2025 Southern Education Grant Call for Proposals

Maximum Amount Funded: $50,000
Proposal Submission Deadline: August 2, 2024 at 12 p.m. (noon) EST
Online Submission Link: SARE Grant Management System

Questions should be directed to Jeff Jordan or Sandra Blackwell at southern-edu@sare.org

Education Grant Schedule

May 2024: Call for Proposals Released
August 2, 2024: Call for Proposals Due
February 2025: Proposals Awarded

What is Sustainable Agriculture?

Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SSARE) is requesting proposals for **Education Projects and Activities** that address issues of sustainable agriculture of current and potential importance to the region and the nation.

Maximum funding amount for Education Projects and Activities is $50,000. Proposals with smaller funding requests are welcomed and encouraged.

Southern SARE accepts proposals from applicants in the Southern region: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Proposed projects must focus on Southern SARE's program objectives in developing sustainable agriculture systems or moving existing farming systems toward sustainability, as defined by the Congress in the 1990 Farm Bill. Under that law, "the term sustainable agriculture means 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 nonrenewable 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."

Education Grants

Education Grants are open to academic institutions and organizations, such as nonprofits and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), who are interested in conducting education and outreach activities for the benefit of the greater sustainable ag community, and promote efforts in farmer innovations, community resilience, business success, agricultural diversification, and best management practices. Non-governmental organizations and 1890 land-grant university faculty/extension cooperators are especially encouraged to apply for this grant for their education and outreach activities.

SSARE also considers proposals from organizations/institutions whose projects involve indigenous farmer cooperators who produce for community food systems. These enterprises may be an eligible farmer cooperator where the production activity has an annual value of at least $1,000, but products are not sold due to cultural factors.

Education Grant proposals should meet the following basic requirements:

- Project outcomes must focus on developing sustainable agriculture systems or moving existing systems toward sustainable agriculture.
- The project must clearly articulate what is being taught, to whom and how the project will accomplish those goals.
- The results must be realistic, acceptable to farmers, logical, and capable of leading to the actions and benefits described in the proposal.

Education Grants should focus on a topic area of sustainable agriculture relevance that meets SARE's program goals. In addition, the proposed project should comprise education/outreach efforts/activities that support the research/education foundation of the institution/organization, and must clearly articulate how those education/outreach efforts/activities will be implemented and evaluated.

Examples of Education Grant projects can include one or more of the following, but are not limited to:

- Experiential (Demonstrations, on-farm tours, field days, workshops, trainings, case studies);
- Integrative (Conferences, seminars, course curriculum);
- Reinforcement (Fact sheets, bulletins, books, manuals, videos, online technologies, guidebooks).

SARE encourages proposals on quality of life topics that focus on the social health of a farming system. These can include, but are not limited to and are not in order of priority:

- Heirs property;
- Farmers' markets; food hubs; locavores; CSAs;
- Local/regional processing/slaughter;

- Food sheds and food circles;
- Direct marketing and value-added;
- Beyond organics value chains;
- Farm to School/Institution;
- Civic agriculture, agritourism;
- Denominations of origin/geographic indications;
- Non-GMO movement, Slow Food, chef collaboratives;
- Urban ag systems;
- Food policy councils, governance structures; and
- Local/regional certification/branding.

Youth Education Policy

Generally, Southern SARE does not fund youth education projects in its competitive grants or events sponsorship. However, Southern SARE is committed to advancing equity and justice and recognizes that some of the most innovative work being done within historically underserved communities involve youth education. We will consider a limited number of youth education projects each year in the Education grants category. For these projects, the priority will be proposals that are led by and involve youth from historically underserved communities as defined below, as well as projects that are highly innovative and can provide a replicable model for other communities within the Southern SARE region.

SSARE defines underserved communities as those populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civil life.

Preparing Your Proposal

Refer to the following template when preparing your proposal. The information provided here is required for submitting your proposal online. When you are ready to submit your proposal, apply in the SARE Grant Management System.

Be sure to submit your proposal prior to the application deadline. Once the August 2, 2024 at 12 p.m. (NOON) EST deadline passes, the online system will close and late proposals will not be accepted.

