

2015 Call for Proposals

NCR-SARE

Partnership Grant Program

Make sure that you have the 2015 call for proposals.

We use an online submission system.

To submit, go to <http://www.ciids.org/ncsare/pg>

Proposals must be submitted on line by 4:00 p.m. CDT, Oct. 30, 2014.

You must upload a copy of the cover page with required institutional signatures (authorized organization representative) with your submitted application. Allow sufficient time to print the draft of your application with the application signoff sheet, and submit it to your grants office for review and signatures; then upload the signed page as the final attachment and submit electronically prior to the deadline.)

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

Partnership grant program proposals must be submitted on line at <http://www.ciids.org/ncsare/pg>. The online application interface has strict word limits, and we strongly suggest you prepare your proposal using a word processing program, edit each response to comply with the word limits, and then copy and paste your proposal section by section into the online template, saving as you go.

Online Submission Deadline

4:00 p.m. CDT, Oct. 30, 2014



NORTH CENTRAL REGION SARE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Application deadline is Thursday, October 30th

The Partnership Grant program funded by the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) program is intended to foster cooperation between agriculture professionals and small groups of farmers and ranchers to catalyze on-farm research, demonstration, and education activities related to sustainable agriculture. Examples of appropriate projects include on-farm testing of cropping system strategies or grazing systems, cooperative efforts to develop new marketing approaches, or investigations into new approaches to processing and/or adding value to sustainably produced farm products. General guidelines on these grants are below, with more specific details following.

- **Partnership Grants are for on-farm research, demonstration and/or educational projects and are funded for up to 24 months.**
- **Up to \$30,000 total funding request per application is allowed.**
- **An Agricultural Professional is the grant applicant and the principal investigator.**
- **Typically three or more farmers or ranchers are expected to be substantially involved in the project (see further details on role of producers on page 2).**
- **Each farm/ranch must be an independent and separate/distinct operation.**

Any agriculture/natural resource professional in the North Central region may apply. These professionals are:

- university educators including extension agents and specialists
- NRCS field staff
- agricultural consultants (individuals who actively consult with farmers and ranchers as certified crop advisors, soils consultants, ranching consultants, etc.)
- nonprofit or agency staff assisting farmers and ranchers at the local level

For the current year funding of the Partnership Grant Program, up to \$200,000 of the partnership grant pool of \$340,000 in funds is available for projects focused on cover crops and soil health. For consideration under the cover crops and soil health funding, applicants are asked to use cover crops and/or soil health in their project title and to make the topic of cover crops and/or soil health the main focus of the application. Other criteria for these applications remain the same. This special request for proposals on cover crops and soil health is made possible by a match of funds between NCR-SARE www.northcentralsare.org and the Howard G. Buffett Foundation's *Harvesting the Potential* campaign www.harvestingthepotential.org. For the remaining funds of \$140,000 or more, other project topics appropriate to the NCR-SARE program will be considered for funding.

PROPOSAL DETAILS

The following information is required to be provided in the online application system. It is suggested that you prepare the information in a word processor before cutting and pasting each section into the online system. If your information for a given section exceeds the word limit for that section, you will receive an error message from the online application system and be required to shorten that section before successfully completing the application. Word limits are maximums; shorter sections are certainly appropriate.

Contact information and other descriptor information

The first thing you will be asked to fill out online is contact information for the project lead and organization (if relevant) and specific descriptors about the project, including type of project, start date and duration, and requested amount of funding.

Summary (200 word maximum)

Summarize the research, demonstration, and/or education and outreach components of your proposal and briefly explain these in the context of why this project is important and innovative. What problems or situations are being addressed related to sustainability? How will your project distinctively or creatively address those problems? Identify the agricultural region being targeted and the types of farms or ranches involved in the project.

Project Description (50 word maximum)

Provide a brief (2-3 sentence) synopsis of your project that can be used in a press release if your project is funded, or for other communications about your project.

List of Objectives (100 word maximum)

Provide a list of the achievable objectives of your project. These are major things you plan to accomplish during the project as it relates to research, demonstration, or education activities.

Relevance to Sustainability and Regional Agricultural Concerns (200 word maximum)

Clearly articulate how the project and its possible outcomes are relevant to the three basic elements of sustainable agriculture, specifically an agricultural system that is economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially responsible. Also identify how the project addresses a need relevant to local or regional agricultural issues. Where possible, use specific estimates of benefits – for example, potential dollars saved per acre, tons of soil protected from erosion, reduction in inputs or increased biodiversity, number of acres or people affected, markets expanded, etc.

