



# **REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**

## ***Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program***

### **Request for Applications to serve as a Regional Host Institution or as the National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office for FY 2023 – 2032**

FUNDING YEAR:	Fiscal Year 2023
APPLICATION DEADLINE:	November 14, 2022
ANTICIPATED FUNDING:	\$42,000,000
FUNDING OPPORTUNITY NUMBER:	USDA-NIFA-OP-009382
ASSISTANCE LISTING NUMBER:	10.215
LETTER OF INTENT DEADLINE:	Not Required

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**  
National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture

**Assistance Listing Number (ALN):** The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program is listed in the Assistance Listings under number 10.215.

**Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines**

Task Description	Deadline
<b>Application:</b>	<b>5:00 P.M. Eastern, November 14, 2022</b> <i>[Ref to <a href="#">Part I § C</a> of this RFA]</i>
<b>Letter of Intent:</b>	<b>Not Required</b>
<b>Applicants Comments:</b>	<b>Within six months from the issuance of this notice</b> <i>(NIFA may not consider comments received after the sixth month)</i>

**Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA).** NIFA recognizes research, education, and extension efforts will have the greatest impacts when programs are grounded in DEIA. NIFA is committed to enhancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility of programs and encourages individuals, institutions, and organizations from underserved communities to apply to funding opportunities as lead, co-lead, or subaward recipient(s), and to engage as leaders in the peer panel review process to support the development of strong networks and collaborations. NIFA encourages applications that engage diverse communities and have broad impacts through research, education, extension, and integrated activities to address current and future challenges.

**Stakeholder Input.** The National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) seeks comments on all request for applications (RFAs) so it can deliver programs efficiently, effectively, with integrity, and with a focus on customer service. NIFA considers comments, to the extent possible when developing RFAs and uses comments to help meet the requirements of [Section 103\(c\)\(2\) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 \(7 U.S.C. 7613\(c\)\(2\)\)](#). Applicants may submit written comments to [Policy@usda.gov](mailto:Policy@usda.gov) (email is for comments only). Please use the following subject line: Response to the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) RFA.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NIFA is soliciting applications under the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE) from institutions to serve as a:

1. Regional Host Institution (RHI) or as the
2. National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office (NRCCO).

This RFA is to select the institution that will serve as a SARE Regional Host Institution (RHI) (one in each of the four regions) and the institution that will serve as the National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office (NRCCO) for the program. Selected institutions are expected to serve in the role for FYs 2023 through 2032. Budgetary information being requested at this time should allow reviewers to assess the staff, contractual, and equipment costs that will be needed to administer the SARE program if the institution is selected. Institutions selected to serve as a SARE RHI or as the NRCCO will be required to amend the budget submitted with this grant application to include the regional grant programs and related budget items. For each succeeding fiscal year, the selected institutions are expected to submit a non-competing application with a comprehensive 5-year budget. A separate award will be issued for each fiscal year and each award will be for a 5-year period; no-cost extensions beyond the 5-year period of performance will not be allowed for any cooperative agreement administered as part of this award. Each RHI and the NRCCO will manage multiple cooperative agreements concurrently and will be required to complete all cooperative agreements, including those that have an end date beyond FY2032, thus requiring administration of those programs even after a new RHI and NRCCO is competed (FY2032). While funding will be withheld until an amended budget is submitted and approved after selection, information (e.g., [Part VI](#), Award Administration) is included in this RFA so applicants can anticipate award matters should they be a selected institution.

Applications are solicited to serve as a SARE RHI; one in each of the four regions (Northeast, North Central, South, and West). Subject to appropriations, each fiscal year approximately \$10.1 million will be awarded to each RHI through a cooperative agreement.

Applications are also solicited to serve as the NRCCO for the SARE program. Subject to appropriations, each fiscal year approximately \$1.5 million will be awarded to the NRCCO through a cooperative agreement.

Each RHI works in cooperation with NIFA to implement regional competitive grant and outreach programs as directed by the Regional Administrative Council. The NRCCO works in close cooperation with NIFA and the national SARE Operations Committee to administer the national reporting, coordination, and communications functions. Individuals and organizations interested in applying for SARE project grants should NOT respond to this funding opportunity; they should apply to the appropriate SARE regional program (<https://www.sare.org/grants/>).

The purpose of the SARE program is to encourage research and outreach designed to increase knowledge concerning agricultural production systems that: (1) maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of the soil; (2) conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources, and fish and wildlife habitat; (3) maintain and enhance the quality of surface and ground water; (4) protect the

health and safety of persons involved in the food and farm system; (5) promote the well-being of animals; and (6) increase employment opportunities in agriculture (7 U.S.C. 5801 and 5811).

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2023. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or a full appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

This notice identifies the objectives for the SARE program, deadlines, funding information, eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and application forms and associated instructions.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....3**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS .....5**

**TABLE OF TABLES .....6**

**PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION.....7**

A. Legislative Authority .....7

B. Purpose and Priorities .....9

C. Program Area Description.....10

**PART II. AWARD INFORMATION.....13**

A. Available Funding.....13

B. Application Restrictions.....13

C. Project Types .....14

D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects.....14

**PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION .....15**

A. Eligibility Requirements .....15

B. Cost Sharing or Matching .....15

**PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION .....16**

A. Method of Application .....16

B. Content and Form of the Application.....16

C. Funding Restrictions .....20

**PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS .....21**

A. NIFA’s Evaluation Process.....21

B. Evaluation Criteria .....23

C. Organizational Management Information .....24

D. Application Disposition .....24

**PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION.....25**

A. General.....25

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements .....25

C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements .....25

**PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION .....27**

A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget .....27

B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards.....27

C. Regulatory Information.....27

**APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT .....28**

**APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS .....29**

**APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS.....30**

## TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1: Key Dates and Deadlines .....	2
Table 2: Regional Host Institution Key Information.....	10
Table 3: National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office Key Information.....	11
Table 4: Steps to Obtain Application Materials .....	16
Table 5: Help and Resources.....	16
Table 6: Key Application Instructions .....	17

## **PART I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority**

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program (SARE) was originally authorized in Chapter 1, sections 1621-1624 and Chapter 3, sections 1628 and 1629 of Subtitle B, of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (FACT Act), Public Law 101-624 (7 U.S.C. 5811, 5812, 5813, 5814, 5831, and 5832). The annual funding for this well-established program was approximately \$40,000,000 in FY 2021 and approximately \$45,000,000 in FY 2022.