A. Basic Information

Project Title

The title of the proposed project.

Funding Amount Requested

Indicate the funding amount requested. Maximum funding is $50,000 (including direct and indirect costs).

Principal Investigator or Project Leader

Information requested consists of principal investigator or project leader name, lead institution name, full address, telephone, and e-mail. This person will be the main project PI listed on the proposal and the person the SSARE office will contact regarding this project. The institution/organization the PI is associated with is considered the leading institution and will receive the grant funding.

Principal Investigator or Project Leader Role

Detail the area of expertise and specific role of the principal investigator or project leader.

Co-Principal Investigator(s) or Co-Project Leader(s) (if applicable)

Information requested consists of co-principal investigator or co-project leader name, lead institution name, full address, telephone, and e-mail. Detail the specific role of each co-principal investigator or co-project leader. Up to five maximum.

PI or Project Leader and Co-PI or Co-Project Leader CVs

Include a CV/resume for the PI or Project Leader and for each Co-PI or Co-Project Leader listed. The CVs should be limited to 2 pages each in length.

Institutional Administrative Contact

The Administrative contact is the person who handles contracts and has authority to sign the contracts. Information requested consists of person's name, institution/organization name, full address, e-mail, and telephone.

Institutional Financial Contact
The financial contact is the person who submits invoices and answers questions concerning invoicing and payments. Information requested consists of person's name, institution/organization name, full address, e-mail and telephone.

Cooperating Institution(s) Receiving Funding

Listing of cooperating institutions/organizations receiving funding. If an individual or institution/organization is not receiving any project funding, they should not be listed in this section.

Other Cooperating Institution(s) Not Receiving Funding

Listing of cooperating institutions/organizations that you would like to recognize as participants in your project proposal, but are NOT receiving any project funding.

Project Duration and Timetable

Education Grant project duration is limited to two (2) years. The project start date for FY2025 is April 1, 2025.

Develop a timetable for each year of your project. Outline project activities in a chronological timeline that states where, what, when and how long it will take for you to perform your project activities. Include project investigators and the activities they will be conducting for each aspect of the work on the project. Include your outreach plan in your timetable. Limited to 250 words.

Type of Institution

Select Institution Type: 1862 Land Grant University, 1890 Land Grant University, Other College/University, Governmental Organization, Non-Governmental Organization, or Other.

Primary State

Select the state where most of the work for this project will be conducted.

B. Body of Proposal

Project Abstract

Enter a project abstract. Limited to 500 words.

Is this a Previous Submission?

If you are submitting a proposal that has been submitted in the past, or is substantially similar to prior applications, the proposal should take into account the comments from the prior review(s). Note how you have addressed reviewer comments. If you disagree with a review comment, just state that and explain why. This section can be no more than 1,000 words.

Statement of Need, Rational and Significance

State the outreach/education need of your project, and the rationale and justification for the objectives. Focus on the following questions: What do you intend to "teach" your intended audience? Why is it needed? How will it be implemented? How will success be measured? State the potential economic, environmental, and social impact of the anticipated project outcome. Begin The Statement of Need as: ***"The purpose of this project is to".***   Limited to no more than 250 words.

Project Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture

State how addressing the need and the expected results contribute to agricultural sustainability. Does the proposed project meet SARE's goals? How does it address SARE's three pillars of sustainability: profitability, stewardship, and quality of life? Don't simply tell us that your project addresses an element of sustainable agriculture, tell us HOW your project will address it and make it more sustainable.

Does your project use genetically engineered varieties or organisms? If so, state how their use will contribute to your project and make agriculture more sustainable.

How will this project improve quality of life for producers, communities and consumers in the Southern region? See Southern SARE's working document on what quality of life means for sustainable agriculture research grants.

Limited to 500 words.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Will this project support underserved producers and/or increase equity in Southern agricultural systems? If yes, how? Limited to no more than 1,000 words.

SSARE defines underserved communities as those populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civil life.

Objectives

Provide a numbered list of concise project objectives that supports your Statement of Need, Rational and Significance. Limited to no more than 125 words.

