

**Southern Region
Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Program**

**2018 GRADUATE STUDENT GRANT IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE
Call for Proposals**

PROPOSAL DEADLINE IS Friday 5:00 PM Eastern time May 4, 2018

The Southern Region USDA Program on Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (**SARE**) is requesting proposals for Graduate Student research projects that address issues of sustainable agriculture of current and potential importance to the Southern region and the nation. The Southern SARE Graduate Student Grants in Sustainable Agriculture grants a one-time project maximum of \$16,500. Projects may last up to three years. A candidate may receive only one Southern SARE Graduate Student Grant during his or her graduate student program. The Southern SARE program **will only consider proposals submitted, and to be conducted, by graduate students (Master's and PhD) enrolled at an accredited college or university in the Southern region. The graduate student must be considered full-time (according to his or her institution's requirements) at the time of proposal submission.**

A graduate student may only submit one proposal to the SSARE Graduate Student Grant Program in one grant cycle. Further, if awarded, a SSARE Graduate Student Grant can only be used for the graduate student who submitted the proposal. If, for any reason, the graduate student does not complete his or her project and/or is no longer enrolled, the grant cannot be transferred to another graduate student without prior approval from SSARE.

The Southern region includes: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

Sustainable agriculture, as defined by Title XVI, Subtitle A, Sec. 1603, is 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 agriculture economy depends; make the most 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 ranchers, and society as a whole.

The objective of the **SARE** program is to enable the full spectrum of farmers and ranchers to move profitably toward production systems compatible with the goal of sustainable agriculture. Specific objectives include:

- Promote good stewardship of the nation's natural resources by providing site specific and profitable sustainable farming and ranching methods that strengthen agricultural competitiveness; satisfy human food and fiber needs; maintain and enhance the quality and productivity of the soil; conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources, and fish and wildlife habitat; protect endangered species; and maintain and improve the quality of surface and groundwater;
- Protect the health and safety of persons involved in the food/farm system;
- Enhance the quality of life for farmers/ranchers and society as a whole, in part by increasing income and employment-especially profitable self-employment opportunities in agriculture and rural

communities. Specifically, a major goal is to strengthen the family farm system of agriculture, a system characterized by small-and moderate-sized farms that are principally owner operated;

- Promote crop, livestock, and enterprise diversification and the well-being of animals, and;
- Strengthen rural communities by creating economic conditions, including value-added products that foster locally owned business and employment opportunities.

Types of Projects Funded by the Southern SARE Program

Submitted proposals need to address sustainable agriculture issues important to the Southern region and successful projects must contribute to one or more of the following:

- Improving the profitability of farmers/ranchers and southern agriculture.
- Sustaining and improving the environmental quality and natural resource base on which agriculture depends.
- Enhancing the quality of life for farmers, ranchers and rural communities

The Instructions You Need to Submit a SSARE Graduate Student Proposal Can Be Found in the following Pages of this Call for Proposals.

Important!

Proposals must be submitted only on the SSARE Online Proposal Submission website. The website address for Online Proposal Submissions is: <http://www.ciids.org/sare/gs/> The web address can also be found throughout this call for proposals.

Use the online proposal system to develop and submit your proposal. Do all of your editing and modifying before you finalize your proposal. Once your proposal is finalized, it can not be modified. Also, once the May 4, 2018 deadline passes, the online system will close and no more proposals—even those in progress that haven't been finalized—can be submitted.

Please print your proposal and signature page and have your proposal reviewed by your institution or organization and obtain the appropriate signatures on the signature page. **Then email as an attachment, mail or fax--the signature page only—as soon after you obtain the appropriate signatures as possible.**

Although you may email, mail or fax the signature page after the proposal deadline, we must have your signature page on file in order for your proposal to be funded.

Please email, mail or fax the signature page only to:

Southern SARE Program
Room 203, Stuckey Bldg.
1109 Experiment St.
Griffin, GA 30223-1797
FAX: (770) 412-4789
youngjs@uga.edu

All of the guidelines, program goals and review criteria for submitting a Southern SARE Graduate Student proposal can be found in this call for proposals.