#### Background

The Chapter 1 (Research and Education) portion of the SARE legislation authorizes the overall program structure to be administered by USDA-NIFA in conjunction with four regional Administrative Councils (ACs) and implemented by the RHIs. The Research and Education program in each region now includes a portfolio of four competitive grant types that are regionally administered.

The Chapter 3 portion of the SARE legislation, The Sustainable Agriculture Technology Development and Transfer Program, has two key components. One is the production of technical guides and handbooks which has evolved into the SARE Outreach Program administered by the NRCCO. The other is a National Training Program, known as the Professional Development Program (PDP) that is administered through the four SARE regions. The PDP is a “Train the Trainer” program and is designed to provide education and training for extension agents and other professionals. The PDP programs in each region include both a regional competitive grants program and state programs that are led by State Coordinators appointed from the Cooperative Extension Service in each state.

#### Administration

SARE is a regionally delivered program with four regions (Northeast, North Central, South, and West). Each region offers a portfolio of five core competitive grant programs and administers the PDP state programs. Specific information on each region’s competitive grant programs, the PDP state programs, and the current staffing can be found on the regions’ websites shown below:

1. Northeast SARE: <https://northeast.sare.org/>
2. North Central SARE: <https://northcentral.sare.org/>
3. Southern SARE: <https://southern.sare.org/>
4. Western SARE: <https://western.sare.org/>

SARE is a collaborative program that engages USDA-NIFA, the NRCCO, the regional Administrative Council (AC), the RHIs, the Regional Coordinators (RC), the Regional PDP Coordinators (RPDPC), and the National Operations Committee to manage the program.

The SARE legislation requires USDA to carry out the program through agreements with land grant colleges or universities, other universities, State agricultural experiment stations, the State cooperative extension services, nonprofit organizations with demonstrable expertise, or Federal

or State governmental entities. NIFA provides funding to the four RHIs and the NRCCO via annual cooperative agreements that each last up to five years; no-cost extensions will not be allowed beyond the five year period of performance of each cooperative agreement. Each RHI and the NRCCO will manage multiple cooperative agreements concurrently and will be required to complete all cooperative agreements, including those that have an end date beyond FY2032, thus requiring administration of those programs even after a new RHI and NRCCO is competed (FY2032).

The RHIs have the operational responsibility to carry out the competitive grant programs that are established for the region, and each RHI employs a Regional Coordinator (RC) to oversee the program. The RHIs contract with other persons or organizations as needed to carry out the program. This can include contracting with other organizations to administer the Professional Development Program (PDP) and engage the Regional PDP Coordinators (RPDPC). The RHIs also provide an active communications program supervised by a Regional Communications Coordinator working collaboratively with National SARE Outreach.

The RHIs convene Administrative Council (AC) meetings and provide staff support to the AC and its subcommittees, identify appropriate people to serve on the technical committee appointed by the AC, and facilitate recruitment and rotation of the AC membership. Each region hosts two face-to-face AC meetings each year with approximately 25 participants at each meeting. The RHI arranges and supports all accommodations and reimburses all allowable travel expenses for meeting participants. The number and type of technical committees varies by region.

The RHIs have cooperative agreements with NIFA to carry out the regional competitive grants programs established by the Administrative Councils. The cooperative agreements include “streamlining” provisions for most programs such that the process of soliciting, reviewing, and selecting proposals, administering sub-awards, and reviewing project reports may be conducted at the regional level by the RHI. Currently each RHI makes between 60-120 new sub-awards per year that vary in size and duration.

The Regional Coordinator (RC) and Regional PDP Coordinator (RPDPC) are key positions in each region. They have a demonstrated understanding of sustainable agriculture principles and practices with significant professional experience in sustainable agriculture, as educators, researchers, and administrators. They are committed to engaging with a diversity of views and have the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders. They have strong organizational and people management skills and are respected members of their institution and professional community. The RPDPCs have especially strong records of effective outreach in the agricultural community.

#### The National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office (NRCCO)

The NRCCO works in close collaboration with the SARE National Program Leader at NIFA to provide overarching service to the entire SARE program. The core reporting services are to design, build, and maintain the projects database and oversee implementation of the established peer review evaluation system. The core coordinating functions are to facilitate national planning meetings for the National Operations Committee and the SARE Outreach Steering Committee, to



work in coordination with the four SARE regions to organize national conferences and workshops, to represent SARE at national conferences and events sponsored by other organizations, and to implement special projects as requested by the SARE National Director or the SARE Operations Committee. The core communications services are to design, build, and maintain the national SARE website, to produce and distribute high quality publications including books, bulletins, fact sheets and videos, and to make all materials available in multiple print and electronic formats. The communications function includes preparing periodic reports on program activities and accomplishments. The address for the national SARE website is <https://www.sare.org/> and information on the SARE Outreach Staff can be found at <https://www.sare.org/about/staff/sare-outreach-staff/>.

The Project Director for the NRCCO and the Communications Director in the NRCCO are key positions for the SARE program. The Project Director for the NRCCO works directly with the SARE National Program Leader at NIFA to manage many aspects of program coordination and communication including attendance at national and regional meetings and workshops. The Communications Director has responsibility to provide overall leadership for the SARE Outreach program which includes working closely with all the regional Communications Coordinators, convening the SARE Outreach Steering Committee, and overseeing a high performing staff.

#### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The purpose of the SARE program, under assistance listing 10.215, is to encourage research and extension projects designed to increase knowledge concerning agricultural production systems that: (1) maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of the soil; (2) conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources, and fish and wildlife habitat; (3) maintain and enhance the quality of surface and ground water; (4) protect the health and safety of persons involved in the food and farm system; (5) promote the well-being of animals; and (6) increase employment opportunities in agriculture.

For purposes of this program, sustainable agriculture is defined by section 1404 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension and Teaching Policy Act of 1977 (7 USC 3103(19)) as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that over the long-term will satisfy human food and fiber needs; enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agriculture economy depends; make the most efficient use of non-renewable and on farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; sustain the economic viability of farm and ranch operations; and enhance the quality of life for farmers and ranchers and society as a whole.

For additional background information on the SARE program go to

<https://nifa.usda.gov/program/sustainable-agriculture-program>

#### **Alignment with USDA, REE, and NIFA Goals**

The SARE program is aligned with the following:

USDA Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 found at

(<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-fy-2022-2026-strategic-plan.pdf>).

SARE is inclusive of research and extension for all types of farming, large or small, organic or conventional, urban or rural, row crop, livestock, small fruit and vegetable, and aquaculture. Projects that use indigenous traditional ecological knowledge will be appropriate for funding by the centers. It is inclusive of multiple agricultural science disciplines, and it addresses multiple points on the value chain including production, processing, distribution, and marketing.

**C. Program Area Description**

NIFA is soliciting applications for the SARE program under the following two program areas:

1. Regional Host Institutions
2. National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office

***Regional Host Institutions***

**Table 2: Regional Host Institution Key Information**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Program Code:</b>	<b>RHI</b>
<b>Program Code Name:</b>	<b>Regional Host Institution</b>
<b>CFDA Number</b>	<b>10.215</b>
<b>Project Type:</b>	<b>Regional Host Institution</b>
<b>Award Type:</b>	<b>Cooperative Agreement</b>
<b>Application Deadline</b>	<b>Nov. 14, 2022</b>
<b>Grant Duration:</b>	<b>60 Months for each annual funding allocation</b>
<b>Anticipated # of Awards:</b>	<b>Four (4)</b>
<b>Maximum Award Amount:</b>	<b>Approximately \$10,000,000 per year</b>

**Applications to serve as a Regional Host Institution must address the following requirements:**

1. The Regional Coordinator must have demonstrated capacity to administer programs, experience in agricultural research and extension, and proven ability to work with and lead diverse groups to successful outcomes.
2. The Regional Professional Development Program Coordinator (RPDPC) must have demonstrated capacity to administer projects, experience in agricultural extension work, and proven ability to work with and lead diverse groups to successful outcomes.
3. Each RHI applicant must provide sufficient staff, facilities, equipment, and administrative services needed for effective delivery of the SARE regional program. Applicants must show proposed staffing levels and the distribution of roles that are appropriate to the coordinating, administrative, and communications functions needed in the region and demonstrate awareness of approaches to staffing used by other SARE regions. Staffing information for each region can be found at [www.sare.org](http://www.sare.org).
4. Applicants must demonstrate their commitment to sustainable agriculture science through prior research and extension work.
5. Applicants must present their vision of the objectives and desired outcomes for the regional SARE program. Attention to the diverse audiences in the region including mainstream and alternative agricultural producers and businesses, the Land Grant

University System, socially disadvantaged and limited resource individuals and communities, and Minority Serving Institutions will be required.

6. The applicant will serve as the primary spokesperson for the regional SARE program. Applicants will be expected to build a regional network to engage with producers and producer organizations, researchers and extension specialists, federal and state agencies, agribusiness, and nongovernmental and community-based organizations.
7. Each Regional Coordinator will be required to ensure that all necessary processes for proposal solicitation, proposal review, project selection, granting and oversight of sub-awards, and project reporting for the region’s grant programs are established and followed. They will work closely with the NRCCO to ensure project information is publicly available, aggregate and communicate results, and conduct national impact evaluations of the SARE Program.
8. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to administer federally funded programs and the capacity and control systems necessary to administer the regional streamlining agreements used by the SARE program. This includes administering the application, review, award, and reporting processes for five (5) or more grant programs and 60-100 new sub-awards per region per year.
9. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to establish processes for managing the SARE funds awarded from NIFA and the regionally selected and streamlined sub-awards.
10. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to convene, budget, and facilitate meetings such as the regional Administrative Council and Technical Committee meetings.
11. Applicants should have a good track record of constructive engagement with other regional institutions and organizations which are engaged in agricultural research, education, and extension in the region.

***National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office***

**Table 3:** National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office Key Information

<b>Title</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Program Code:</b>	<b>NRCCO</b>
<b>Program Code Name:</b>	<b>National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office</b>
<b>CFDA Number</b>	<b>10.215</b>
<b>Project Type:</b>	<b>National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office</b>
<b>Award Type:</b>	<b>Cooperative Agreement</b>
<b>Application Deadline</b>	<b>Nov. 14, 2022</b>
<b>Grant Duration:</b>	<b>60 Months for each annual funding allocation</b>
<b>Anticipated # of Awards:</b>	<b>One (1)</b>
<b>Maximum Award Amount:</b>	<b>Approximately \$1,500,000 per year</b>

**Applications to serve as the National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office must address the following:**

