This is a presentation about applying for a Partnership grant in the North Central SARE program. This presentation goes over material that is in the Call for Proposals, so it would be useful to have that in front of you as you're going through this presentation.

I'll begin with a quick overview of SARE and North Central SARE, emphasizing some of the SARE philosophy that will aid you in developing your proposals. Then I'll go over the sections of the Partnership grant proposal, and wind up with screenshots from the online proposal submission website

We are the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program, commonly referred to by our acronym, SARE. We are a part of the United States Department of Agriculture, funded through the National Institute of Food and Agriculture or NIFA program.

This program is intended to foster cooperation between agriculture professionals and small groups of farmers and ranchers to catalyze on-farm research, demonstration, and education activities related to sustainable agriculture. We anticipate that projects will be very similar to projects proposed through our Farmer-Rancher grants, but these projects will include an ag professional who is coordinating the collaboration, research and reporting.

What is SARE?

Grants and outreach to advance sustainable innovations to the whole of American agriculture.

We provide grants and outreach to advance sustainable innovations to the whole of American agriculture.

A Different Kind of Grant Program

SARE was started in 1988, conceived as a decentralized, ***science-based***, **grassroots**, practical, problem solving – and ***inclusive*** – competitive grant making and outreach program.

This slide highlights some of the main characteristics of the SARE program--

We are decentralized, in that each of the four regions make their own funding decisions, including which grant programs to offer.

We are science-based, meaning that we expect research proposed to be planned with sufficient scientific rigor—so that findings are replicable, and we invite you to look at our bulletin on "How to Conduct Scientific Research" for more information. But we are also a grassroots grants program. Our proposal review teams and our administrative council include people with knowledge and expertise that comes from farming and working with farmers. Our proposal review teams include farmers and ranchers, extension educators, researchers and personnel from state and federal agencies. That's an important point to remember when you're writing your preproposal—don't assume that everyone reviewing your proposal is an expert in your field—avoid using jargon.

In all of our grant programs, we look for projects with strong farmer/rancher or end-user involvement, and most projects are applied research projects.

Successful SARE grantees have projects that simultaneously address the 3 principals of sustainability—Quality of Life for farmers, ranchers and their communities, profit over the long term and Stewardship of our resources.

In your proposal, you should address how your project addresses each of these considerations, even if your project is focused more specifically on one of the aspects.

Social Sustainability

https://www.sare.org/resources/understanding-and-measuring-social-sustainability/

Understanding and measuring social sustainability:

https://www.sare.org/resources/understanding-and-measuring-social-sustainability/

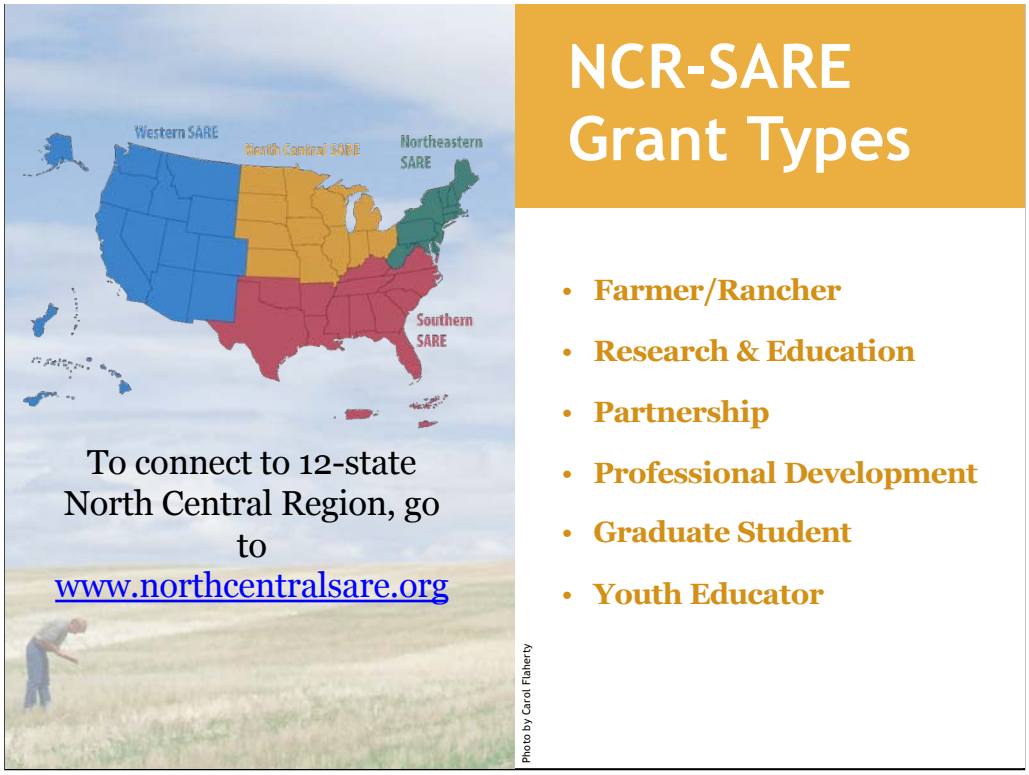
The SARE Portfolio

- Sustainable pest and weed mgmt.
- Marketing and local food systems
- Water quality and nutrient mgmt.
- Systems research
- High tunnels and season extension
- Crop diversification
- Cover crops and soil health
- Small ruminants/poultry/cattle
- Pastured livestock/grazing systems
- Pollinators and biodiversity
- Urban agriculture

...and much more

Photo by Troy Bishopp

We have funded projects on a wide range of topics.



We are decentralized in that each of the four regional administrative councils set priorities and make grant decisions. The North Central region includes 12 midwestern states--a highly productive, critical agricultural region. We offer the six grant programs listed above. Information on all of our grant programs can be found on our website www.northcentralsare.org and you should look at all our grant programs to determine the one that might be the best fit for your project. The Partnership Grant program a newer program in the North Central region.

SARE Outreach

a library of practical, how-to books (in print or download for free)

media outreach

a portfolio of in-depth reports on current topics

Topic rooms for multimedia information

countless online resources, including project reports

We are a grants and education program, and SARE Outreach produces practical information like you see here, and you can find a wealth of information online, including informative bulletins on topics from Cover Crops to How to Conduct Research on Your Farm or Ranch. These are available to view online or download as pdfs.

NCR-SARE Partnership Grants

Grants for up to $50,000 total for up to 2 yrs

Can be research, demonstration, education, or marketing

Involve a team of 3 or more farmers or ranchers

Led by an ag professional

Due ONLINE Thurs., Oct. 20th by 4:00 CDT

These are the program basics for the NCR SARE Partnership grant program. Partnership grants are for up to $50,000, for up to 2 years. Grants can be for research, OR education, or demonstration projects, but all have must have an outreach component.

They should involve 3 or more farmers or ranchers, although as noted in the Call for Proposals, we recognize that there may be situations with specialty crops or livestock, or another developing area where you don't yet have three farmers established, so feel free to contact us to discuss that type of situation.

These projects will be led by an ag professional, and we anticipate funding 20 projects this year.

Your proposal must be submitted online by 4:00 p.m. CDT, on Thursday, the 20th of October.

Examples of Ag Professionals

Each project is to be led by an ag professional, such as:

Extension educators (specialist/agents)

Other university educators or researchers

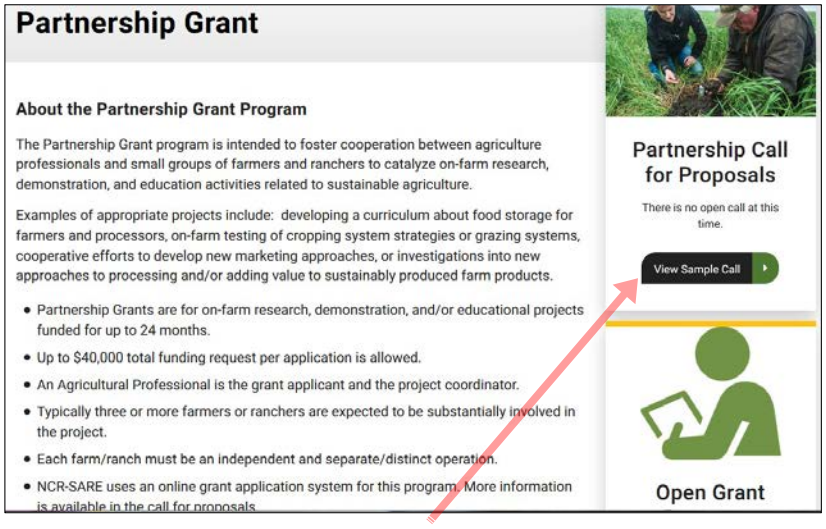
Non-profit organization staff

Agency staff

Certified crop advisors

Other ag and natural resource consultants

We define an ag professional fairly broadly—it could be an extension educator, or an educator from a university or college, or a nonprofit or federal agency or state agency, or a crop advisor directly working with farmers.

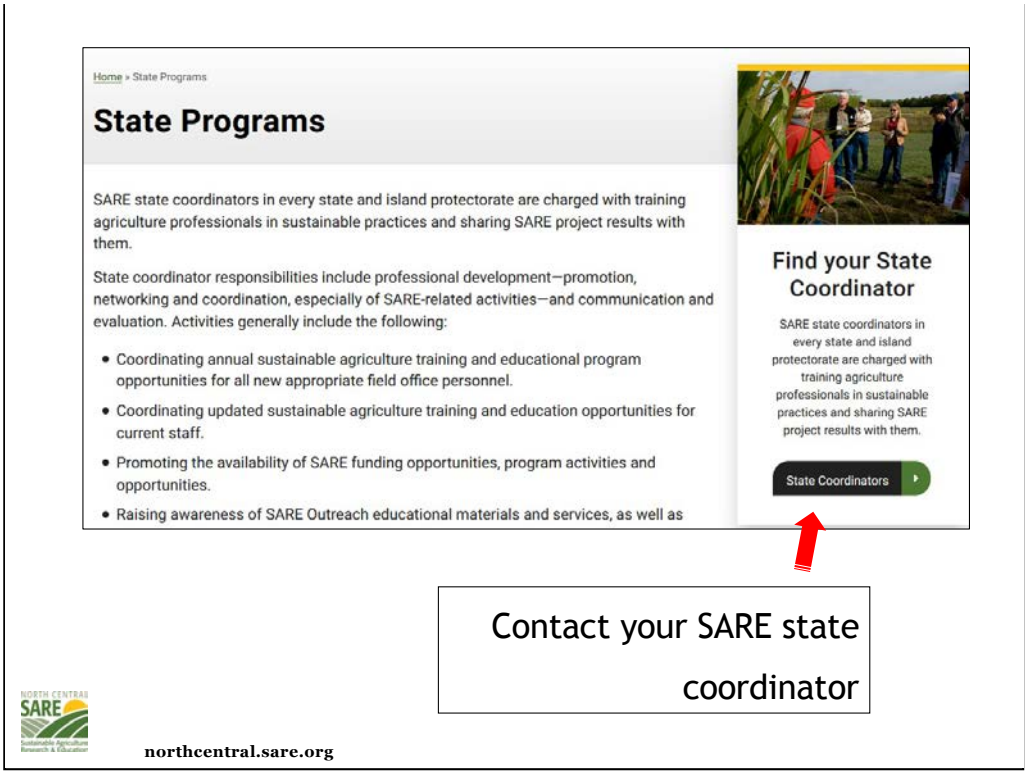


Click here to download Call for Proposals

If you haven't yet, here is how to download the 2023 Call for Proposals. If you have any problems downloading the Call for proposals, please contact the NCR-SARE office and we can email you a copy, or send a print copy. Please note that we are in the process of changing website platforms in late summer/early fall, so what you see might look different from the current screen shot.