Approach and Methods

Provide a synopsis of the proposed educational approach to mitigate or solve a problem and encourage farmer adoption of recommended practices or strategies. This approach must be realistic, acceptable to farmers, logical, and capable of leading to the actions and benefits described. The educational approach description must include the outreach/education activity, list of curriculum topics, the methods for delivery and support, known challenges to farmer adoption, and a description of how the results will be evaluated.

What research-based materials/resources are being used to form the basis of the educational program being proposed? Describe the institution/organization research/strategic business foundation that supports the applied work of the proposed outreach/education activity.

The approach should lead to the development of quality educational materials and multiple format delivery methods with long shelf lives. The educational materials should be useful in future trainings. It is appropriate to conduct small focused educational sessions or trainings using the materials to verify how successful they are and improve the approach as well as determine participation rates. The applicant must make a defensible attempt to show how many people will be educated and the makeup of the audience to be educated or trained.

Approach and Methods is limited to no more than 625 words total (no more than 125 words for each corresponding objective listed above).

Literature Cited

Provide documentation that supports knowledge/skills to develop/implement the proposed project. It is encouraged that applicants refer to previous SARE-funded projects and note how the proposed project builds upon work previously conducted, fills an educational void, or addresses a new, innovative educational method/activity.

Limited to no more than 125 words.

C. Budget

For each institution included in this proposal receiving funding, include a detailed budget. This includes any funds you will budget for cooperating institutions/organizations. If farmers are included in your project, they should be compensated. **For guidance on the budget, see the budget checklist attached to this Call for Proposal.** You must include a justification that explains why each cost in the budget is needed to complete the project goals/activities.

USDA-NIFA will allow recovery of indirect costs. Indirect cost rates are limited to 10 percent of total direct costs.

Adding Your Budget

In the budget section, you will begin your budget by clicking "Add a budget item". You will use the drop down arrow to select an item from the Budget Category, enter the item description, a detailed justification and total amount. You will then use the drop down arrow to select which Institution's budget this item is for. After selecting the appropriate institution, click "Add another budget item," and follow the above instructions until you have completed the budget for all institutions receiving funding. You can view the budget by clicking the "Save" button.

Indirect Costs

USDA-NIFA will allow recovery of indirect costs. Indirect cost rates are limited to 10 percent of total direct costs. When preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 10 percent of total direct costs. The Indirect Cost of 10 percent Total Direct Costs is the maximum allowable.

If your institution has never had a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), you may include indirect costs as a line item in your budget at a maximum rate of 10 percent modified total direct costs. This is the de minimus rate approved under Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200.414). The calculation of the modified total direct cost base must adhere to the definition of modified total direct costs in 2 CFR 200.68.

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)

MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures,

charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

D. Outreach Plan

Enter a detailed plan outlining the target audience participating in the project and the target audience for information/education and outreach components of the project. Project results should have applicability for farmers/ranchers and be presented in a way that could be adopted or implemented.

Limited to no more than 3000 words.

E. Evaluation

The proposal should include a method for evaluating project success. Provide a description of how impacts on the intended audience will be measured.

Enter the plan to evaluate project process and outcome. The plan must include mechanisms for self-evaluation and monitoring and/or external evaluation. The evaluation plan must also include mechanisms for project response to evaluation outcomes. Explicitly state the expected outcomes and how you will measure if they have been achieved. No more than 2000 words.

F. Signature Page

Print a copy of the proposal signature page from the online system. Fill out all the requested information on the signature page. It should be signed by both the Principal Investigator or Project Leader and the Organizational Administrative Representative. After scanning your signed signature page, the system will allow you to upload it to your application up to the proposal deadline. Signature pages can be signed electronically.

You may also send in your signature page after the proposal deadline. After the proposal deadline, please send the signed signature page as an e-mail attachment to Sandra Blackwell at sblackwell@uga.edu. Although you may e-mail the signature page after the proposal deadline, we must have your signature page on file in order for your proposal to be funded.

Questions regarding your signature page can be sent to Sandra Blackwell at sblackwell@uga.edu.

