optional)
- ☐ Other Documents (optional)

Resources

Please review the documents located in the [Documents for Applying](#) section of the Western SARE [website](#) to strengthen your proposal.

Information on past projects can be found at projects.sare.org/search-projects/. We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about sustainable agriculture and the Western SARE program at western.sare.org. 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 has a number of resources at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic> that may be relevant to your proposal; or, contact AFSIC at 301-504-6559 or e-mail afsic@nal.usda.gov.

In compliance with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, any material produced by Western SARE can be made available in other formats upon request.

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

Please note that awards provided under these Calls are contingent upon USDA-NIFA authorizing the funding to our Host Institution, Montana State University.

Statement from USDA NIFA

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), to the extent permitted by law, will no longer make grants or otherwise fund programs or activities that improperly discriminate on the basis of race or sex, including discrimination in the name of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies. Instead, USDA will prioritize merit and efficiency. USDA recognizes programs and initiatives will have the greatest impact when these programs and initiatives put American farmers, ranchers, and foresters first by:

- solving the most pressing challenges they face;
- protecting America's food, fuel, and fiber supply to enhance national security;
- supporting production of healthy and safe food for consumers;
- expanding and developing domestic markets;
- training the next generation of agriculturalists; and
- fueling innovation to keep American farmers at the forefront of productivity.

The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) is committed to advancing these principles and encourages applicants to actively engage farmers, ranchers, and foresters when applying for funding opportunities to ensure relevancy and adherence to them. NIFA also encourages agricultural leaders to engage in the peer review panel process to ensure American producers are better served through research, education, and extension activities.