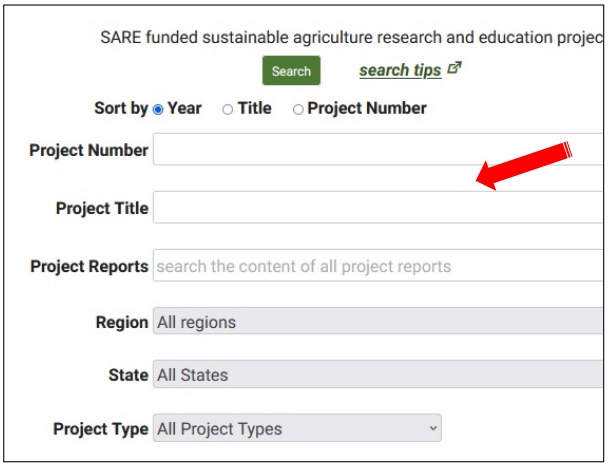
The Call lists all the sections you'll be required to address in the online grant proposal, and the word limits.

You can get additional help for writing grants on the NCR-SARE website.



An important resource for you is your state NCR SARE coordinator. If you click on the link indicated in this slide, you will pull up the contact information for your state coordinator. They can discuss your idea with you, offer suggestions, and may be able to link you to collaborators. They can be especially helpful in connecting you to farmers who might be interested in your work and willing to collaborate.

Go to : https://projects.sare.org/search-projects/

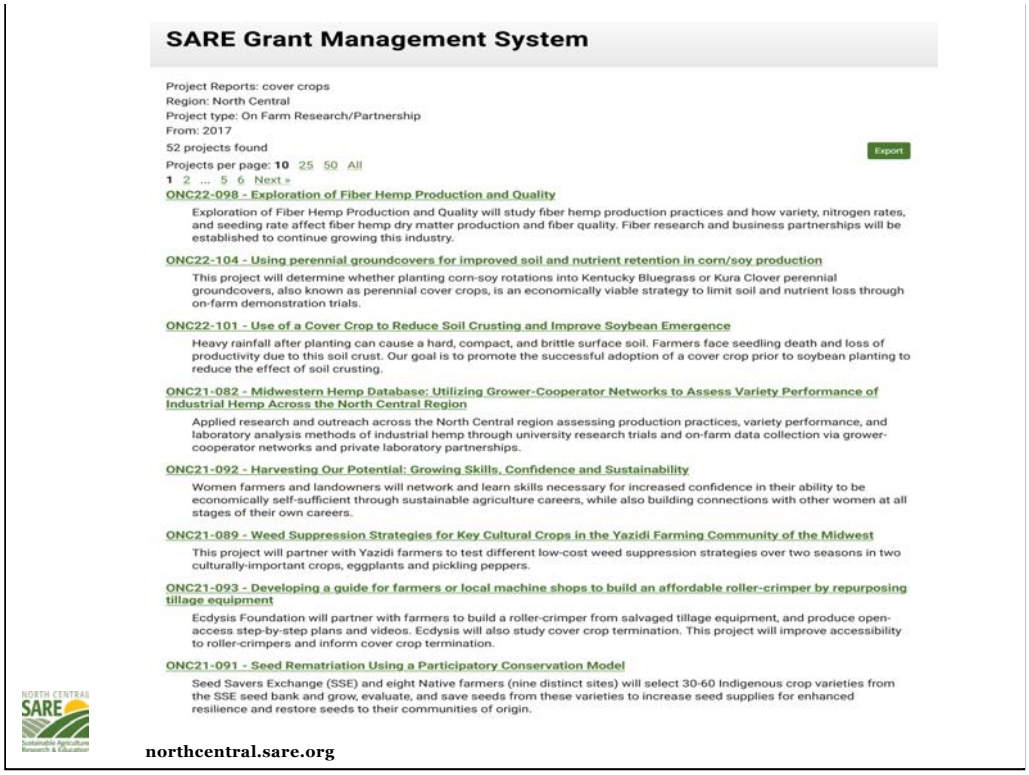


Look up past SARE projects to see how your work differs or builds on past projects.

Type in key words under “Project Reports” and you can choose the region, state, or the grant type

northcentral.sare.org

You should also look at past grant projects to see how your work builds on those, and use that information in your preproposal.



Here is a partial list of the NCR Partnership projects that have dealt with cover crops. You can click on the title and be taken to the Project overview, or click on the annual or final reports.

Guidelines

Proposals due October 20th by 4:00 pm CDT

Involve 3 or more farmers, with each farmer representing an independent and separate or distinct operation

Online application

Funding can cover partial salary and benefits of ag professional, on-farm research expenses, education programming, travel, etc.

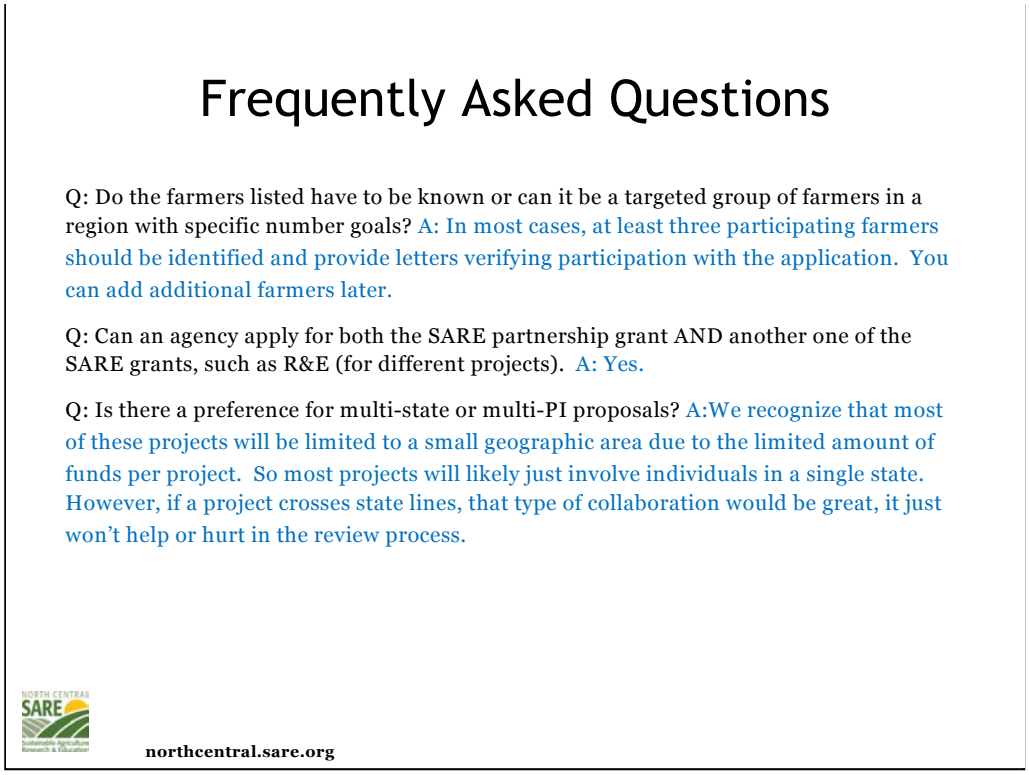
Here are some of the main points to keep in mind as you begin to write your proposal.

Proposal Sections

- **Summary**
- **Project objectives**
- **Relevance to sustainable ag and regional concerns**
- **Proposed activities, including outreach plan**
- **Role of ag professionals, farmers or ranchers**
- **Previous research on the topic**
- **Outcomes and impact**
- **Budget and budget justification**
- **Attach resumes, signature page, letters from participating farmers**
- **You will need to include an animal welfare statement (if applicable) but can wait until funded**

Photo courtesy NRCS

These are the specific sections of the proposal that you'll be expected to complete in the online grant proposal application. If you input directly into the online system, be sure to save often.



We presented a webinar about the Partnership Grant program that went through the preceding slides and information, then addressed questions from participants. We transcribed the questions and answers on the next five slides. Following those slides we'll present information about applying through the new online system.

FAQ(cont.)

- Q: Can we be awarded for both the Partnership grant and the R&E? A: Yes, obviously not for the same exact work, but for different aspects of a project. If you submit different aspects of a project into both programs, you should try to propose the work so that it can be done regardless of whether the related project is funded in the other grant program. Reviewers tend to be negative about funding a project that depends on receiving additional funding from another source.
- Q: Will you fund process … leadership development projects? A: The Partnership grant program is intended to be more about on-farm research, demonstration, or education. There could potentially be a leadership component to a project, but a project focused solely on leadership development would probably not fare well. That might be a better fit with another grant program.
- Q: Is matching funding of any kind required? A: No, no matching funds required.
- Q: Would prior SARE funding for work that is related raise or lower an applicant in the priority considerations? A: It would not lower its competitiveness unless reviewers felt the work had already been accomplished. Reviewers like to see work that builds on previous work.

FAQ (cont.)

- Q: If the project can secure match, financial or labor, will that increase chances of award? A: We do not request matching fund information or give points for matching funds in the review process. It might influence an individual reviewer slightly if matching funds are available, but we don't focus on that at all in the review process. Do not include matching funds in your submitted budget, since it would then be a part of the contract and included in the accounting.
- Q: Would this be an appropriate project be for farmers to get better at on-farm data collection? A: Yes.
- Q: What are the key distinctions between the Partnership Grant, and the Farmer/Rancher Grant? Is it mainly the Ag Professional requirement? A. Yes.
- Q: What led to these grants? A: Provided a better opportunity for ag educators who work closely with multiple farmers to apply for smaller grants to try out an idea. Non-farmers or non-ranchers are not eligible to be the lead in the Farmer-Rancher grant program. It also allows a third party to handle the grant funds without the tax burden that a farmer-rancher grant recipient has. We have also found that more and more field/county extension educators and other types of educators are needing to get grants to support projects, and these types of smaller grants are well suited for those individuals who might not have the time or ability to compete for and manage a larger USDA grant project.

FAQ (cont.)

- Q: Is overhead allowed or not allowed? A: Up to 10 percent of total federal funds as Indirect Costs are allowed.
- Q: Can one org/professional submit more than one proposal? A: Yes.
- Q: Is it expected that the entire project should be completed within the time frame, or is it OK to be more of a feasibility study or pilot for a larger project later? A: The deliverables for the proposed project should be accomplished within the time frame—you might state in the narrative that pending the results, you expect longer term outcomes in projects that will follow.
- Q: Can any of the funding be used for animals? A: Yes, 50% of livestock can be covered. However, it must be clear how the purchase of livestock (or equipment) is really contributing to achieving the goals and deliverables on the project. This funding is not intended to simply help a small group of beginning farmers or others get into livestock production, for example.

FAQ (cont.)

- Q: Can funding cover honey bees? A: Can pay 100 percent for honey bees—not considered livestock in this instance.
- Q: Is a bee keeper considered to be a farmer? A: Yes.
- Q: If a nonprofit is a farm and education center, could it apply for both grants? The farm is a CSA - profitable but also does training of interns and area farmers. A: Yes, but you need to have involvement of three farmers/ranchers that have separate enterprises for Partnership grant. If the work is only being done on one farm, make it very clear how the other farmers are substantially involved in the project, such as helping with planning and delivering education programs or planting the research trials, etc. For Farmer-Rancher, as long as the person submitting the proposal is a farmer/rancher, they can apply.
- Q: Would monitoring equipment be allowed? A: Yes, as long as it falls within the budget limits.