1. The Project Director must have demonstrated capacity to administer programs, experience in agricultural research and extension, and proven ability to work with and lead diverse groups to successful outcomes.
2. The Communications Director (CD) must have demonstrated capacity to administer projects, experience in agricultural science and communications, and proven ability to work with scientists, writers, editors, printers, web designers, and consultants to produce high quality publications and communications materials.
3. Applicants must present their vision of the objectives and desired outcomes for the NRCCO, including the reporting, coordinating, and communications functions. Attention to the diverse audiences, including mainstream and alternative agricultural producers and businesses, socially disadvantaged and limited resource individuals and communities, the Land Grant University System, Minority Serving Institutions, and NIFA will be required.
4. The Project Director for the NRCCO works directly with NIFA's SARE National Program Leader to manage many aspects of program coordination and communication including attendance at national and regional meetings and workshops. Applicants will be expected to have a national network to engage producers and producer organizations, researchers and extension specialists, federal and state agencies, agribusiness, and nongovernmental community-based organizations.
5. Applicants must demonstrate their commitment to sustainable agriculture science through prior research, education, extension, or administrative work.
6. Applicants must propose staffing levels that are appropriate to the reporting, coordinating, communications, and administrative functions needed in the NRCCO, and demonstrate awareness of the current staffing roles for the program.
7. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to convene, budget, and facilitate meetings such as the SARE Outreach Steering Committee meetings.
8. Applicants should be knowledgeable of SARE's current communications portfolio including books, bulletins, fact sheets, websites, and social media. They should be knowledgeable of the SARE projects database and the IT capacity necessary for continued upgrades and support.
9. Applicants must detail how they will work with the four (4) Regional Coordinators at the RHIs to ensure project reports are completed and project information is publicly available and how they will aggregate, evaluate, and communicate project results and programmatic impact for the national SARE program.

## **PART II. AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

This RFA is to select the institution that will serve as a SARE RHI (one in each of the four regions) and the institution that will serve as the NRCCO for the program. Selected institutions are expected to serve in the role for FYs 2023 through 2032. Budgetary information being requested at this time should allow reviewers to assess the staff, contractual, and equipment costs that will be needed to administer the SARE program if the institution is selected. Institutions selected to serve as a SARE RHI or as the NRCCO will be required to amend the budget submitted with this grant application to include the grant programs and related budget items. For each succeeding fiscal year, the selected institutions are expected to submit a non-competing application with a comprehensive 5-year budget. A separate award will be issued for each fiscal year and each award will be for a 5-year period; no-cost extensions beyond the 5-year period of performance will not be allowed for any cooperative agreement administered as part of this award. Each RHI and the NRCCO will manage multiple cooperative agreements concurrently and will be required to complete all cooperative agreements, including those that have an end date beyond FY2032, thus requiring administration of those programs even after a new RHI and NRCCO is competed (FY2032). While funding will be withheld until an amended budget is submitted and approved after selection, information (e.g., [Part VI, Award Administration](#)) is included in this RFA so applicants can anticipate award matters should they be a selected institution.

Applications are solicited to serve as a SARE RHI; one in each of the four regions (Northeast, North Central, South, and West). Subject to appropriations and available funding for FY 2023, approximately \$10.1 million will be awarded to each RHI through a cooperative agreement each fiscal year.

Applications are also solicited to serve as the NRCCO for the SARE program. Subject to appropriations and available funding for FY 2023, approximately \$1.5 million will be awarded to the NRCCO through a cooperative agreement each fiscal year.

This RFA is being released prior to the passage of a full appropriations act for FY 2023. Enactment of additional continuing resolutions or a full appropriations act may affect the availability or level of funding for this program.

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards.

The [Automated Standard Application for Payments](#), operated by the Department of Treasury, Bureau of Fiscal Service, is the designated payment system for awards resulting from this RFA.

### **B. Application Restrictions**

NIFA will evaluate applications using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA. Applications for FY2023 are limited to the following application types:

1. *New application*: New applications will be evaluated using the criteria described in [Part V](#) of this RFA and are subject to the due dates herein (see [Appendix III](#) for definitions).

**C. Project Types**  
**Regional Host Institution (RHI)**

Applicants must indicate in the Project Summary that their submission is to serve as a Regional Host Institution. See [Part II, A](#) of this RFA for funding details.

**National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office (NRCCO)**

Applicants must indicate in the Project Summary that their submission is to serve as the National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office. See [Part II, A](#) of this RFA for funding details.

**D. Ethical Conduct of Funded Projects**

In accordance with sections [2, 3, and 8 of 2 CFR Part 422](#), institutions that conduct USDA-funded extramural research must foster an atmosphere conducive to research integrity, bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct, and maintain and effectively communicate and train their staff regarding policies and procedures. In the event an application to NIFA results in an award, the Authorized Representative (AR) assures, through acceptance of the award that the institution will comply with the above requirements. Award recipients must, upon request, make available to NIFA the policies, procedures, and documentation to support the conduct of the training. See [Responsible and Ethical Conduct of Research](#) for further information.

## **PART III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligibility Requirements**

The SARE legislation requires USDA to carry out the program through agreements entered into with land grant colleges or universities, other universities, State agricultural experiment stations, the State cooperative extension services, nonprofit organizations with demonstrable expertise, or Federal or State governmental entities. Applications may only be submitted by these types of organizations. Failure to meet an eligibility criterion by the application deadline may result in the application being excluded from consideration or, even though an application may be reviewed, will preclude NIFA from making an award.

Applicants for the SARE program must meet all the requirements discussed in this RFA. Failure to meet the eligibility criteria by the application deadline may result in exclusion from consideration or, preclude NIFA from making an award. For those new to Federal financial assistance, NIFA's [Grants Overview](#) provides highly recommended information about grants and other resources to help understand the Federal awards process.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

***No Match Required*** - The SARE program has **NO** matching requirement. NIFA will not factor matching resources into the review process as an evaluation criterion.

