SOUTHERN REGION SARE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
2019 CALL FOR PRE-PROPOSALS
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PRE-PROPOSAL DEADLINE 5:00 PM EST, JUNE 1, 2018

The Southern Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Professional Development Program (PDP) is requesting pre-proposals for projects of one to two year(s) duration that provide training on sustainable agriculture for agricultural professionals, educators, and mentor farmers* who serve farmers and other interested people in USDA's Southern Region. This region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Puerto Rico, the US Virgin Islands, and Virginia.

FUNDING LEVEL
There is no funding cap for projects. To fund a broad portfolio of projects, priority will be given to those less than $80,000.

WHO MAY APPLY?
SARE is an inclusive program and encourages pre-proposals from land grant and non-land grant universities, colleges, USDA agencies, community-based organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION
To be considered for funding, a project must meet the following two criteria:
1. Project outcomes must focus on developing sustainable agriculture systems or moving existing systems toward sustainability, as defined in the 1990 Farm Bill. The 1990 Farm Bill defines sustainable agriculture as an integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term:
   - satisfy human food and fiber needs.
   - enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends.
   - make the most efficient use of nonrenewable resources and on-farm resources, and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls.
   - sustain the economic viability of farm operations.
   - enhance the quality of life of farmers and ranchers, and of society as a whole.

2. A project's central purpose must be to provide or enable training to one or all of the following: Cooperative Extension Service agents, USDA field personnel from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Farm Service Agency and other USDA agencies, and other agricultural professionals and educators, including mentor farmers* who will serve as trainers. Research projects and farmer-outreach or education projects do not qualify for this funding.

Mentor Farmer – In Southern SARE, we use the term "mentor farmer" in addition to limited resource farmer. While there is no strict definition, we see mentor farmers as innovators in sustainable agriculture who teach others what they have learned. They may be active in a farmer's market, farmer cooperative, associations, or simply be a producer who tries innovative practices and hosts field days, trainings, demonstrations, and other events. PDP is a train the trainer program and the main idea is that mentor farmers participate in sustainable agriculture education events and take the information home to teach other producers.

2019 PDP GRANT CYCLE

March 2018	Call for Pre-Proposals released
June 1, 2018	PDP Pre-Proposals due
August 2018	Pre-proposals invited to submit full proposals
November 16, 2018	Full proposals due
February 2019	Full proposals awarded

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<u>**IMPORTANT**</u>

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> Pre-proposals <u>must</u> be submitted on the Southern SARE Online Proposal Submission website
> http://www.ciids.org/SARE/pdp.
> Once you have read through this call for pre-proposals, click on the link above and follow the directions to begin your pre-proposal. Complete all of your editing and modifying before you finalize your pre-proposal. **Once your pre-proposal is finalized, it cannot be modified. Also, once the June 1, 2018, deadline passes, the online system will close and pre-proposals- even those in progress that haven't been finalized- can no longer be submitted.** Please print your pre-proposal and have it reviewed (if required) by your institution or organization, execute any necessary modifications to the pre-proposal, then perform the online submission.

<u>**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF A PRE-PROPOSAL**</u>

All of the guidelines, program goals, and review criteria for submitting a Southern SARE PDP pre-proposal can be found in the following pages of this call for pre-proposals. Pre-proposals must include all of the elements listed in the "Pre-Proposal Format and Outline" below and comply with length restrictions. We recommend that you compose the lengthy sections of your pre-proposal in Microsoft Word, then copy and paste into the online submission forms.

Projects should include or involve the following:
- the development of a case for relevancy to southern agriculture and significance to the state(s) involved
- participation or support from both 1862 and 1890 land grant universities
- how the training need was determined
- effective participatory training methods
- systems approach that includes environmental, societal, and economic impacts to the community
- interdisciplinary efforts and multi-institutional partnerships that can endure beyond the life of the project
- farmer involvement in planning, evaluation, and delivery of training
- when possible, multiple formats should be used in the delivery of training material; while other formats are allowed, final deliverables should be in an internet-ready format

<u>**PRE-PROPOSAL FORMAT AND OUTLINE**</u>

Pre-proposals should include the following elements:
1. **Title Page** – This will include the project title, project director information, institutional administrative contact (cannot be the same as the project director), institutional financial contact, and key words.
   ➢Project Director Demographic Data – This information will not be part of the review process. It will be confidential and will not appear on any copy of the submitted proposal, including the applicant's copy.
2. **Institutional Information** – collaborating institution(s) and major partnership(s)
3. **Abstract** – *(maximum of 250 words)* The project abstract should reflect the gist of the proposal by including the following information: your organization and key partners, project goals and objectives, the target audience, how the audience will be reached, activities proposed, results expected, and how results will be evaluated. Items mentioned in the abstract that are not found in the pre-proposal itself will be ignored.
4. **Project Duration & Timetable** – *(maximum of 250 words)* Choose between a 1 or 2 year project. Timetable includes project schedule, with anticipated dates of project activities and tasks.
5. **Behavior-based Objectives** – *(maximum of 500 words)* Concise list of project objectives, including desired changes in the behavior of those receiving training.
6. **Approaches and Methods** – *(maximum of 700 words)* Detailed description of the activities and methods to be used to accomplish the objectives. How did you determine the training need? 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.
7. **Collaboration Plan** – *(maximum of 250 words)* Briefly describe the roles of both funded and non-funded collaborators.