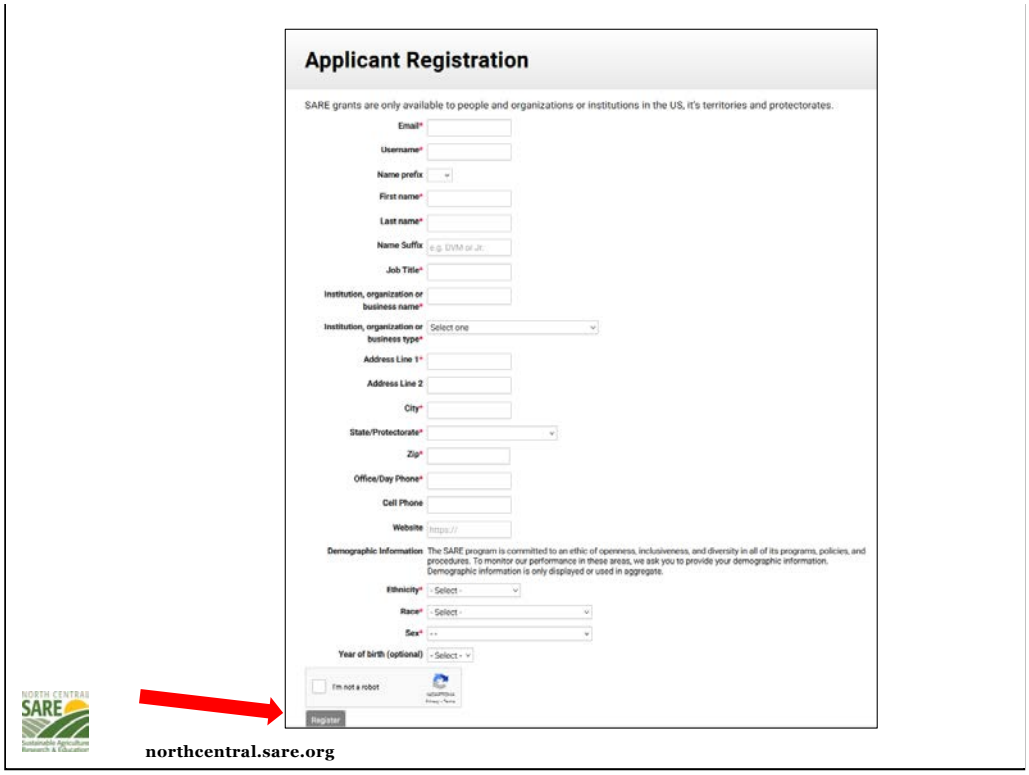
https://projects.sare.org/

northcentral.sare.org

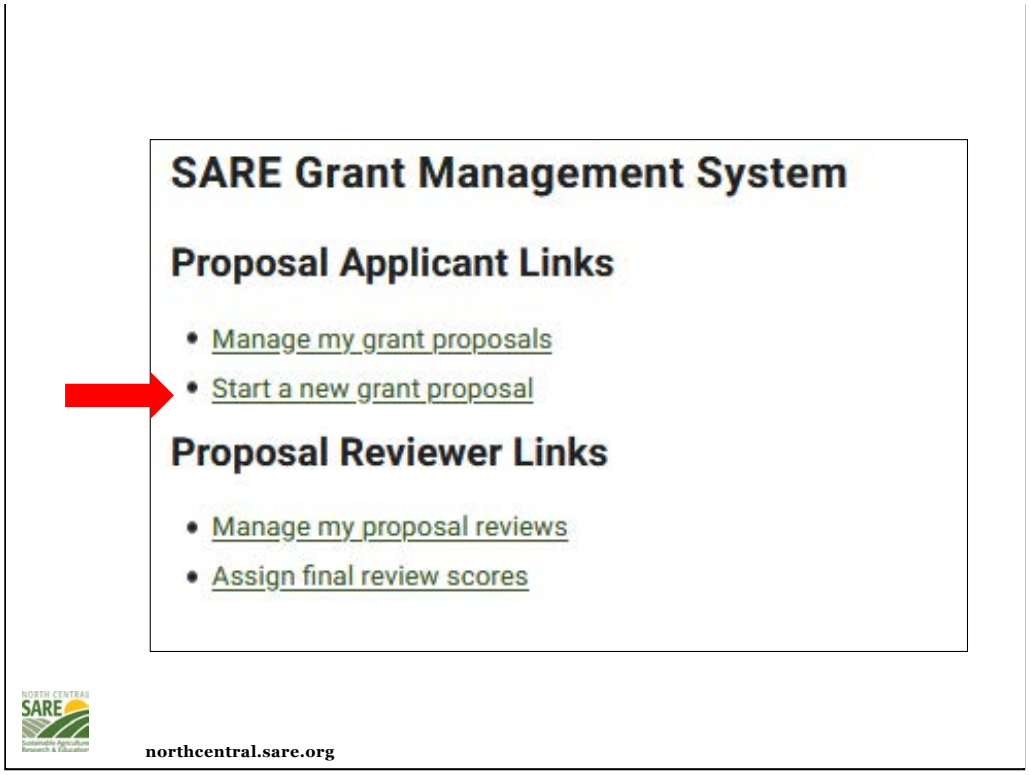
The next set of slides are screenshots from the online application system.

If you've never had a SARE grant before, you'll first need to create an account and complete your user profile. Go to projects.sare.org and click on "create an account"

If you've had a SARE grant previously and filed reports in this system, your profile will already be in the system and you can log in with the information you used for reporting.

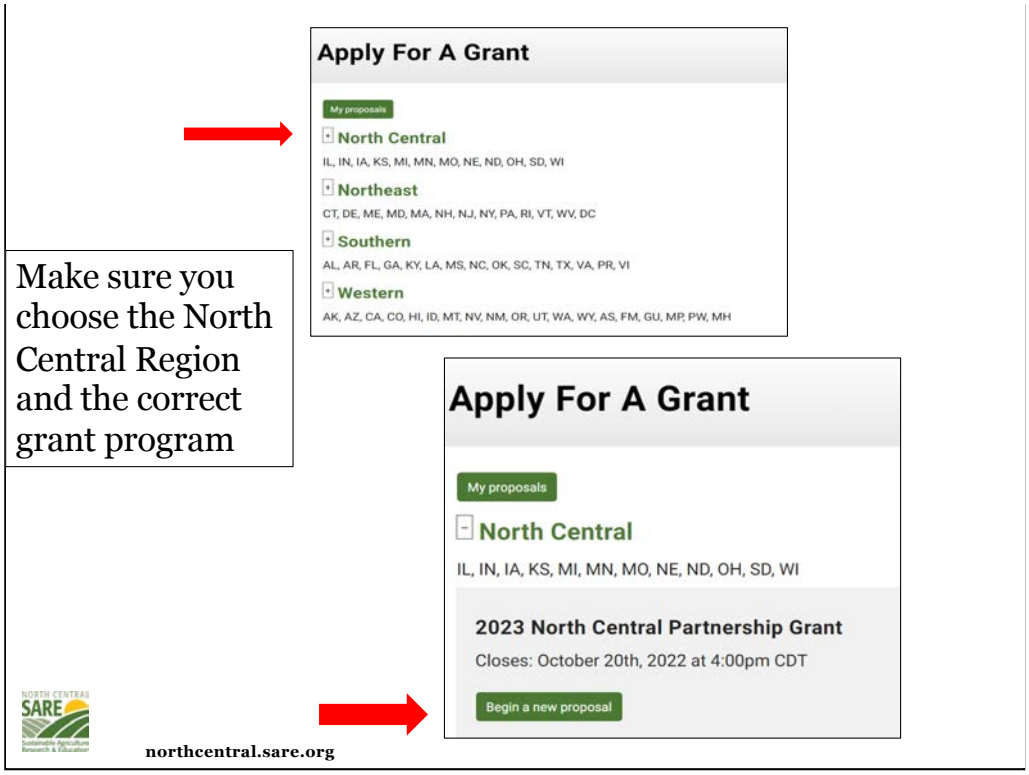


To register as a new applicant, complete the requested information—note that we ask for demographic information the first time you use the system. Your demographic information is only aggregated with other proposal demographic information. The people reviewing proposals or determining the proposals funded will not have access to your demographic information. When you've finished, click on register



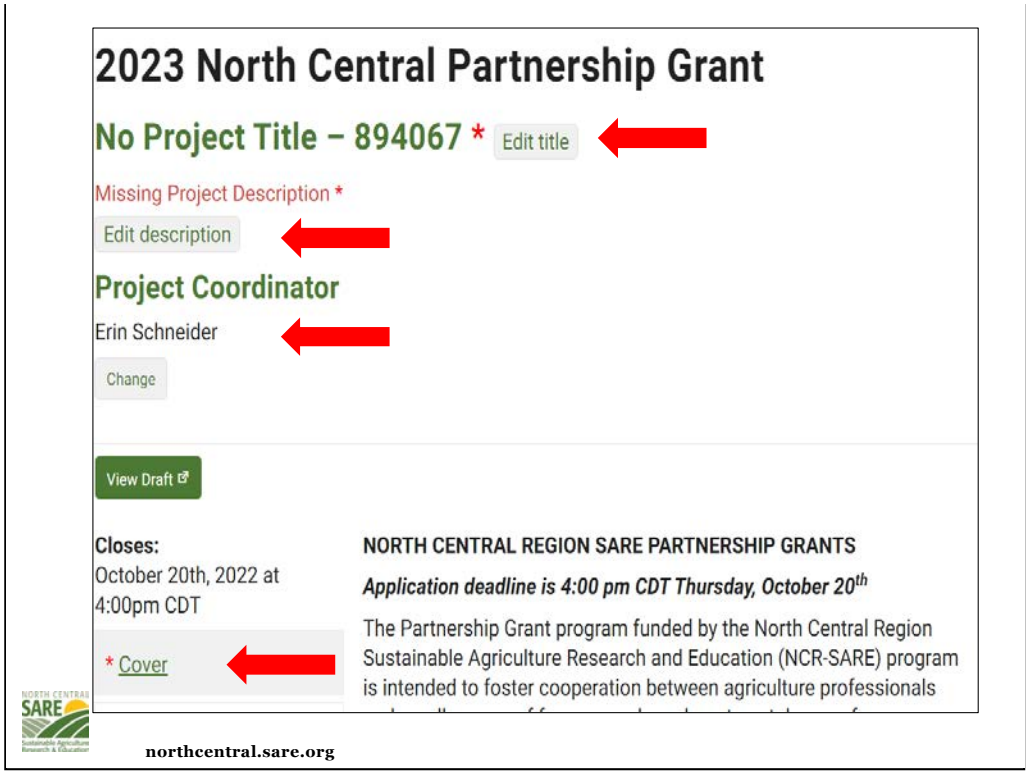
Once you log in, you'll see this screen. Under projects, you'll see a list of all projects you've been associated with. Under the proposal Applicant Links, you'll see a link to manage applications. This is for you to edit proposals you've started but not submitted.

Click on "Start a new grant proposal".