Proposed Activities, including Outreach Plan (500 word maximum)

Provide a detailed plan for the activities you will undertake on the grant, whether it be research, demonstration, education, or outreach activities. Provide a general timeline for activities. For research or demonstration, describe the types of field or livestock treatments to be used and information on the locations involved. Indicate whether the trials are replicated or not and whether economic data will be gathered. For education projects, provide details on who the target audience is for the educational programs, how you will promote the educational program, and what the content will be.

Explain how you will communicate about your project, including through field days, workshops, or other farmer and rancher-oriented events. Provide a list of any educational materials you plan to produce and describe the type of materials – such things as factsheets, PowerPoint presentations, articles, brochures, social media, web-based material, etc.

Roles of Ag Professional(s), Farmers or Ranchers (250 word maximum)

For each ag professional and farmer/rancher involved in the project, state their name, county and state (and organization if relevant) and provide a few sentences on the role of each participant in the project. Note that the ag professional(s) do not count as one of the farmers/ranchers on the project. Normally, at least three farmers or ranchers should be involved in the project. The only exception would be if the project is unique to a set of farmers or ranchers which are small in number in a given area, such as aquaculture producers or certain specialty crop producers; in such cases at least two farmer/ranchers should still be involved in the project locally, and perhaps a third farmer/rancher from another area can be an advisor or collaborator on the project.

Previous Research on this Topic (200 word maximum). What efforts have been made by others to solve the problem? Explain how you are building on past work or research and what makes your project innovative and different from what has already been done. It is recommended that applicants review reports from previous SARE grants on this topic (see www.sare.org and click on the Project Reports tab, then the search option).

Outcomes and Impact (200 word maximum)

Identify the outcomes and impacts you expect the project to achieve. Describe how you will measure the impact of your project results on the farming/ranching community. This plan should also describe changes expected in these farmers or ranchers (new skills or practices, increased knowledge or awareness, changed attitudes or opinions, etc.) and ways to measure these changes such as a before-and-after questionnaire, survey, etc.

Budget and Budget Justification (no word limit)

Provide a concise budget, with proper justification, that is appropriate to the proposed project. Your budget line items should be for the total project period, rather than broken down by year. **Special Note:** Any single item or piece of equipment over \$500 must be listed separately with proper budget justification.

BUDGET GUIDELINES

Partnership Grant funds may be used for the following purposes:

- Cost of field sampling, crop analysis and educational surveys.
- Materials and supplies needed for the project, including seed, fertilizer, portable fencing or other farming/ranching inputs.
- Reimbursement of farmers and ranchers for their time involved with the project.
- Partial or full cost of small tools and equipment, or any piece of equipment costing less than \$5,000. Describe type of equipment (for example, pH meters, balances, scales, etc.), cost and

a brief narrative on the intended use of the equipment for project objectives. Any single item or piece of equipment over \$500 must be listed separately with proper budget justification. We also discourage applicants from being focused on equipment purchase. Any equipment that is purchased must be an integral part of the project and needed for project completion.

- Outreach expenses such as holding a field day, tours, making a brochure, creating a webpage, etc.
- Out-of-town travel needed for the project. State purpose, destination, and number of travelers and estimated cost per trip.
- Local travel (where personal auto is used and reimbursed) needed for project. State purpose and total dollar amount of reimbursement for vehicle use. If any overnight stays are anticipated, include the number of nights and the amount for meals and lodging. (i.e., local travel for site visits to farmers in neighboring counties - \$500 for mileage and \$500 for meals and lodging (five days @ \$100/day) = \$1,000). Maximum mileage allowance depends on institutional policy, or use the current federal mileage reimbursement rate.
- Refreshments at field days or group meals for events are allowable if they maintain the continuity of the meeting and to do otherwise will impose arduous conditions on the meeting participants.
- Services of Agricultural Professionals can be compensated - provide hourly rate.
- Indirect Costs of up to 10% of total funds awarded are allowed.