G. Applicant Demographic Data

SSARE has a continuing commitment to monitor the operation of its review and award processes to identify and address any inequities based on gender or race. To gather information needed for this important task, applicants are asked to voluntarily submit the requested information with the proposal. This information will not be part of the review process, will be confidential and will not appear on any copy of the submitted proposal including the applicant's copy.

Gender: Male, Female

Race: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White/Caucasian, Other

Are you of Hispanic/Latino background? Yes, No

How Your Proposal Will Be Reviewed

To be considered for funding, a project must first meet the following criteria:

- Project outcomes must focus on developing sustainable agriculture systems or moving existing systems toward sustainable agriculture.
- The project must clearly articulate what is being taught, to whom, how the project will accomplish that goal, and how the project outcomes will be evaluated.

Following the grant deadline, all Education Grants are reviewed by the Project Review Committee of Southern SARE's Administrative Council.

The Project Review Committee judges the following:

- Is the proposed work seeking to address a useful question?
- Are the objectives clear? Does the plan of work and timeline allow clear completion of objectives?
- Is there a clear outreach plan that will reach a large number of audiences who could benefit from the project?
- Does the proposed educational approach mitigate or address an issue, and encourage adoption of recommended practices or strategies? Is there a list and description of curriculum topics and methods for delivery and support that are adequate to meet project objectives?
- Is the budget appropriate to conduct the proposed project activities?
- Are the investigators qualified to conduct the proposed project?

The selected projects for funding are presented to and voted on by Southern SARE's full Administrative Council during the winter Administrative Council meeting, which is held in February.

By late February, you will be contacted by e-mail regarding the status of your proposal, and review comments on your proposal will be made available to you. If awarded an Education Grant, your institution/organization will be asked to sign a contract prior to receiving any funds. Once the contract is signed, you agree to conduct the activities outlined in your proposal. Any changes in budget or activities must receive prior approval from Southern SARE. The award funding will be paid through reimbursement of allowable project expenses.

Other Information

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, background research, and identifying experts in the field and pertinent USDA researchers and projects. AFSIC has a number of resources on its website that may be relevant to your proposal. Contact: AFSIC, National Agriculture Library, USDA, 10301 Baltimore Ave., Beltsville MD 20705-2351, phone: 301-504-6559, fax: 301-504-6927, e-mail: afsic@nal.usda.gov, web: http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/.

If you are submitting a proposal on organic agriculture, you may want to consult the National Organic Standards Board research priorities.

Budget Checklist for 2025 Education Grant Proposals

In the Budget Narrative, you must explain why each cost in the budget is needed to complete your project.

PERSONNEL SERVICES: Your Institution Personnel

(non-employee payments are other direct costs)

- [ ] Position or Name
- [ ] Salary & basis for this salary (i.e. FTE; Hourly rate; etc.) Length of time expected to work
- [ ] What will they be doing?
- [ ] ***Secretarial / clerical** must be exceptional in nature and justified as it relates to the project.

FRINGE BENEFITS

- [ ] Provide Total allowable fringe benefits
  Salary x % Rate = Benefits

NON-EXPENDABLE EQUIPMENT

Equipment greater than or equal to $5,000 and has a useful life of more than 1 year.

- [ ] Type / description
- [ ] List each Item and Cost
- [ ] Narrative on intended use in project
  *Permanent capital expenditures (e.g. land, buildings, etc.) are NOT ALLOWED.

TRAVEL

All travel expenses associated with this request must be shown in budget narrative.

- [ ] How does this travel relate to your project goals/activities (**required**)
- [ ] Destination – if known
- [ ] Mileage – Maximum rate is $0.67/mi.
- [ ] Lodging - # of nights, # of people, Lodging cost
- [ ] Daily Per Diem-Rate for Meals; for current rate see: www.gsa.gov/perdiem
- [ ] *International Travel is <u>NOT ALLOWED</u>*

PUBLICATION CHARGES

- [ ] Commercial printing or field related publication charges for brochures & program materials.
  State how this cost relates to the project.

COMPUTER (ADPE) COSTS

☐   Line/computer processing usage charges which include internet service provider fees. State how each Computer Cost relates to the project.