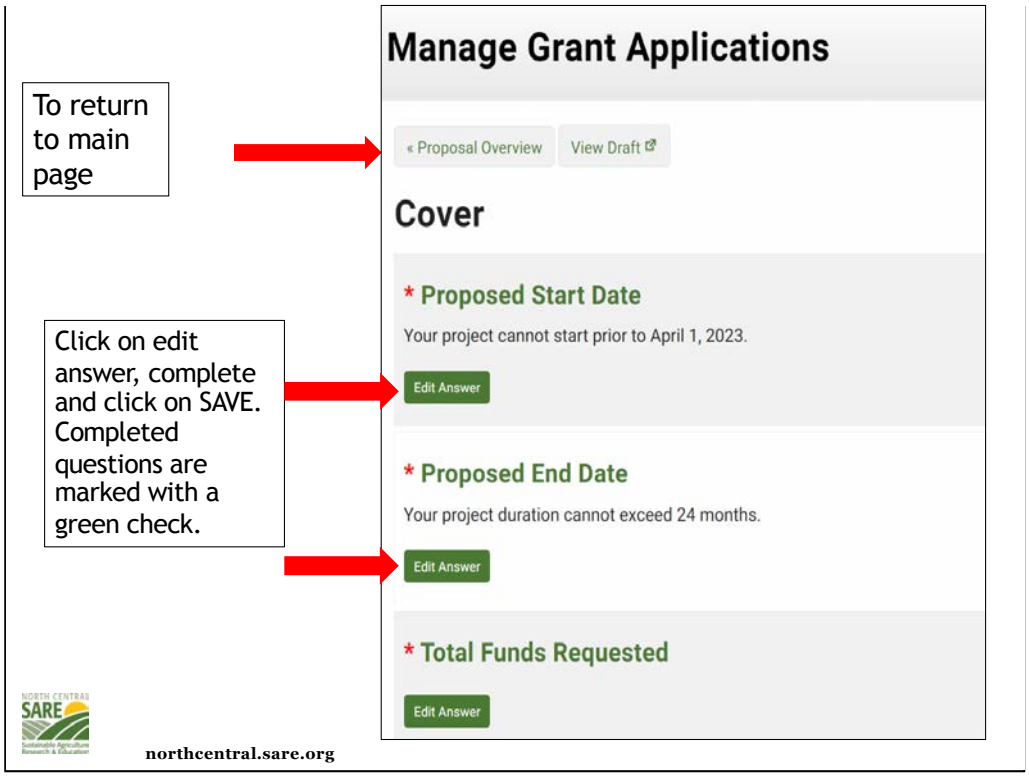


You will see a list of all open grant applications, for all regions.

Make sure you choose the correct grant program and the North Central Region. You will be completing the 2023 North Central Partnership Grant proposal application.



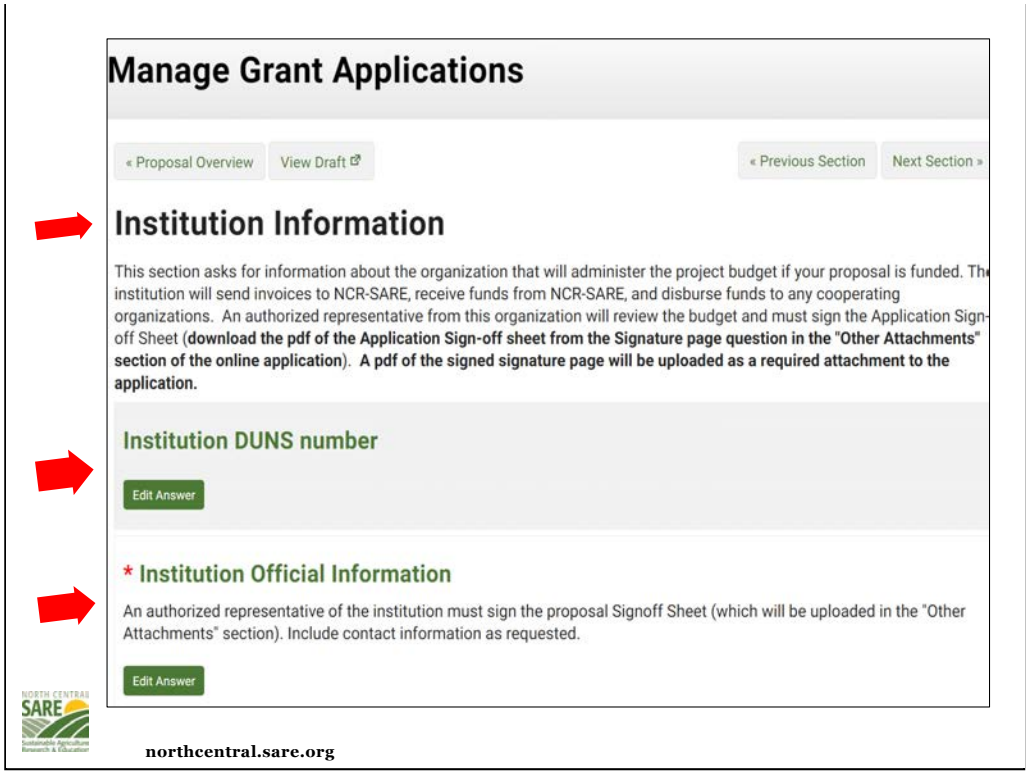
Enter the title and brief project description (less than 160 characters). Then click on "cover"



Answer each question by clicking on “edit answer” and saving your answer.

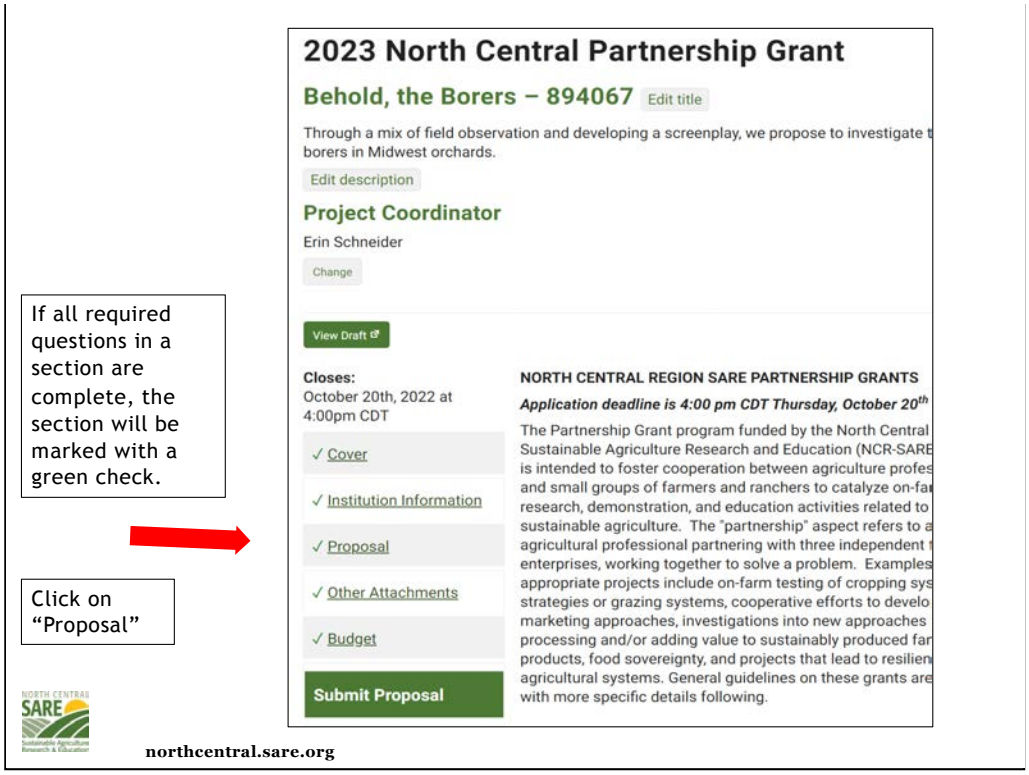
Questions marked with a red asterisk must be completed.

Once you’ve completed the cover page information, or at any time, you can click on “Proposal Overview” to go back to the main page.



Click on Institution information and complete the requested information. Your Institution Official will be the person responsible for administering grants for your organization. You will be downloading a form that you complete this information as well, and getting a signature from the person named.

Click on “Proposal Overview” to return to main page.

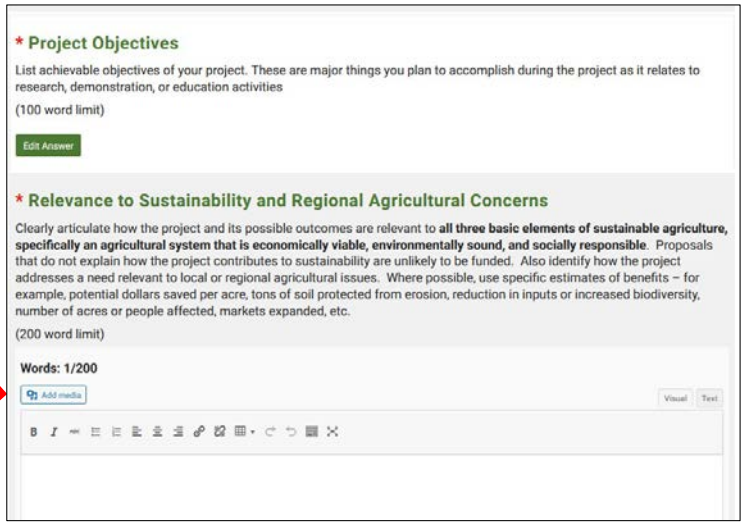


Once all required questions in a section are complete, the section will be marked with a green check.

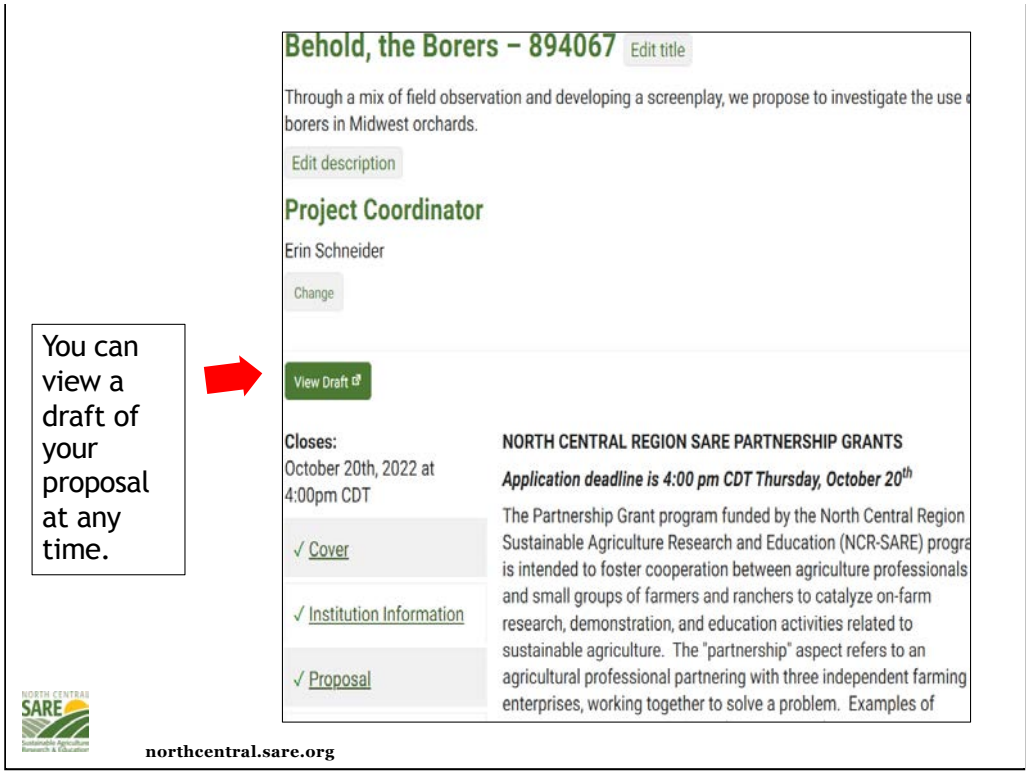
Click on "Proposal" to enter information in the main body of the proposal.