## PART IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION

### A. Method of Application

Applicants must apply to this RFA electronically; no other method or response is accepted. The electronic application for this RFA and additional resources are available on [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and [Grants 101](#). **Table 4** provides instructions on how to obtain an electronic application. **Part III** and **IV** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) contains detailed information regarding the [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) registration process. The [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is contained in the specific funding opportunity package, or a sample of the guide can be found [here](#). When applying for a NIFA award, it is important to reference the version of the guide that is included in the specific funding opportunity application package.

**Table 4.** Steps to Obtain Application Materials

Steps	Action
Step One: Register	<i>New Users</i> to <a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> must register early with <a href="https://www.grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> prior to submitting an application ( <a href="#">Register Here</a> ).
Step Two: Download Adobe	Download and Install <a href="#">Adobe Reader</a> (see <a href="#">Adobe Software Compatibility</a> for basic system requirements).
Step Three: Find Application	Using this funding opportunity number <b>USDA-NIFA-OP-009382</b> search for application here: <a href="#">Opportunity Package</a> .
Step Four: Assess Readiness	Contact an AR prior to starting an application to assess the organization's readiness to submit an electronic application.

**Table 5:** Help and Resources

Grants.gov Support	NIFA Support
<a href="#">Grants.gov Online Support</a> Telephone support: 800-518-4726 Toll-Free or 606-545-5035 Email support: <a href="mailto:support@grants.gov">support@grants.gov</a> Self-service customer-based support: <a href="#">Grants.gov iPortal</a> <a href="mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov">grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov</a> Key Information: Customer service business Hours 24/7, except <a href="#">federal holidays</a> .	Email: <a href="mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov">grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov</a>  Key Information: Business hours: Monday thru Friday, 7a.m. – 5p.m. ET, except <a href="#">federal holidays</a> .

### B. Content and Form of the Application

The [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) is part of the corresponding application package for this RFA. The RFA overrides the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) if there is a discrepancy between the two documents. NIFA will accept subsequent submissions to an application until the application deadline. However, applicants that do not meet the application requirements, to



include partial applications, risk being excluded from NIFA’s review. NIFA will assign a proposal number to all applications that meet the requirements of this RFA. Applicants must refer to the proposal number when corresponding with NIFA. **Table 6** outlines other key instructions for applicants.

**Table 6: Key Application Instructions**

<b>Instruct ion</b>	<b>References (All references are to the <u>NIFA Grants Application Guide</u>)</b>
Attachments must be in a portable document format (PDF).	Part IV
Check the manifest of submitted files to verify attachments are in the correct format.	Part IV
Conduct an administrative review of the application before submission.	Part IV
Follow the submission instructions.	Part V
Provide an accurate email address, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R.	Part V
Contact the <a href="http://Grants.gov">Grants.gov</a> helpdesk for technical support and keep a record of the correspondence.	N/A
Contact NIFA if applicant does not receive correspondence from NIFA regarding an application within 30 days of the application deadline.	N/A

**SF 424 R&R Cover Sheet.** See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for the required certifications and assurances.

**SF 424 R&R Project/Performance Site Location(s).** See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

**R&R Other Project Information Form.** See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. Field 7. Project Summary/Abstract. The Project Summary must show how the project goals align with the goals of the SARE program. The Project Summary is limited to 500 words. Title the attachment as ‘Project Summary’ in the document header and save file as ‘Project Summary’. The Project Summary should indicate which specific Program Area and project type the proposed project addresses. For RHI applications, the Project Summary must list the names and institutions of the RC and RPDPC. For NRCCO applications, the Project Summary must list the names and institutions of the Project Director and the Communications Director. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the goals of the SARE program. It is important that the Project

Summary be concise and informative. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for instructions and suggested templates.

2. Field 8. Project Narrative. The Project Narrative section for all SARE program applications may not exceed a total of 20 single-spaced pages, including figures and tables, with font size no smaller than 12 point and margins no less than one inch. We have established this maximum Project Narrative length to ensure fair and equitable competition.

**For RHI applications, the Project Narrative must include all of the following:**

- a. Discussion of the vision, objectives, and desired outcomes of the regional SARE program.
- b. Discussion of the projected applicants, the beneficiaries the program should reach, and the key audiences the program leaders should engage.
- c. Listing of the key personnel (or positions) including organizational affiliation. At a minimum, the key personnel that must be specifically identified are the RC and RPDPC. Additional key positions to fulfill roles such as communications and business management should be listed. The identification of the individuals in these roles is welcome and encouraged, but not required. Letters of Commitment should be included as “Other Attachments” under Field 12 for all individuals or organizations included in the proposal that are external to the RHI.
- d. Discussion of the RC’s and RPDPC’s experience and skills working with and leading diverse groups and how the experience and skills can be applied to the SARE program. Discussion of the experience and skills of people in other key roles is encouraged but not required.
- e. Discussion of the management and coordination processes that will be used to ensure sustained engagement of key individuals, institutions, and organizations that are directly and indirectly associated with the program.
- f. Discussion of the management processes that will be used to ensure open and fair access to regional grant opportunities, including solicitation and review of proposals and administration and oversight of sub-awards.
- g. Discussion of the management processes that will be used to ensure proper accounting and reporting for the use of Federal funds.

**For NRRCO applications, the Project Narrative must include all of the following:**

- a. Listing of the key personnel (or positions) including organizational affiliation. At a minimum the key personnel that must be specifically identified are the Project Director (PD) and the Communications Director (CD), including their experience and skills working with and leading diverse groups and how the skills and experience can be applied to the SARE program.
- b. Additional key positions to fulfill roles such as information management, content development, and product promotion should be listed. The identification of individuals in such roles and discussion of their skills and experience is encouraged, but not required.
- c. Discussion of the vision, objectives, and desired outcomes of the NRCCO.

- d. Discussion of the beneficiaries and key audiences the program should reach and engage, as well as efforts to be made to reach underserved communities.
- e. Discussion of the management and coordination processes to ensure inclusion of multiple diverse perspectives to guide the NRCCO and SARE Outreach and to ensure sustained engagement of key individuals, institutions, and organizations that are directly and indirectly associated with the program.
- f. Discussion of the management processes that will be used to ensure proper accounting and reporting for the use of Federal funds.

