

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Communications Director
Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education
Submission Deadline 15 January 2016

The Administrative Council of the Western Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program announces the Request for Proposals for communication and outreach services to be provided by a Communication Director. The Communications Director supports both the research and professional development aspects of the program. The communications program is developed and operated under the direction of the WSARE Administrative Council and will report to the WSARE Administrative Council. However, the Communication Director operates independently and maintains programmatic control and discretion over how the work is carried out.

Expectations for the Communications and Outreach Program include:

Creation of WSARE publications through writing, editing, overseeing graphic design, printing and distribution. Publications include:

- Monthly e-newsletter (maintain newsletter address database)
- Semi-annual printed newsletter
- Project profiles
- Fact sheets based on WSARE funded research projects
- Brochures
- Presentations
- Assess impact of publications (IRB approved protocol)
- Announcements of calls for proposals and funded projects

Maintain the WSARE website (westernsare.org) using content management software

- Update on-line project profiles
- Maintain online 'Learning Center' materials on westernsare.org site
- Update proposal submission guidelines and dates
- State PDP information and resources
- Coordinate work of web designers
- Present website analytics to Administrative Council

Conduct media outreach (traditional and social)

- Write feature articles regarding WSARE projects and submit for publication in Western Ag trade publications (printed and/or electronic)
- Write and distribute press releases regarding funded and completed projects
- Develop relationships with western ag media personnel
- Maintain press database
- Develop and distribute content for Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, etc.
- Assist funded projects with their media outreach

Coordinate conference and workshop opportunities

- Find appropriate venues for WSARE affiliated speakers
- Identify opportunities for meeting sponsorships and booth presence and staff booths
- Give presentations
- Create display materials
- Assess impact of conference participation (IRB approved protocol)

Oversee photographic services

- Obtain non-exclusive licenses for photographs submitted by grant recipients and develop a library of project related photographs (with metadata) that can be used for education and outreach purposes.
- Take photos, select project photos, and manage stock photo library for use in publications and electronic outreach.
- Coordinate work of contract photographers/videographers
- Oversee creation of videos that highlight WSARE projects. This includes creating scripts, taking video footage, and working with videographers and participants to create excellent quality videos
- Maintain a library of video footage.

Participate in SARE affiliated meetings

- Attend annual SARE outreach meeting
- Participate in monthly national SARE Outreach conference calls
- Attend semi-annual WSARE Administrative Council Meetings
- Attend annual WSARE Staff meeting

The Communication Director must be able to travel several weeks per year in 2-3 day increments. Travel costs, including costs to attend required meetings, must be included in the proposal budget.

Application Process:

Applications must be submitted to WSARE Center, 4865 Old Main Hill, Logan, UT 84322 (wsare@usu.edu) no later than 5:00 pm MST, Friday January 15, 2016. Telephone inquiries can be made at 435-797-2257.

Individuals or groups that submit proposals must designate a lead communication specialist. They may also include the names and qualifications of other team members that would be involved in providing the services outlined above. Proposals must include:

- A signed letter of intent/application
- A sample annual communication plan for WSARE (Scope of Work)
- Writing sample from the lead communication specialist
- Portfolio of work including samples of work completed by the Specialist and/or team. The portfolio can be provided either on paper or digitally (preferred).
- A detailed budget including salaries (with hourly rate), fringes, supplies, travel and other direct costs such as printing and design. The proposal may include indirect costs up to the WSARE limit, currently at 10% MTDC.

Team members must all be eligible to work in the United States.

The successful applicant will obtain a contract executed by Utah State University. The contract will be for three years with annual renewal based on performance.

Selection Criteria:

A subcommittee of the Western SARE Administrative Council plus outside members will review all submitted applications. Top candidates will be invited to Salt Lake City for a face-to-face interview in late February.

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Quality and completeness of the annual communication plan (Scope of work)
- Quality of the work of the communication team exhibited in the portfolio
- Quality of the submitted writing sample
- Demonstrated ability of the communication team to accomplish the communication plan
- Alignment of the budget with the scope of work.

Annual evaluation for contract renewal:

In January each year the Communication Director will provide a written report summarizing the accomplishments for the prior year along with a new communication plan (scope of work) for the coming year to the Western SARE Administrative Council, Regional Coordinator, and Regional Training Coordinator. The Western Regional Coordinator and the Western Regional Training Coordinator will each provide an evaluative letter to the Administrative Council to be included in their deliberations. The Administrative Council will conduct the annual review and will communicate the results to the Communication Director and to the Host Institution (USU). The evaluative letter must include language recommending that the contract be renewed or not.

Western SARE Goals

- Promote good stewardship of the nation's natural resources by providing site-specific, regional 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 soil; conserve soil, water, energy, natural resources and fish and wildlife habitat; and maintain and improve the quality of surface and ground water.
- Enhance the quality of life of farmers and ranchers and ensure the viability of rural communities, for example, by increasing income and employment, especially profitable self-employment and innovative marketing opportunities in agricultural and rural communities.
- Protect the health and safety of those involved in food and farm systems by reducing, where feasible and practical, the use of toxic materials in agricultural production, and by optimizing on-farm resources and integrating, where appropriate, biological cycles and controls.
- Promote crop, livestock and enterprise diversification.
- Examine the regional, economic, social and environmental implications of adopting sustainable agriculture practices and systems.