Some sections allow you to add images or tables. Click on “add media”.

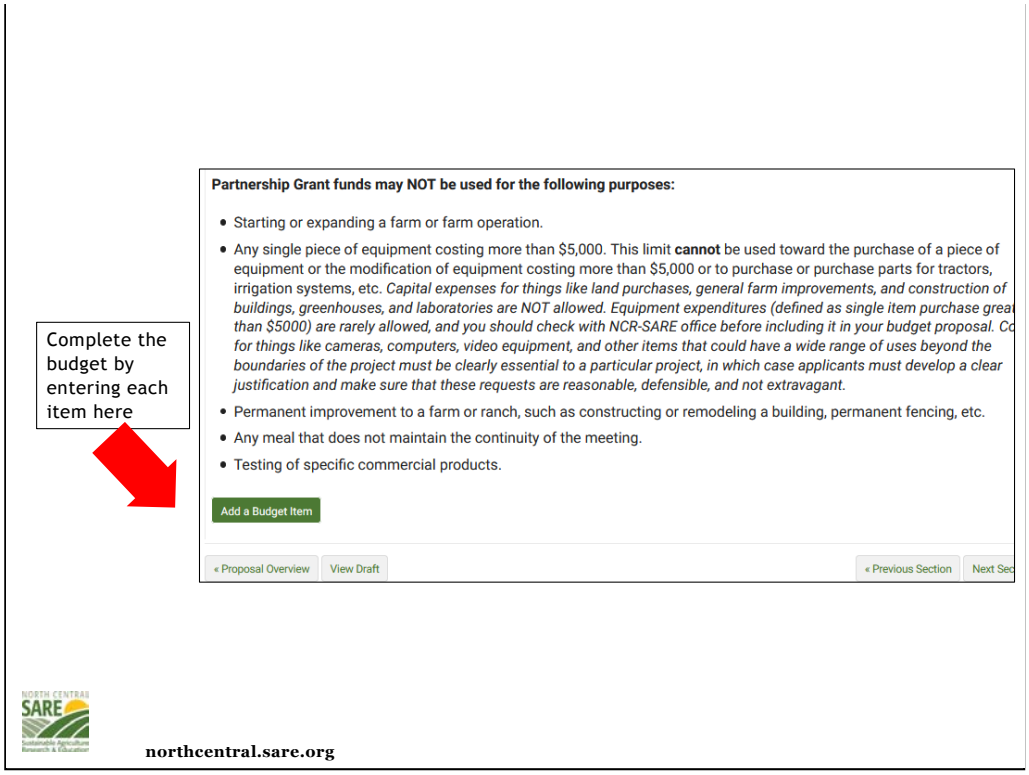
Limit images/table to the equivalent of one two-sided page.



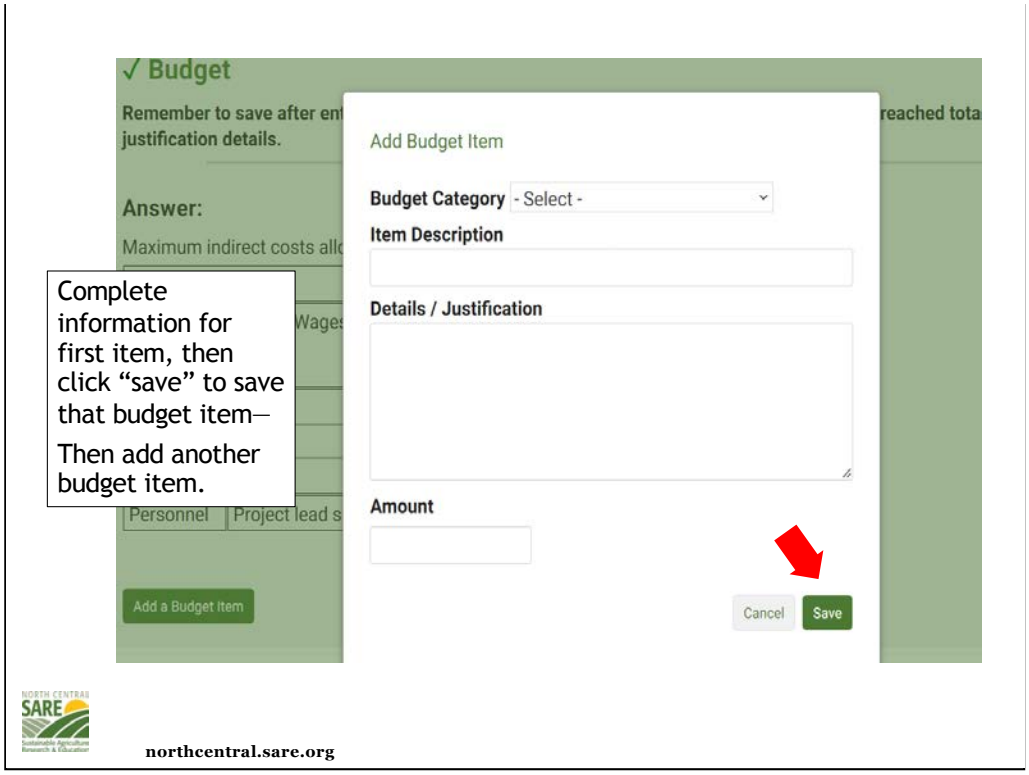
You will enter the body of your proposal here. Note that most sections have word limits. You can add images or tables in sections that have an “add media” button, but please limit your images to no more than one page (front and back).



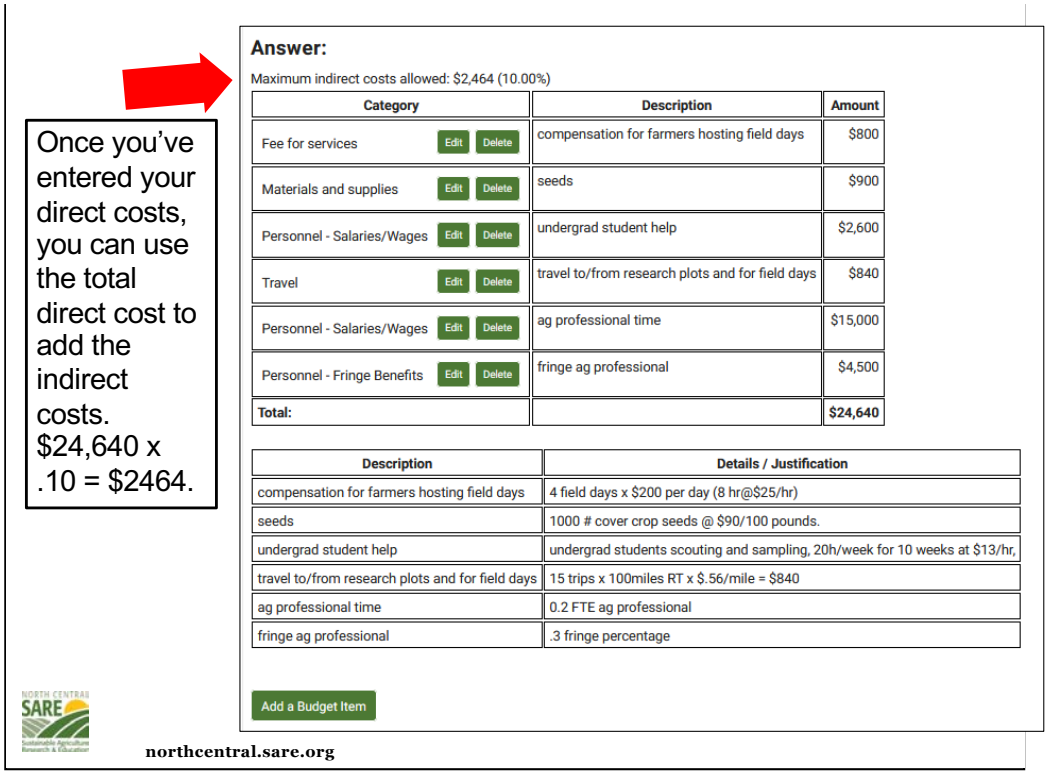
To return to the main screen. Click on “proposal overview”. To view or share your draft proposal, click on “View draft”



You will enter each item in the budget.



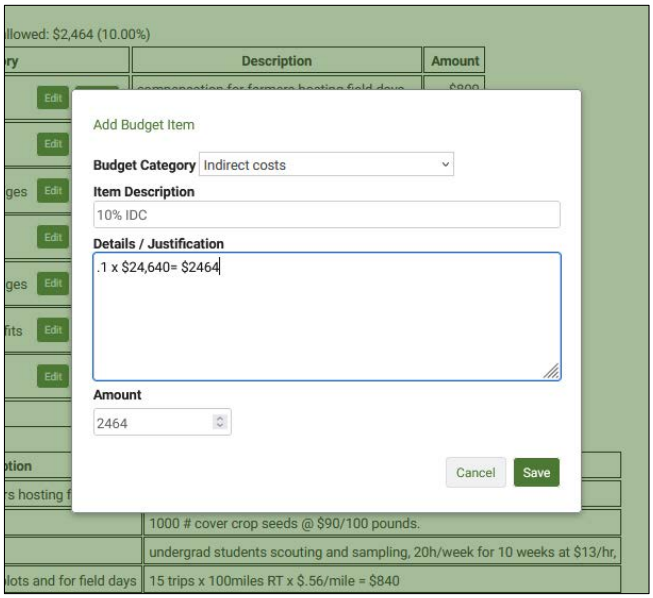
Select the major budget category from the drop down list, provide a brief item description, provide a more detailed budget justification for how you arrived at that number, as described in the instructions, and the total amount. Save each budget item as you enter it, then enter the next budget item.



You'll see a table with the simple item description and the amount, and a separate table below that provides the more detailed justification.

When you've added in all your direct costs, use the total to calculate indirect costs. Multiply the direct cost total by .10 to get the maximum amount of indirect costs that can be charged to the grant. In this example, that will be $2464.

Add $2464 as a budget item as “Indirect Costs”—10 percent of total Direct Costs.