3. Field 12, Add Other Attachments. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

Other attachments should be assembled into a single indexed PDF if possible. If not possible or practical, applicants are encouraged to combine relevant attachments into indexed PDF files and minimize the total number of files attached. Additional attachments to consider:

**Other Attachments to Consider for Regional Host Institution (RHI):**

- a. Letters of Commitment should be included for all individuals or organizations included in the proposal that are external to the applicant institution.
- b. Letters of support from relevant organizations are not required but may be included. Individual letters of support should not exceed a single page.
- c. Prior relevant program evaluations for comparable programs led or managed by the RC, the RPDPC, or the RHI may be included but are not required.

**Other Attachments to Consider for National Reporting Coordinating, and Communications Office (NRCCO):**

- a. Letters of Commitment should be included for all individuals or organizations included in the proposal that are external to the applicant institution.
- b. Prior communications products developed by the CD can be referenced by a list of citations and links to websites where they can be examined. A limited number [six (6) or less] of short documents such as newsletters and fact sheets may be included as PDFs.
- c. Prior relevant program evaluations for comparable programs led or managed by the PD or CD may be included but are not required.

***R&R Senior/Key Person Profile (Expanded)***. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for profile requirements, details about the biographical sketch, and suggested support templates.

***R&R Personal Data***. This information is voluntary and is not a precondition of award (see **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#)).

***R&R Budget***. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#). The following are additional instructions.

The budget submitted with this application should be for only one year. For an RHI application, the budget should include the Senior/Key personnel, other personnel that will be direct charged,

employee fringe benefits, and the contractual or consulting costs necessary to provide the proposed staffing levels to administer the SARE program in their region, including allowable and necessary equipment and other direct costs necessary to fulfill the reporting, coordinating, communications, and administration requirements. For an NRCCO application, the budget should include allowable and necessary equipment and other direct costs necessary to fulfill the reporting, coordinating, communications, and administration requirements of the SARE program. Budget Justification is required. **Do not include travel or participant/trainee costs in either an RHI or NRCCO budget application.**

1. Indirect costs (IDC) – See [Part IV,C](#) of this RFA for funding restrictions regarding indirect cost, and **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for additional information.

**Data Management Plan.** A DMP is required for this program. Applicants should clearly articulate how the project director (PD) and co-PDs plan to manage and disseminate the data generated by the project. The DMP will be considered during the merit review process (see [Part V,B](#) of this RFA, [NIFA’s Data Management Plan](#)).

**Supplemental Information Form.** See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

1. Field 2. Program to which the applicant is applying. Enter the program name (i.e., enter **Sustainable Agriculture Regional Centers**) and the program code (i.e., enter **MA.1**). Accurate entry is critical.
2. Field 8. Conflict of Interest List. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#).

**Representations Regarding Felony Conviction and Tax Delinquent Status for Corporate Applicants.** This form is required for corporate applicants. See **Part V** of the [NIFA Grants Application Guide](#) for a description of the term, “corporation.”

### **C. Funding Restrictions**

**Legislative mandated Indirect Cost (IDC).** Indirect cost rates for this program are limited to 10 percent of the total direct costs under each cooperative agreement. Therefore, 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 of the agreement awarded.

Successful applicants must not use grant funds awarded under the authority of this RFA to renovate or refurbish research, education, or extension space; purchase or install fixed equipment in such space; or to plan, repair, rehabilitate, acquire, or construct buildings or facilities.

Given that the primary source of funding for the SARE program is Federal funds, RHIs and the NRCCO should contract with hotels for lodging at or below the Federal per diem rate for workshops, administrative council meetings, and any other meetings that require travel. NIFA retains the right to disallow use of NIFA funds for any travel that does not meet these requirements.

## **PART V. APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. NIFA's Evaluation Process**

NIFA evaluates each application in a two-part process. First, we screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this RFA. All administrative requirements must be met for the application to proceed to the next level of review. Second, a scientific peer-review process will be used to technically evaluate applications that have met the administrative requirements using a review panel (see [NIFA Peer Review Process](#)).

### **Regional Host Institution Applications (RHI)**

The authorizing legislation for the SARE Program requires USDA to work in conjunction with the four (4) regional Administrative Councils (ACs) to identify the RHIs. To do so, NIFA will evaluate each RHI application as follows:

First, NIFA will screen each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements set forth in this RFA. Next, the regional ACs will review and rate the accepted proposals using the criteria in [Part V, B](#) of this RFA and prepare summary comments of the AC review.

Next, all proposals will be reviewed by an expert panel established by NIFA. NIFA will select reviewers for the expert panel based upon their experience in relevant scientific, extension, communications, or administrative fields, taking into account the following factors:

1. Inclusion of one representative from each regional AC on the panel;
2. The formal experience of selected individuals and the extent to which they are engaged in relevant research, extension, communications, or administrative activities;
3. The need to include other experts (e.g., farmers, ranchers, and land managers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and program needs;
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) who can assess the applicants' ability to administer the program and sub-awards on behalf of NIFA.
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, and geography

The expert panel will review each proposal using the criteria in [Part V, B](#) of this RFA plus the ratings and comments from the regional AC to rank the proposals within each region. The expert panel will have discretion to interview up to three (3) finalists per region with such interviews open to participation by members of the regional administrative council.

After the expert panel has reviewed and ranked the proposals in each region the NIFA SARE National Program Leader will recommend to NIFA leadership the projects which should be selected as the RHI for each region for a period of ten (10) years; and competing proposals which are not reviewed as highly, or which receive an unfavorable review will be declined.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for approval.

NIFA will share the summaries of the AC and expert panel comments with the PD after the review process has been completed.