USE OF FUNDS

Funds **MAY NOT** be used for the following purposes:

1. Graduate student stipends (see below);
2. Preparation of thesis copy;
3. Publication costs;
4. Purchase of classroom books or payment of tuition; and
5. Permanent capital improvements (e.g. land, buildings, etc.).

Funds **MAY** be used for the following purposes:

1. Supplies, including software;
2. Equipment (any equipment obtained becomes the property of the university that the funded graduate student attends);
3. Labor (The graduate student project investigator may receive up to a maximum of 50 percent of the project total. This is actual identifiable work on the project and **NOT** a general graduate stipend);
4. Special texts not readily available;
5. Farm equipment rental or operating charges;
6. Travel and per diem necessary for the project (use your university per diem rules).
7. Student travel to one conference (not to exceed \$1,000 including registration), to present their SARE funded research.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR PROPOSAL

On the following 2 pages you can see all the questions you will be asked on the Online Submission website at <http://www.ciids.org/sare/gs/> Once you have read through this call for proposals, click on that site, follow the directions and begin your proposal.

Title Page:

Project Title

Major Professor

Information requested consists of major professor name (list only one person), lead institution/organization name, full address, telephone, e-mail and fax.

Graduate Student

Information requested consists of graduate student name (list only one person), lead institution/organization name, full address, telephone, e-mail and fax.

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, the applicant should 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

Institutional Administrative Contact (person who handles contracts and has authority to sign)
Name, institution name, full address, telephone, e-mail and fax.

Project Duration

Duration is limited to no more than two years.

Body of Proposal

Project Abstract

Abstract is limited to no more than 250 words.

Statement of Problem, Rational and Justification

Statement of the problem being addressed, rationale and justification for objectives and the impact of the anticipated project. Begin the statement of the problem as: "*The purpose of this project is to*"... Limited to 500 words.

Project Relevance to Sustainable Agriculture

State how the project and the expected results contribute to agricultural sustainability. 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. Make sure that your work -- even though it is making a part of a system more sustainable -- does not make the whole system or another part of it, less 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. No more than 500 words.

Objectives

A numbered list of concise project objectives limited to no more than 500 words.

Approach and Methods

A brief description of the methods to be used for each objective, numbered according to their corresponding objective. **There must be a direct relationship between the approach and methods and the project relevance to sustainable agriculture.** Approach and Methods is limited to no more than 1000 words.

Timetable

Timetable is limited to no more than 500 words.

Literature Cited

List cited literature limited to no more than 250 words.

Budget

Fill in a budget, with estimated labor/personnel, operating, supply, and equipment costs. See page 3 for a list of what can and cannot be funded. For budget narrative detail required please see: <http://www.southernsare.org/Grants/Proposal-Budget-Checklist> You must provide a budget justification for each item listed on your budget.

USDA-NIFA will allow recovery of indirect costs. If your institution has a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), you may include indirect costs as a line item in your budget at the USDA-NIFA capped rate of 10% total federal funds. This is equitable to 11.11% total direct costs. This is only allowable if your institution's negotiated rate is higher than the USDA-NIFA capped rate.

If your institution has a federally negotiated indirect rate agreement (NICRA), and your negotiated rate is less than the USDA-NIFA capped rate of 10% total federal funds (11.11% total direct costs), you may only

include indirect costs in your budget calculated using your lower negotiated indirect rate. A rate higher than your negotiated rate will not be approved as an allowable cost.

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.

The maximum amount allowed for funding on a Graduate Student Grant, even when indirect costs are entered, is \$16,500.

Budget Justification

Provide a budget justification for each item listed on the budget.

Major Professor and Graduate Student Experience and Roles

Briefly describe experience relative to project and role in the project for the major professor and graduate student. 500 word maximum.