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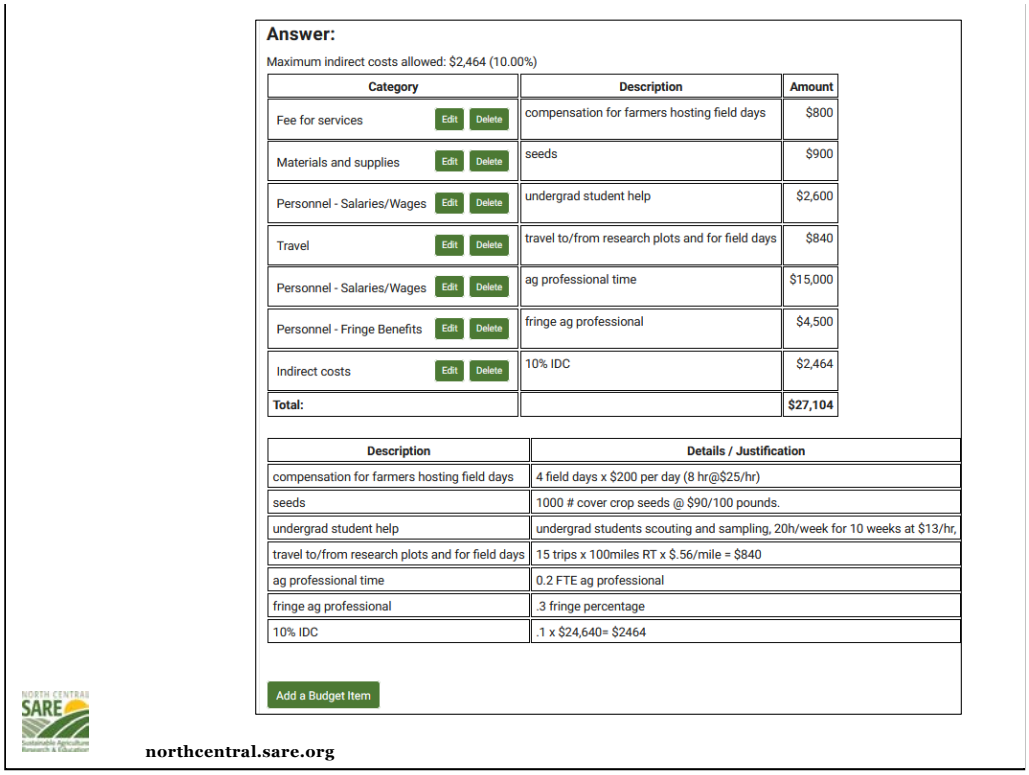
Add $2464 as a budget item, identified as Indirect Costs from the drop down menu.



Answer:

Maximum indirect costs allowed: $2,464 (10.00%)

Category	Description	Amount
Fee for services Edit Delete	compensation for farmers hosting field days	$800
Materials and supplies Edit Delete	seeds	$900
Personnel - Salaries/Wages Edit Delete	undergrad student help	$2,600
Travel Edit Delete	travel to/from research plots and for field days	$840
Personnel - Salaries/Wages Edit Delete	ag professional time	$15,000
Personnel - Fringe Benefits Edit Delete	fringe ag professional	$4,500
Indirect costs Edit Delete	10% IDC	$2,464
Total:		**$27,104**

Description	Details / Justification
compensation for farmers hosting field days	4 field days x $200 per day (8 hr@$25/hr)
seeds	1000 # cover crop seeds @ $90/100 pounds.
undergrad student help	undergrad students scouting and sampling, 20h/week for 10 weeks at $13/hr,
travel to/from research plots and for field days	15 trips x 100miles RT x $.56/mile = $840
ag professional time	0.2 FTE ag professional
fringe ag professional	.3 fringe percentage
10% IDC	.1 x $24,640= $2464

Add a Budget Item

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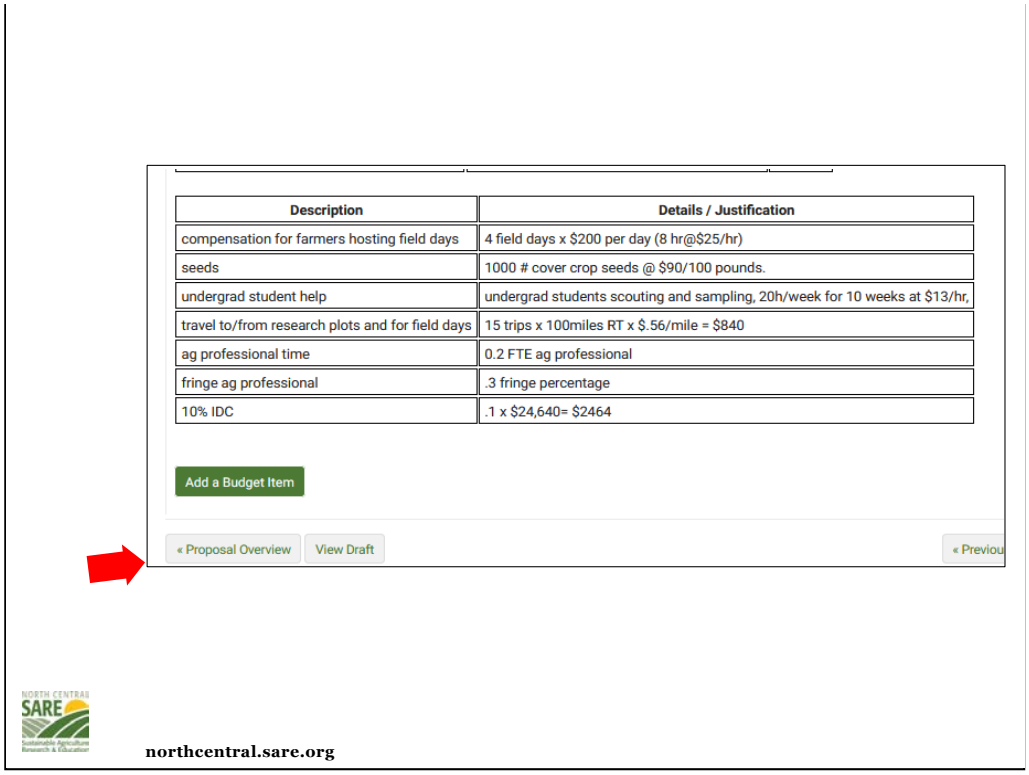
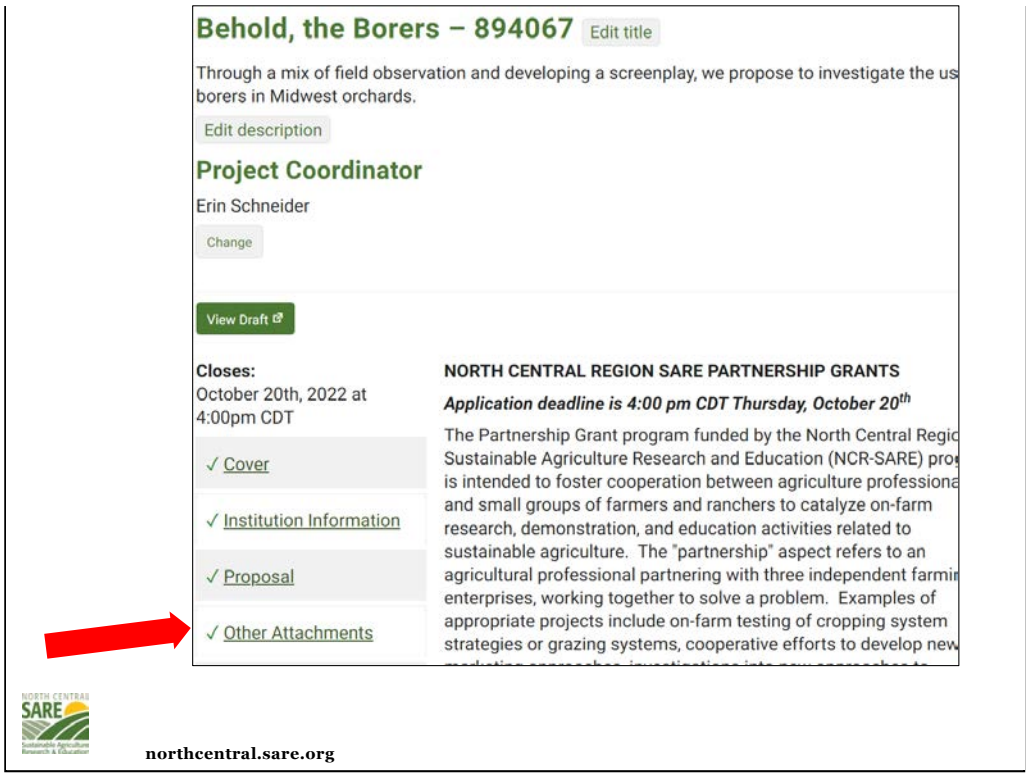
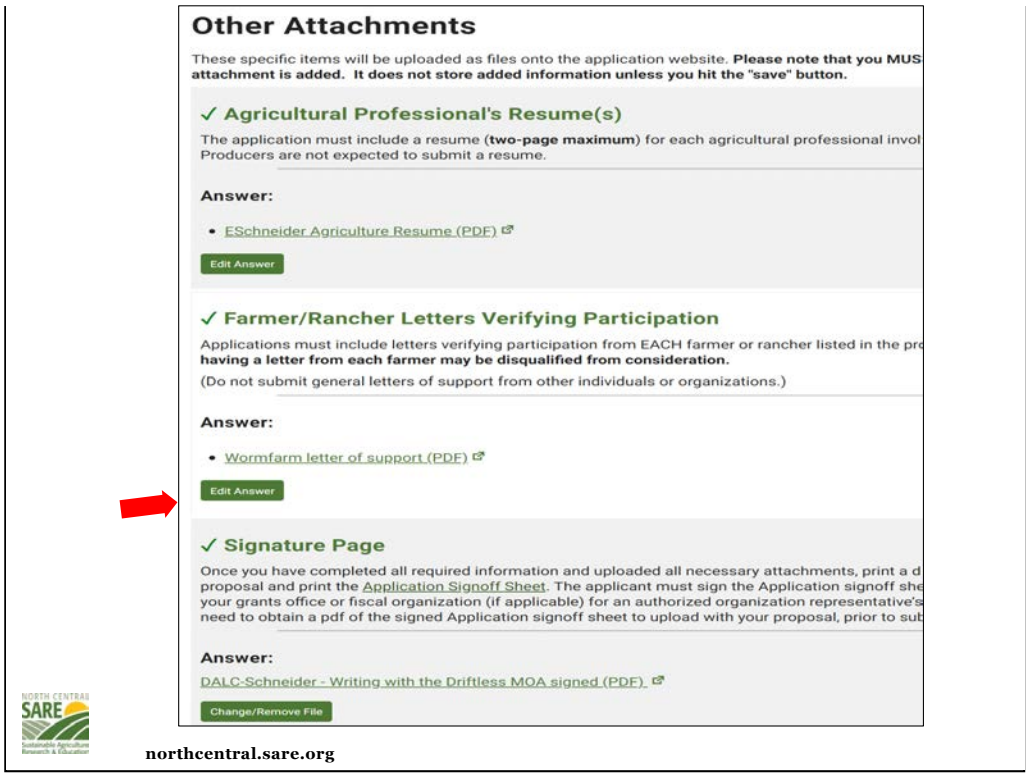
This is how your budget question will look.