### **National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office Applications (NRCCO)**

NIFA will evaluate each NRCCO application in a two-part process. First, NIFA screens each application to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, an expert review panel established by NIFA will evaluate applications that meet the administrative requirements.

NIFA will select reviewers based upon their training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, education, communications, or administration, taking into account the following factors:

1. Inclusion of one representative from each regional AC on the panel;
2. The formal experience of selected individuals and the extent to which they are engaged in relevant research, extension, communications, or administrative activities;
3. The need to include other experts (e.g., farmers, ranchers, land managers, consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs;
4. The need to include experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and federal agencies, and private profit and non-profit organizations) who can assess the applicants' ability to administer the program and sub- awards on behalf of NIFA;
5. The need to maintain a balanced composition with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, and geography.

After the expert panel has completed its deliberations, the NIFA SARE National Program Leader will recommend to NIFA leadership the project to be selected as the NRCCO for a period of ten (10) years. Competing proposals which are not reviewed as highly, or which receive an unfavorable review will be declined.

NIFA reserves the right to negotiate with the PD/PI and/or with the submitting organization or institution regarding project revisions (e.g., reductions in the scope of work, funding level, period, or method of support) prior to recommending any project for funding.

NIFA will share the summaries of the AC and expert panel comments with the PD after the review process has been completed.

***Conflicts of interest.*** NIFA takes extreme care to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may influence the review or evaluation process (see [NIFA Peer Review Process for Competitive Grant Applications](#)).

## **B. Evaluation Criteria**

NIFA will use the evaluation criteria below to review applications submitted in response to this RFA:

### **For RHI Applications:**

#### Key Personnel and Program Leadership – 75%

1. The Regional Coordinator is well qualified to lead and coordinate the regional SARE program and has a strong record of performance.
2. The Regional Professional Development Program Coordinator is well qualified to lead and coordinate the regional Professional Development Program and has a strong record of performance.
3. Roles and levels of commitment of key personnel are clearly defined, key personnel have appropriate expertise for their identified roles, and as a team the key personnel have well-balanced breadth and depth.
4. The leadership, coordination, communications, and administrative functions of the program are considered and addressed well. Appropriate partnerships with other organizations or institutions have been established where needed.
5. Vision, objectives, beneficiaries, audiences, and desired outcomes are appropriate and clearly expressed with a high probability of success.
6. The applicant demonstrates understanding of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program in their region and has sufficient knowledge of the program in other regions to facilitate effective collaboration.

#### Host Institution – 25%

1. The Host Institution demonstrates a good record of administering federally funded programs and the capacity and control systems necessary to administer the regional streamlining agreements used by the SARE program.
2. The Host Institution demonstrates a good record of research and education related to sustainable agriculture.
3. The proposed staffing levels and the distribution of roles are appropriate.
4. The proposed one-year administrative budget is well prepared and costs are appropriate for the work which will be performed.
5. The Host Institution has experience developing and managing processes to administer Federal funds and sub-awards.
6. The Host Institution has proposed sufficient staff, facilities, equipment, and administrative support.
7. The Host Institution is constructively engaged with other institutions and organizations engaged in agricultural research, education, and extension in the region.

### **For NRCCO Applications:**

1. The PD is well qualified to lead and coordinate the NRCCO and has a strong record of performance.

2. The Communications Director is well qualified to lead and coordinate SARE Outreach and has a strong record of performance.
3. Roles and levels of commitment of key personnel are clearly defined, key personnel have appropriate expertise for their identified roles, and as a team the key personnel have well- balanced breadth and depth.
4. The proposed staffing levels and the distribution of roles are appropriate.
5. The proposed one-year administrative budget is well prepared and costs are appropriate for the work which will be performed.
6. The reporting, coordination, and communications functions of the program, as well as the administrative requirements for the office, are well considered and addressed. Appropriate partnerships with other organizations or institutions have been established where needed.
7. Vision, objectives, beneficiaries, audiences, and desired outcomes are appropriate and clearly expressed with a high probability of success.
8. The applicant demonstrates understanding of the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program and has sufficient knowledge of the program to lead effective reporting, coordination, and communications efforts.

**C. Organizational Management Information**

Applicants must submit specific management information relating to an applicant prior to an award and update the information as needed. Applicants may only have to update their information if they had previously provided the information under this or another NIFA program. NIFA provides the requisite forms during the pre-award process. Although an applicant may be eligible for award under this program, there are factors that may exclude an applicant from receiving federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual, or a determination that an applicant is not responsible).

**D. Application Disposition**

Applicants may withdraw at any time before NIFA makes a final funding decision. NIFA will retain all applications, including withdrawn applications and unfunded applications.



## **PART VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of funds authorized, the NIFA awarding official will make grants to responsible and eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the NIFA awarding official as the effective date of the cooperative agreement must be no later than September 30 of the federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. The project need not be initiated on the effective date of the cooperative agreement, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by NIFA under this RFA may be used only for the purpose for which they are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, regulations, terms and conditions of the award, applicable federal cost principles, USDA assistance regulations, and [NIFA General Awards Administration Provisions, 7 CFR Part 3430, subparts A through E](#).

*Award Notice.* The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information as described in [2 CFR 200.211](#) (see [NIFA's Terms and Conditions](#)).

### **B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Several federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications and the projects outlined in this RFA (some are listed here: [Federal Regulations](#)). Unless specifically noted by statute or award-specific requirements, [NIFA Policy Guide](#) applies to all NIFA awards.

### **C. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

The output and reporting requirements are included in the award terms and conditions (see <http://www.nifa.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> for information about NIFA award terms). If there are any program or award-specific award terms, those, if any, will be identified in the award.