The Graduate Student Grant Online Proposal Submission website is:

<http://www.ciids.org/sare/gs/>

PROPOSAL REVIEW

A subcommittee of the SSARE Administrative Council will first evaluate proposals to ensure that they meet the SSARE Program goals of sustainable agriculture. Those proposals that pass this stage (around 40) will receive technical reviews. External technical reviewers will evaluate proposals for technical merit and relevancy of the project to sustainable agriculture and Southern SARE criteria. These reviewers will make recommendations to the Project Review Committee of the Southern Region SARE Administrative Council which will make the award selections based on SARE program goals. Awards will be made by the Southern SARE Administrative Council at their August 2018 meeting. Applicants will be notified by the Southern SARE Program on the status of their proposal by September 2018. At that time, reviewer comments will also be sent to each applicant.

CRITERIA FOR PROPOSAL REVIEW

The Southern Region SARE Program is committed to an ethic of openness, inclusiveness and diversity in all of its programs, policies and procedures.

The criteria by which proposals will be judged are:

1. Contribution to achieving the program goals of the Southern SARE Program;

2. Soundness of methods and feasibility of obtaining the project goals by the methods stated;
3. Time frame is appropriate to stated objectives and methods;
4. Appropriateness of budget to the proposed project activities;
5. Qualifications of the applicant.

PUBLICATIONS AND FINAL REPORT

Southern SARE requires brief annual progress reports and a final report. Furthermore, the Southern SARE Program must be credited as a funding source in any publication generated from the SARE funded research. For information on sustainable agriculture, please refer to the National SARE Program website <http://www.sare.org> and Southern SARE web site at <http://www.southernsare.org>

If you are submitting a proposal on Organic agriculture, you may want to consult the National Organic Standards Board research priorities. To view detailed research priorities, see http://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/MS%202015%20NOSB%20Research%20Priorities_final%20rec.pdf

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](tel:301-504-6559), fax: [301-504-6927](tel:301-504-6927), e-mail: afsic@nal.usda.gov, web: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/>.

Additional copies of this Call for Proposals may be obtained from the web at:

<http://www.southernsare.org/Grants/Apply-for-a-Grant>

or by contacting:

youngjs@uga.edu

Southern SARE Program
Stuckey Building, Room 203
1109 Experiment Street
Griffin, GA 30223-1797
Phone: (770) 229-3212

The SSARE Graduate Student Grant Online Proposal Submission website is:

http://www.ciids.org/sare/gs/

Questions about your proposal? Please call John Mayne at (828) 626-2680.

2018 GRADUATE STUDENT GRANT SCHEDULE

February, 2018	Call for Proposals Released
May 4, 2018	Graduate Student Grant Proposals Due
August 2018	Graduate Student Grant Awards Announced

Seven Tips to Writing a Stronger SARE Graduate Student Grant Proposal

Questions about your proposal? Please call John Mayne at (828) 626-2680.

1. **Make sure SARE is the right granting organization for your project.** Review the guidelines and SSARE Program goals and criteria and what can and can't be funded. Every year we receive a number of well-written, well-designed proposals that don't clearly address the Southern SARE Program's unique goals and criteria.
2. **Keep the writing clear and simple.** You are communicating why your proposal should be funded. Proposals that clearly state how the project addresses sustainable agriculture with clear-cut objectives and methods are generally the most successful.
3. **Help reviewers understand the importance of your project.** Don't assume reviewers are intimately familiar with the issues your proposal addresses. SARE's technical review panel is composed of experts in a variety of disciplines from around the Southern SARE region.
4. **Avoid jargon.** Also be sure to spell out the full names of any acronyms so reviewers know what you're talking about.
5. **Make sure the methods are appropriate to accomplish your goals.** Are plot sizes, replications, controls, surveys, etc., adequate to provide meaningful information? Be sure to consult with a statistician in developing your experimental design. Clearly define your response variables.
6. **Develop a realistic budget.** Be clear about what the requested funding is for. Ask for funding only for things that are allowable.
7. **Leave enough time to have someone else proofread your proposal.** A fresh set of eyes can help you identify sections that are unclear and find errors that you might not catch otherwise.

John C. Mayne, Ph.D.
Assistant Director
Southern SARE Program
(828) 626-2680
jmayne@uga.edu