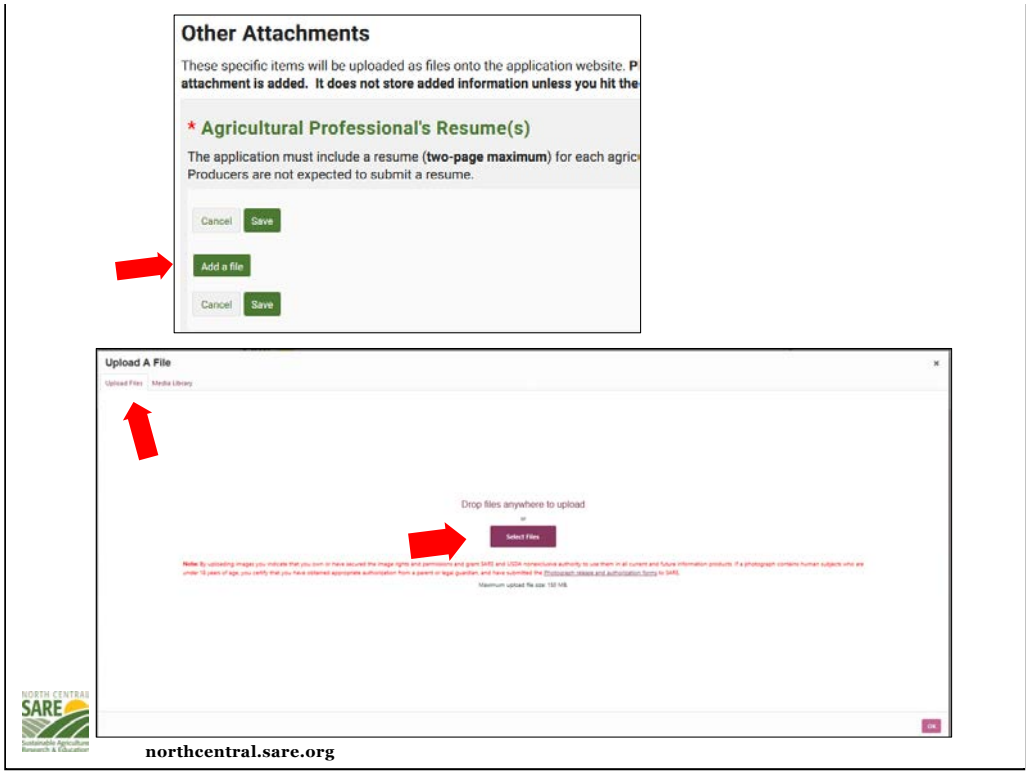
To return to this proposal's main page, click on "Proposal Overview"



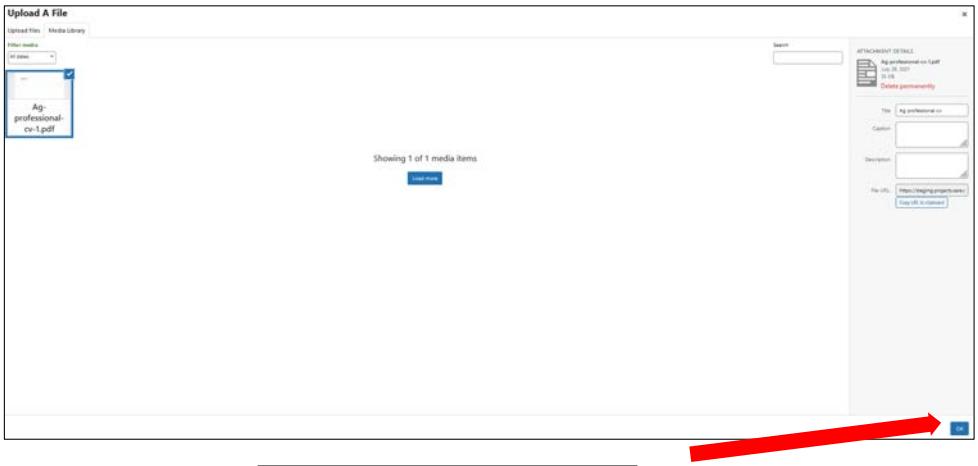
Go to the “other attachments” section.



Click on the appropriate sections to upload Ag professional resumes and Farmer/Rancher letters verifying participation.



Click on “add a file”, then click on “add file” again on the next screen to upload from your computer, and click on “select files” (drag and drop from media library if you have images loaded there.)



Click on “ok” to upload file

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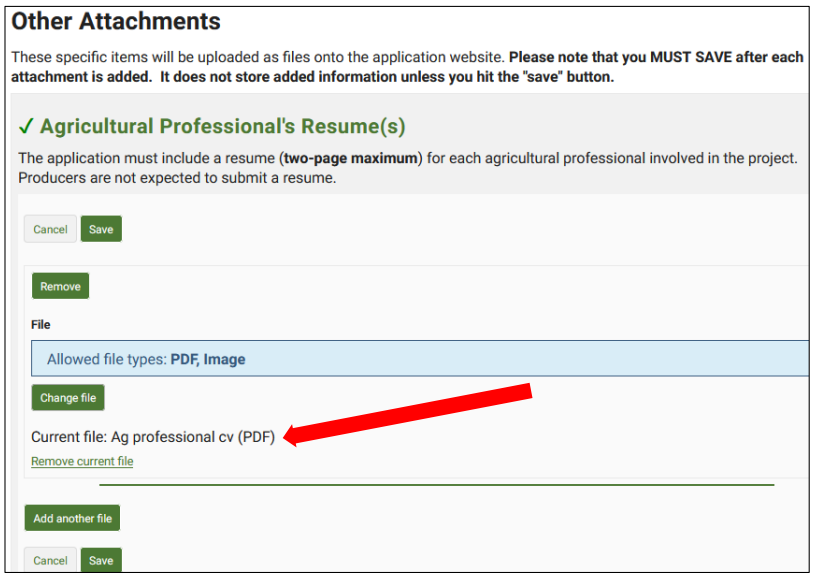
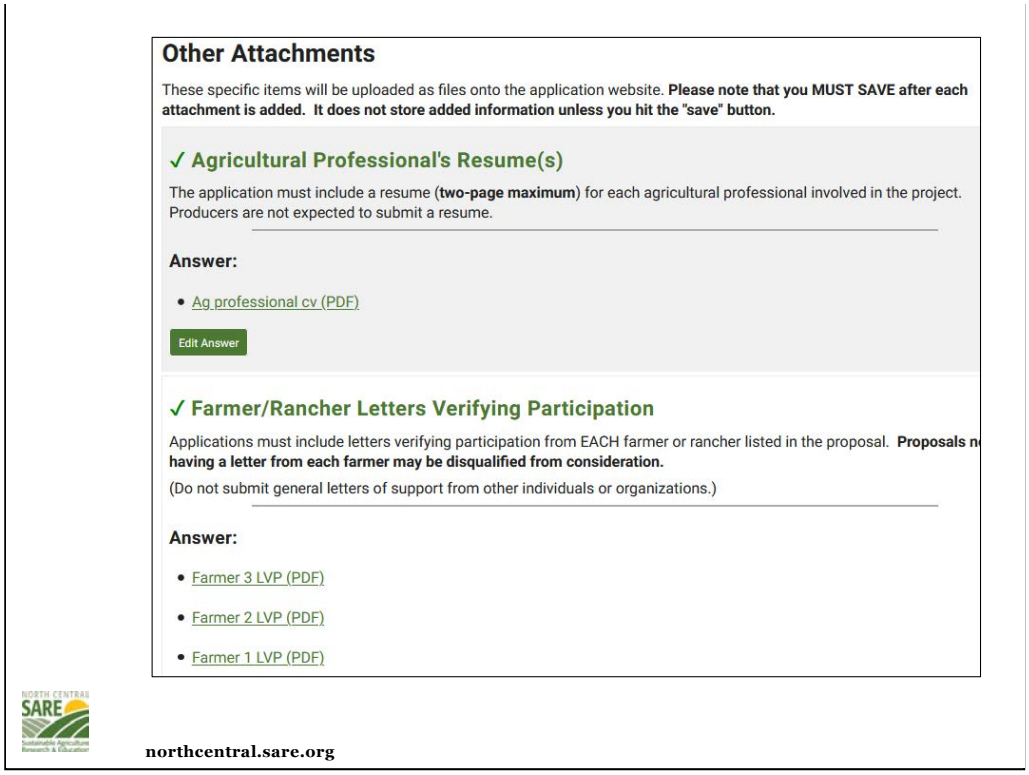
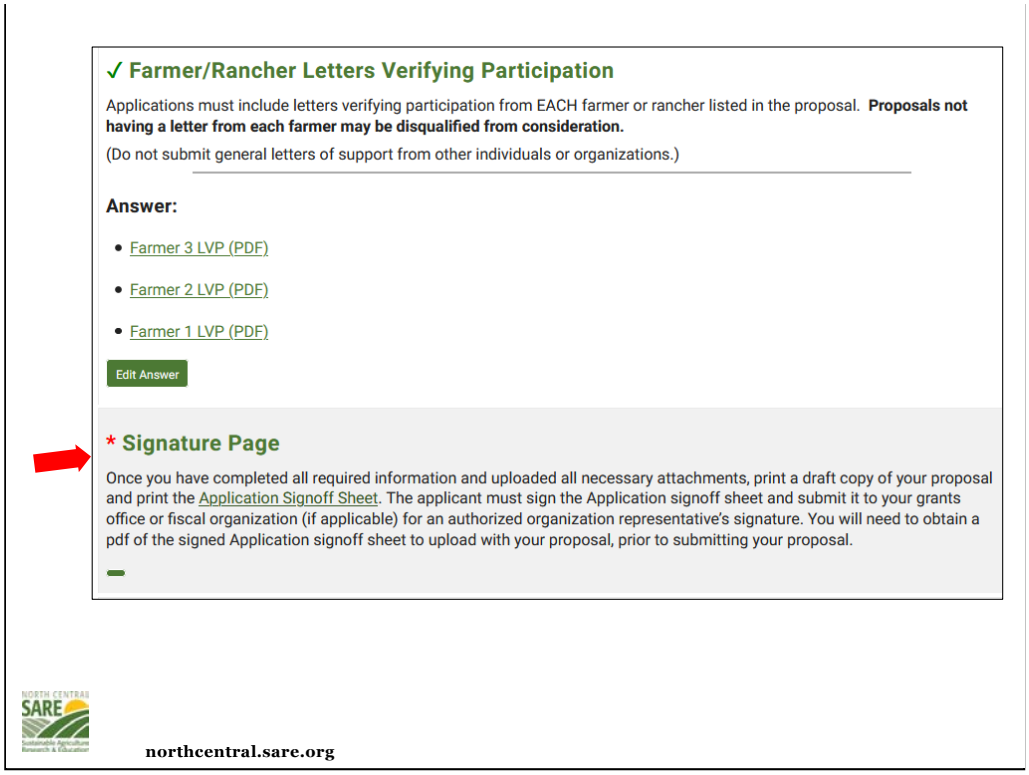
On the far right you should see the title of the uploaded file. You can provide a caption if you’d like, otherwise it will use the file name. You must click the box “ok” in the lower right hand corner to upload your file into the media file



It will have added your file as Current file. Note that you can change the file or remove it. You can click on add another file to add a second c.v.

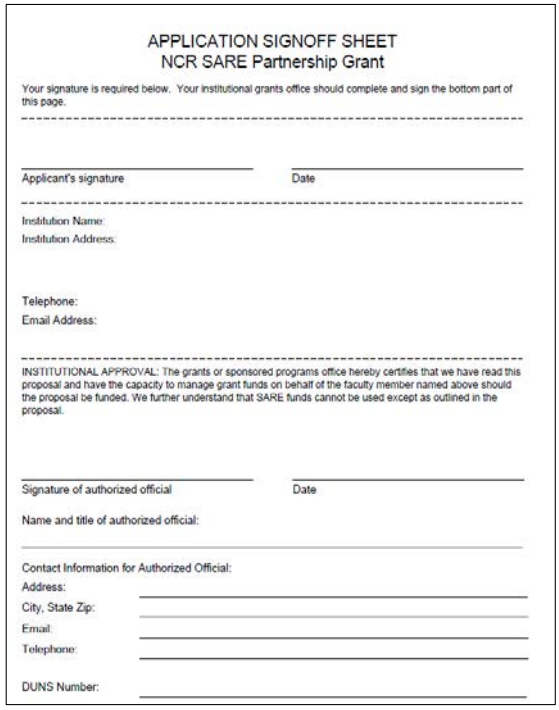


In this shot, you'll see I've uploaded 1 cv for an ag professionals, and 3 farmer letters verifying participation.



Next—print off the Application Signoff Sheet pdf, which is linked in the signature page question.