To alleviate the administrative burden and expedite the award process, NIFA may agree to streamline the administration of sub-awards made by the selected RHIs. After the selection process is complete, only those applicants who are chosen to serve as an RHI or as the NRCCO will be required to submit the following documents and information in order to request streamlining authority: 1) a description of the sub-award programs and processes that will be used to ensure effective management of SARE program resources, 2) a description of how you will ensure a fair and open process to solicit, review, and select applicants for funding, 3) a copy of the Request for Applications for each program, and 4) a description of the proposal review and selection process, a list of reviewers, and the criteria used to rank the applications.

If streamlining authority is approved by NIFA, the grantee will not be required to submit proposals and budgets for sub-awards to NIFA for approval. Streamlining must be requested annually for programs that competitively select sub-awards. When streamlining has been approved for a program, grantees are required to provide a program report for the prior year listing all sub-awards, including an identifying proposal number, the sub-awardee institution, the

title of the project, the project director's name, the recipient's state, and the award amount. No funds can be released in subsequent years until this list has been provided.

Awardees are also required to oversee submission of project reports to the SARE Projects database from the streamlined sub-awards.

As a 10-year award, both RHI and NRCCO awardees will undergo at least one mid-award review by NIFA and the Administrative Council to ensure that priorities and goals of the SARE program are being achieved satisfactorily. For RHIs, this review will consist, in part, of evaluating the management and administration of regional Research and Education and PDP grant programs and state PDP programs from development through reporting, managing the activities of the Administrative Council (e.g., meetings, committees, solicitation of new members, facilitating review panels), and providing timely and accurate reporting of SARE activities to NIFA and the Administrative Council. For the NRCCO, this review will consist, in part, of evaluating the implementation of national reporting, coordination, and communications activities across the four SARE regions.

## **PART VII. OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Use of Funds and Changes in Budget**

***Delegation of fiscal responsibility.*** Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, awardees may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

***Changes in Budget or Project Plans.*** In accordance with [2 CFR 200.308](#), awardees must request prior approval from NIFA for the following program or budget-related reasons (the awardee is subject to the terms and conditions identified in the award):

1. Change in the scope or the objective of the project or program without prior written approval (even if there is no associated budget revision requiring).
2. Change in a key person specified in the application or the federal award.
3. Disengagement from the project for more than three months, or a 25 percent reduction in time devoted to the project.
4. Inclusion of costs that require prior approval in accordance with [2 CFR 200 Subpart E \(Cost Principles\)](#), or [45 CFR Part 75 Appendix IX \(Principles for Determining Costs Applicable to Research and Development under Awards and Contracts with Hospitals\)](#), or [48 CFR](#), unless waived by the federal awarding agency,
5. [48 CFR Part 31, Contract Cost Principles and Procedures](#);
6. Transfer of funds budgeted for participant support costs to other categories of expense ([2 CFR 200.456 Participant support costs](#));
7. Sub-awarding, transferring or contracting out of any work under a federal award, including fixed amount sub-awards (see [2 CFR 200.333, Fixed Amount Sub-awards](#)), unless described in the application and funded in the approved federal awards. This provision does not apply to the acquisition of supplies, material, equipment, or general support services.
8. Changes in the approved cost-sharing or matching provided by the non-federal entity; and
9. The need for additional federal funds to complete the project.

### **B. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of NIFA transaction records, which are available to the public. Information that the Secretary of Agriculture determines to be confidential, privileged, or proprietary in nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, applicants should clearly mark any information within the application they wish to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary. NIFA will retain a copy of an application that does not result in an award for three years. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An applicant may withdraw at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **C. Regulatory Information**

This program is not subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, which requires intergovernmental consultation with state and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 ([44 U.S.C. Chapter 35](#)), the collection of information requirements contained in this notice have been approved under [OMB Document No. 0524-0039](#).

## APPENDIX I: AGENCY CONTACT

### **Program Contacts**

Vance N. Owens  
National Program Leader  
[Vance.owens@usda.gov](mailto:Vance.owens@usda.gov)  
816-283-6925

Summer LaRose  
Program Specialist  
[Summer.larose@usda.gov](mailto:Summer.larose@usda.gov)  
704-221-8907

For administrative questions related to:

1. Grants.gov, see [Part IV](#) of this RFA
2. Other RFA or application questions, please email [grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov](mailto:grantapplicationquestions@usda.gov)
3. Awards under this RFA, please email [awards@usda.gov](mailto:awards@usda.gov)

### **U.S. Postal Mailing Address:**

National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
P.O. Box 419205, MS 10000  
Kansas City, MO 64141-6205

### **Courier/Package Delivery Address:**

National Institute of Food and Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
2312 East Bannister Road, MS 10000  
Kansas City, MO 64141-3061

## **APPENDIX II: GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

### **Glossary of Terms**

Authorized Representative – AR

Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 – AREERA

Data Management Plan – DMP

National Institute of Food and Agriculture – NIFA

National Reporting, Coordinating, and Communications Office – NRCCO

Project Director – PD

Request for Application – RFA

Research, Education, and Economics – REE

Regional Host Institution – RHI

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education – SARE

United States Department of Agriculture – USDA

## APPENDIX III: DEFINITIONS

Refer to [7 CFR 3430 Competitive and Noncompetitive Non-formula Federal Assistance Programs – General Award Administrative Provisions](#) for additional definitions.

### Definitions

#### Cooperative Agreement:

Cooperative agreement means a legal instrument of financial assistance between a Federal awarding agency and a recipient or a pass-through entity and subrecipient that, consistent with 31 U.S.C. 6302-6305: (a) Is used to enter into a relationship the principal purpose of which is to transfer anything of value to carry out a public purpose authorized by a law of the United States (see 31 U.S.C. 6101(3)); and not to acquire property or services for the Federal government or pass-through entity's direct benefit or use; (b) Is distinguished from a grant in that it provides for substantial involvement by the Federal awarding agency in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award; or (c)

#### New Application:

An application not previously submitted to a program.