☐   List each Item and Cost

MATERIALS & SUPPLIES

☐   State how these Materials/Supplies relate to the project.

☐   List Items and Cost

* **Items normally covered under F&A**, such as office supplies, must be justified as being required by the scope of the work, can be easily identified to your specific project, and are above and beyond what would normally be covered under F&A.

OUTREACH

☐   Field Days, Workshops, Educational Brochures, Fact Sheets and other outreach activities.
** No Breakfast is allowed on any Grant. **

Field Days & Workshops – includes costs of holding a field day or workshop. (e.g. Rental of facilities, cost of refreshments, equipment or supplies needed for the field day or workshop, and any other expenses associated with the preparation and execution of educational field days or workshops.) **Provide details in the budget narrative**.

Refreshments – Any purchases of food or refreshments must be itemized and justified in the budget, the cost must be reasonable, and the justification must explain the estimated cost per person and why these items are necessary for the project. **Also, must show expense is for the continuity of the meeting; that meeting will be held at a remote location; and includes non- UGA employee participants.**

ALL OTHER DIRECT COSTS

☐   Direct project charges not included in other categories. Description and cost must be included in budget narrative.

Some examples of direct charges include:

Communications – mailings, postage, faxes, telephone *(These items are also considered indirect costs and if placed in budget should be exceptional in nature and justified as it relates to the project)*.

Photocopying – in-house copying (not commercial printing) for materials associated to the program.

Service Maintenance – Maintenance contracts in direct correlation to use of equipment for the project (e.g. 50% use of equip for project, 50% of svc contract applied to budget costs).

Conference / Meetings – includes costs of holding a conference or meeting. (e.g. Rental of facilities, equipment for meeting, honorariums, speaker fees, travel and per Diems for non-UGA employee participants.) Provide detail in the budget narrative.

Speaker / Trainer Fees – Provide speaker information, description of services, and fees.

Honorariums – Provide recipient information (if known) or number expected, reason for need, and fee associated with the honorarium.

Subcontracts: Entities which complete a portion of the project – Include a plan of work, budget, and detailed budget narrative. Use these same required budgetary detail guidelines.

Fee for Services -- A fee for services is the cost of professional services by nonemployees of the lead institution/organization required for a project that is beyond the scope of the work the grant recipient can perform or provide. Fee for services covers work that is needed for the project, but the professional performing the work or skill is not actually working on the project.

Examples of fee for services include: lab/data analysis, survey development, graphic design, videography/photography, transcription.

When listing fee for services in the budget narrative:
• Determine the cost of the service (per hour, flat rate, etc.);
• Provide the nature and scope of the service in relation to the project;
• Provide the qualifications of the individual/group rendering the service;
• Provide the fees charged by the individual/group for the service to be performed.

A fee for service is not the same as a consultation.

Consultants: Persons or Entities who provide advice for the project – Provide the name & organization of the consultant, a statement of work, funds being charged to the project. Also provide a copy of the resume/vita.

INDIRECT COSTS
Section 704 of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations ACT, 2021 (P.L. 116.159) limits indirect costs to 10 percent of the total direct costs provided. Therefore, when preparing budgets limit your requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of your institutions' official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 10 percent of total direct costs awarded.

If your institution has never had a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), you may include indirect costs as a line item in your budget at a maximum rate of 10% modified total direct costs. This is the de minimus rate approved under Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200.414).
The calculation of the modified total direct cost base must adhere to the definition of modified total direct costs in 2 CFR 200.68.

Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)

MTDC means all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first $25,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant support costs and the portion of each subaward in excess of $25,000. Other items may only be excluded when necessary to avoid a serious inequity in the distribution of indirect costs, and with the approval of the cognizant agency for indirect costs.

If your institution is waiving indirect costs, this must be noted in the budget narrative.

TUITION - NOT ALLOWED

MATCHING FUNDS / COST SHARE – NOT REQUIRED

*Note: If you have concerns regarding budget placement of items please contact Denise Quick for assistance at 770-229-3420 or by email at denise.quick@uga.edu