Signoff Sheet: Print, sign, and submit to your institution's grant office to complete and sign.
You will upload pdf of pages with all signatures in the signature question of the "other attachments" section.



APPLICATION SIGNOFF SHEET
NCR SARE Partnership Grant

Your signature is required below. Your institutional grants office should complete and sign the bottom part of this page.

Applicant's signature _____ Date _____

Institution Name:
Institution Address:

Telephone:
Email Address:

INSTITUTIONAL APPROVAL: The grants or sponsored programs office hereby certifies that we have read this proposal and have the capacity to manage grant funds on behalf of the faculty member named above should the proposal be funded. We further understand that SARE funds cannot be used except as outlined in the proposal.

Signature of authorized official _____ Date _____

Name and title of authorized official:

Contact Information for Authorized Official:
Address:
City, State Zip:
Email:
Telephone:

DUNS Number:

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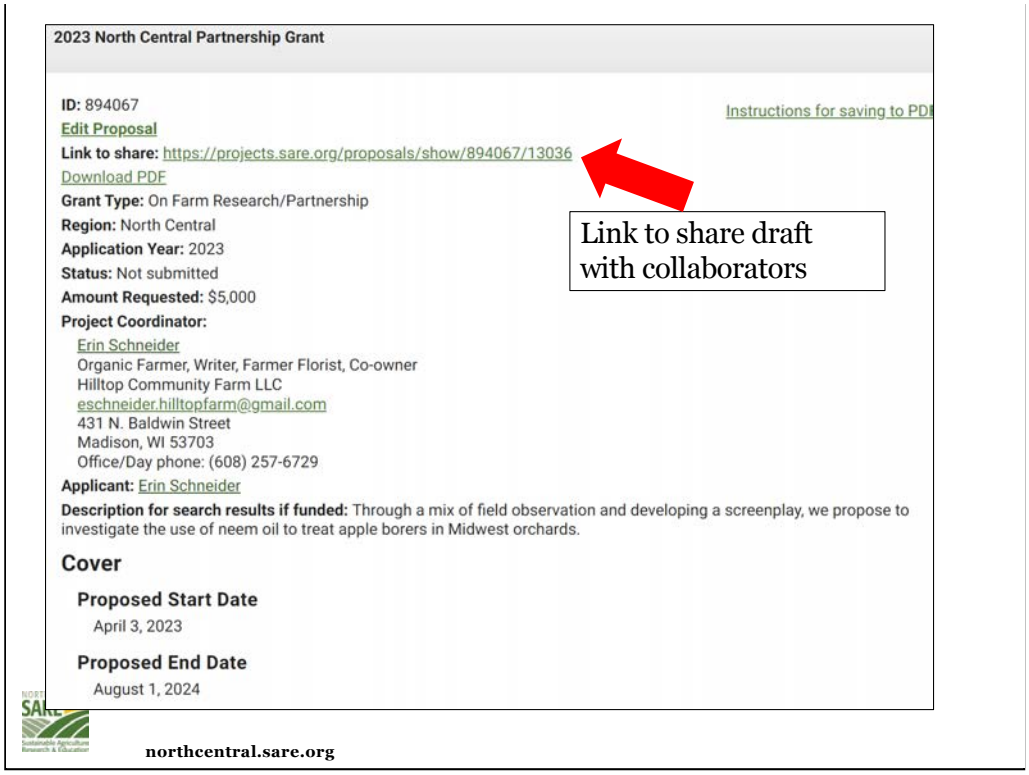
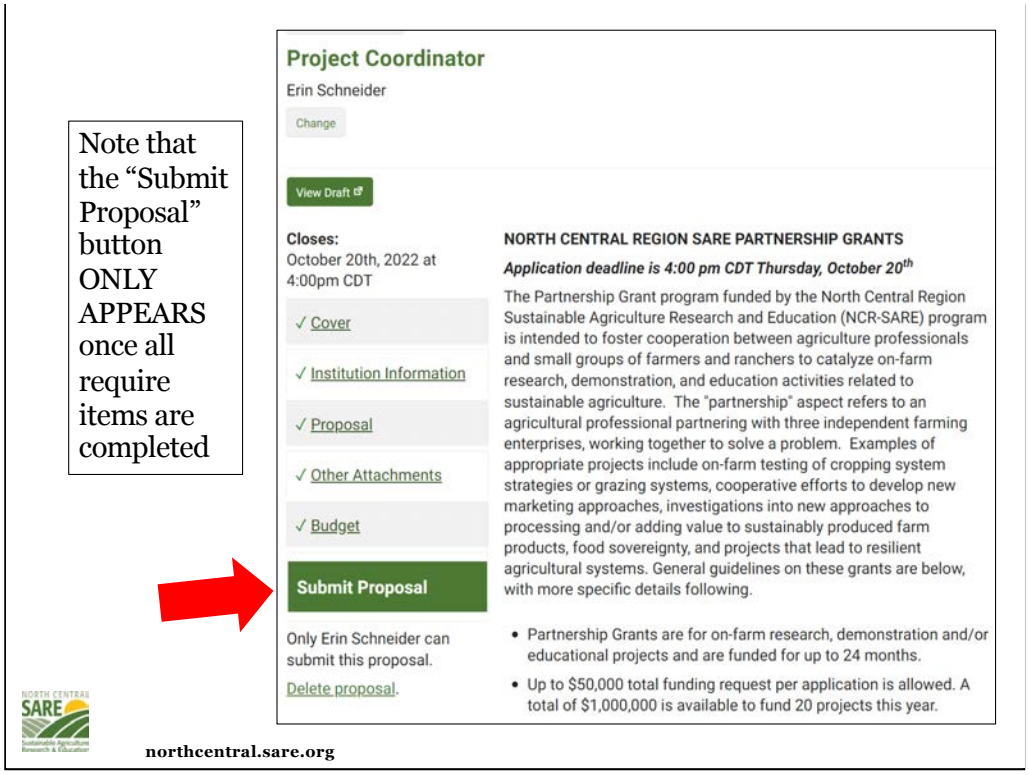
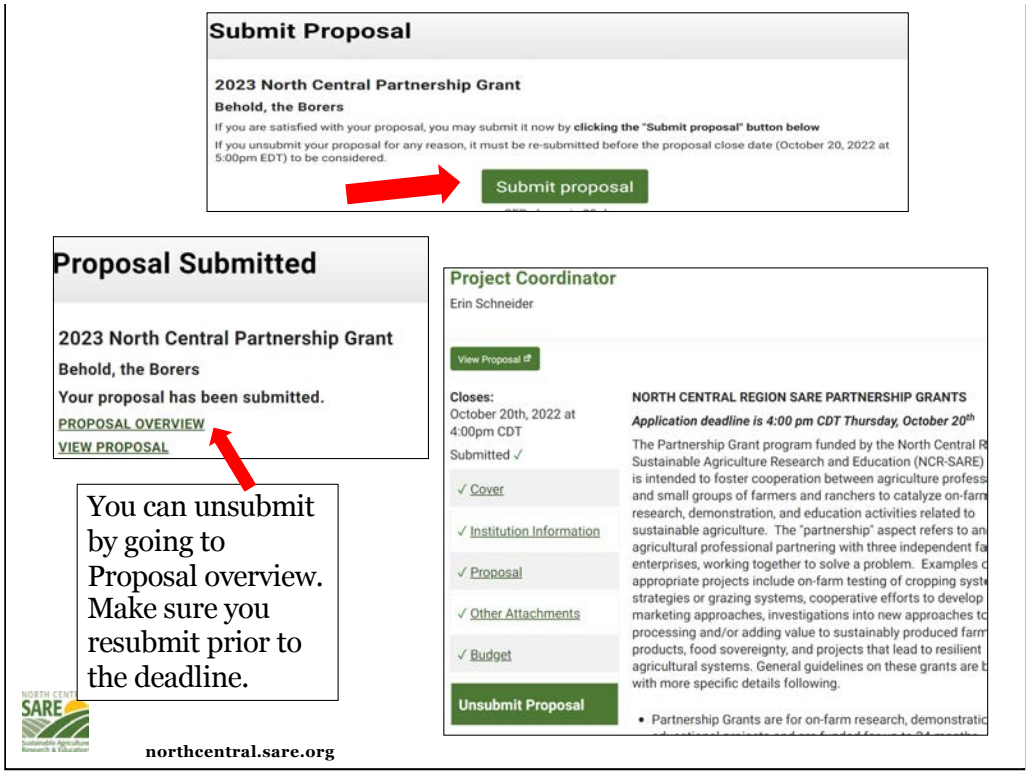
Complete the institution information (or have your authorized organizational representative complete) and submit with the draft of your proposal to your grants office or person who is authorized to sign for your organization. Ask them to provide a pdf of the signed page, and you will then upload that to your proposal prior to submission. This signed form must be submitted by the closing date, so allow extra time for your organization to review your proposal and sign off. Some grant offices require a week or more to complete this.



You can share the draft when you're ready. This will not allow them to edit, but they'll be able to view the draft.

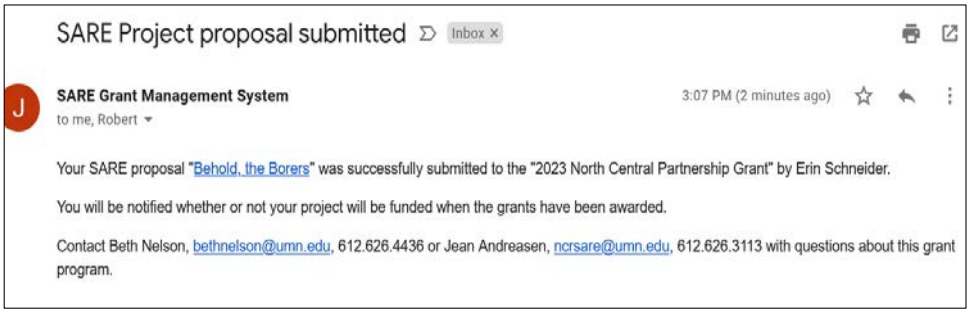


Once you've uploaded the signature page, and all required sections are complete(green check marks by each section), the "Submit Proposal" button will appear. If you don't see the submit buttton, you are missing a required component. Check to see that you've completed the title and the project description, those are often overlooked. Once you see the submit proposal button, you can proceed to submit your proposal.



Submit proposal. Note that you do have the option to "unsubmit" if you discover a mistake or need to edit further, but **you must resubmit prior to the proposal deadline**.

Once you've submitted your proposal, you should receive a confirmation email. If you don't, check the email address you used in the system to make sure it is correct. If that's not the issue, notify us.



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You'll receive a confirmation email—if you don't, check the email address you used in the system. If there's a mistake, correct it, and then let us know so we can check and make sure that your proposal is submitted.

Timeline 2023 Partnership Program

Oct. 20, 2022	Proposals due online by 4:00 pm CDT
Early Feb. 2023	Applicants notified
April 1, 2023	Funds available to applicants
March 1, 2024	*2022* Annual report due
Project end date	Final report due 60 days after project end date

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This is the timeline for the 2023 Partnership grant program. Your proposal, including the signed authorization, must be submitted online by Thursday, October 20th , at 4:00 p.m. CDT. They'll be reviewed and a recommendation made to the NCR-SARE Administrative Council in January, and all applicants will be notified whether or not they are awarded in February. We anticipate that funds will be available for you to begin your project April 1, 2023.

Beth Nelson and Rob Myers are co-coordinating the grant program, so feel free to contact either one of us if you have questions about preparing a proposal for this grant program. You can also contact the main SARE office with questions. We look forward to receiving your proposal.