8. **Funding Request** – <u>**An itemized budget is no longer required at the pre-proposal stage.**</u> We only require an estimate of your total funding request, as well as estimates of any funds you will budget for cooperating institutions. SARE PDP will cover indirect costs (IDC) up to 10%. Matching funds are not required.
An example would look like:

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Lead Institution -- $50,000
Cooperating Institution -- $20,000
Cooperating NGO -- <u>$10,000</u>
Total Proposed Budget Request -- <u>**$80,000**</u>

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INDIRECT COSTS

USDA-NIFA will allow recovery of indirect costs (IDC). If your institution has a federally negotiated rate agreement (NICRA), you may include IDC as a line item in your budget at the USDA-NIFA capped rate of 10% total federal funds. This is equitable to 11.111% total direct costs. This is only allowable if your institution's NICRA is higher than the USDA-NIFA capped rate.

If your institution has a NICRA that is less than the USDA-NIFA capped rate of 10% total federal funds (11.111% total direct costs), you may include IDC as a line item 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.

If your institution accepts IDC, watch for items being charged as direct costs that are normally covered under indirect costs. Direct charging costs to federal grants, which are typically considered Facilities and Administrative costs (F&A), may be appropriate if specific conditions are met.
These conditions include:
1. Items are required by the project's scope of work.
2. Costs can be specifically and easily identified to this project.
3. The number and/or cost of the items needed is clearly in excess of what would normally be considered F&A costs.

PROJECT SCORING CRITERIA *(100 points total)*

A. There is **meaningful farmer participation** in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of the training. Farmers and ranchers are not the primary audience of the training, but they are the ultimate beneficiaries of information, so they can provide a valuable perspective and should be included in the planning and implementation of training. When applicable, a sub-group of trainers should, after being trained, set up and conduct a workshop with farmers and ranchers. The effectiveness of the training should be evaluated from the producers' perspectives and training material revised based on the input received. Farmers and ranchers, where appropriate, are encouraged to serve as trainers. *(10 points maximum)*

B. A **collaboration of diverse groups** will partner to plan, deliver, and evaluate training. Collaboration may include: non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, land grant universities, non-land grant universities, colleges, USDA agencies, and mentor farmers. You are encouraged to connect with the Sustainable Agriculture State Coordinators at the land grant universities in the states where your project will operate. (15 points maximum)

C. **Behavior-based objectives**: The objectives and outcomes of the proposed training and education project must be clearly defined. Identify the groups to be trained and the expected change in attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviors. *(15 points maximum)*

D. A **coherent evaluation plan** that demonstrates: 1) a feedback loop which is essential to assess the effectiveness of the training model; and 2) a plan to measure realistic outcomes that assess the change in attitudes, knowledge, skills, and actions of the trainees. *(15 points maximum)*

Please review the documents on pages 5 and 6 to strengthen your proposal and to understand what will be expected of you and your project team if you are awarded a grant:

- The SARE Logic Model – Professional Development Program outlines what SARE hopes its project investments will achieve in terms of who is participating, what are the outputs, what outreach is done and what participants learn, do, or improve- at least in part- due to the project.

- The SARE PDP Grantee Reporting & Evaluation Expectations matrix shows what results you report on during the project and what SARE may assess two to four years after the project's completion.

E. The proposed **training is relevant to sustainable agriculture** in the Southern SARE service region. Relevance may imply the training contributes to the diversity of agricultural enterprises, diversity of approaches for problem solving, or improving the profitability or economic importance of an enterprise. The project uses systems approaches that include environmental, societal, and economic impacts, including impacts to the community beyond the farm boundary. Information about the relevance of the project and systems approach should be included in the "Approaches and Methods" section of the pre-proposal. *(15 points maximum)*

F. Define project resources and the abilities of the participating organizations and explain how you plan to leverage other inputs, multiply outputs, and sustain outcomes in the future. Include this information in the "Approaches and Methods" section of the pre-proposal. *(10 points maximum)*

> **Leverage other inputs** – Describe how SARE resources will be used to generate additional support for the training project (include use of internal or external resources or funds).
> **Multiply outputs** – Describe your plan to expand the scope of the training project, training opportunities, and educational products.
> **Sustain outcomes in the future** – Describe your plan to institutionalize your project. Provide evidence that your institution supports your project and is committed to its continuation after the initial implementation. Show how collaborating institutions will be strengthened.

G. **Educational methodology** is clearly presented and appropriate to achieve the stated training objectives. Effective participatory training methods should be used when possible, which may include: on-farm experiential learning, interactive multi-media presentations, distance learning, use of SARE Outreach materials, or training manuals. Methods of training should be described in the "Approaches and Methods" section of the pre-proposal. *(10 points maximum)*

H. The proposed project provides a **realistic timeline and budget** request relative to human and other resources proposed. The roles of both funded and non-funded collaborators are defined. *(5 points maximum)*

I. The project builds upon or develops **links to a previously funded SARE Research and Education project or Producer Grant Program project**. If you're planning to develop a training manual or curriculum, make sure you first check the SARE website for existing materials. Go to the Professional Development tab and check for curriculum and online courses. Go to the Learning Center tab and check for books, bulletins, fact sheets and other relevant information products. Go to the Project Reports tab and Search the Database for similar projects that may have developed an educational product that can be utilized or revised for your purposes. *(5 points maximum)*

If you have any questions, please contact the Southern SARE PDP Staff:

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