Partnership Grant funds may NOT be used for the following purposes:

- Starting or expanding a farm or farm operation.
- Any single piece of equipment costing more than \$5,000. This limit **cannot** be used toward the purchase of a piece of equipment or the modification of equipment costing more than \$5,000 or to purchase or purchase parts for tractors, irrigation systems, etc. *Capital expenses for things like land purchases, general farm improvements, and construction of buildings, greenhouses, and laboratories are NOT allowed. Equipment expenditures (defined as single item purchase greater than \$5000) are rarely allowed, and you should check with NCR-SARE office before including it in your budget proposal. Costs for things like cameras, computers, video equipment, and other items that could have a wide range of uses beyond the boundaries of the project must be clearly essential to a particular project, in which case applicants must develop a clear justification and make sure that these requests are reasonable, defensible, and not extravagant.*
- Permanent improvement to a farm or ranch, such as constructing or remodeling a building, permanent fencing, etc.
- Any meal that does not maintain the continuity of the meeting.
- Testing of specific commercial products.

Other Attachments (these will be uploaded as files onto the application website)

1. Agricultural Professional's Resume(s): The application must include a resume (two page maximum) for each agricultural professional involved in the project. This should be uploaded into the "Supporting Documents" sections of the grant submission. Producers are not expected to submit a resume.

2. Animal Welfare Assurance Statement: If your project includes vertebrate animals in the study, you must have the statement signed by you and an IACUC (Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee) representative or attending veterinarian. You may wait until award notification to submit the form.

3. Signature page (see online instructions)

4. Farmer/Rancher Letters Verifying Participation: Applications must include letters verifying participation from farmers or ranchers listed in the proposal.

Schedule of Grant Review and Funding Availability: As noted elsewhere, grants will be due on October 30th, then will be sent out to the appropriate NCR-SARE committee members for competitive review. Funding decisions on this program will be made in late February, 2015, with applicants notified in the first week of March. Funds should be available to funded applicants by mid-April, 2015.

Important Items to Remember:

All proposals must have an ag professional identified as the project lead. The definition of who qualifies as an ag professional is on page one of these guidelines. The lead professional, through his or her institution, is fiscally responsible for the project. You may have more professionals assisting with the project, but only one will be listed as the Principle Investigator. Professionals can be paid for their travel expenses. They can also be compensated for their services.

All proposals must have farmers or ranchers substantially involved in the project.

For purposes of this grant program, a farmer or rancher is someone who:

- Has as their primary occupation farming or ranching;
- Or is a part-time producer with documented annual income from the operation.

****Each farmer/rancher identified must be an independent and separate operation.**

It is expected that farmers and ranchers will receive compensation for their time involved in a project. North Central Region SARE typically uses a guideline that farmers and ranchers receive an honorarium rate of \$200 per day, provided on a prorated basis. Another compensation approach can be used but should be equitable for the farmers or ranchers involved.

It is important that you follow directions. SARE staff can disqualify proposals before review if applicants fail to follow directions.

Keep in mind these considerations:

- Your proposal and all deliberations by the technical review panel regarding its merits will remain confidential.
- While your proposal and its review will remain confidential, the North Central Region SARE program considers all FUNDED proposals and subsequent reports and related information to be in the public domain.

Grant applicant resources:

Information on past projects including summaries, highlights and reports can be found at <http://www.northcentralsare.org/Project-Reports/Search-the-Database>. We encourage you to visit this website to learn more about sustainable agriculture and the North Central SARE program.

Also, socially disadvantaged and limited resource applicants can seek additional guidance on SARE applications from the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute. Contact person is:

Deirdre Birmingham, Grants Advisor, Michael Fields Agricultural Institute

Phone 608-219-4279 Email deirdreb4@gmail.com

www.michaelfields.org/grant-advising-resources

How to Apply:

To apply, please complete your application at the North Central SARE online application system at: <http://www.ciids.org/ncsare/pg>

For assistance with guidelines for this grant program, please contact one of the North Central Region SARE program directors, either Dr. Rob Myers (University of Missouri, email myersrob@missouri.edu, phone 573-882-1547) or Dr. Beth Nelson (University of Minnesota, email bethnelson@umn.edu, phone 612-626-4436).

Checklist for submitting a Partnership Grant proposals:

- Complete all the online text boxes, including budget and budget justification.
- Attach the following documents as pdf files to the online application
 - Resume(s) of Ag Professional(s) (2 page maximum for each ag professional)
 - Signature Page (instructions for this are part of the online application system)
 - The Animal Welfare Statement (if applicable)