

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
**Climate Smart Farming: Agriculture and
Forestry Grant**

Fiscal Year 2023 Grant Guidelines and Forms

***Application Deadline:
January 18, 2023, at 4:00pm***



**Ned Lamont, Governor
Bryan P. Hurlburt, Commissioner**

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 703
Hartford, CT 06103
www.CTGrown.gov



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Important Dates:

Applications must be received by January 18, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. Please review the “Submission Process” section of this document for additional detail on submission requirements.

Applications must be received by:
Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.

Applications will not be accepted after 4:00 p.m. on January 18, 2023.

Questions can be directed to Alison Grabarz:
Alison.Grabarz@ct.gov or (860) 713-5737

Informational Webinar:

Monday, December 19, 2022, at 10:00 a.m.

Please click on the link below to pre-register for the event:

<https://ctdoag.webex.com/weblink/register/rc3a55d409cd139bea2d1987d3a35086e>

Registered attendees will be provided the webinar information 24 hours prior to the webinar.

Grant Description

The Climate Smart Farming: Agriculture and Forestry Grant can pay or reimburse to: (1) provide technical assistance, (2) distribute grant funding to producers, (3) coordinate training programs, (4) coordinate projects that pilot or demonstrate water and land-based conservation practices, (5) create tools that help reduce barriers to accessing assistance for water or land-based conservation practices on farms, (6) establish equipment-sharing programs, or (7) other activities that will increase the number of farmers who are implementing climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices.

Funding is provided through Public Act 22-118 Sec 12(b)(70) which provides \$7 million for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, to the Department of Agriculture to support climate smart farming. The Climate Smart Farming: Agriculture and Forestry Grant and any awards are subject to limitations of state funding.

Eligible Applicants

Any agribusiness or entity, including nonprofit organization, soil and water conservation district, colleges and universities, municipality or for-profit organization in the State of Connecticut are eligible to apply.

Climate Smart Project Areas

Climate smart farming projects can be in a variety of areas including, but not limited to,

1. *Providing technical assistance: e.g.,* a college offering one on one technical assistance pertaining to climate smart farming practices to farmers.
2. *Distributing a grant to producers: e.g.,* a municipality offering a grant program to farmers withing their town to cost share equipment to implement, support, or expand climate smart agricultural practices.
3. *Coordinating training programs: e.g.,* a university coordinating a series of training programs on low till or no till.
4. *Coordinating projects that pilot or demonstrate water and land-based conservation practices: e.g.,* a water conservation district applying to implement a climate smart farming practice to fund a conversion from overhead spray to drip irrigation to show a reduction in water usage.
5. *Creating tools that help reduce barriers to accessing assistance for climate smart farming: e.g.,* a Council of Government establishing multilingual tools and services to reduce barriers and/or increase implementation for climate smart agricultural practices on farms owned by socially disadvantaged producers.
6. *Establishing equipment-sharing programs: e.g.,* a farmer cooperative establishing equipment-sharing or equipment buying programs to enable farmers to implement or expand climate smart agricultural practices.
7. Other activities that will increase the number of farmers who are implementing climate-smart agriculture and forestry practices. Examples of which include, but are not limited to:
 - a. A farm applying to improve manure management storage and reduce run off.
 - b. An aquaculture producer converts dated coolers/freezers and ice makers to energy efficient equipment.
 - c. A university purchases equipment to enable additional testing and research around the impact of climate smart agriculture practices.

d. A farm installs solar panels on buildings to offset electricity usage for the farm.

Other Eligibility Criteria:

- All agricultural commodities can participate: including aquaculture, agriculture and forestry.
- All production types will be supported: conventional/organic, indoor/outdoor, soil/water, urban/rural, etc.
- Projects on public or privately own land are allowed, subject to obtaining any needed permissions and permitting.

For examples of climate smart agriculture practices please see those practices identified by [USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#). [These include the areas of:](#)

- **Soil Health** – Reducing emissions and enhancing soil carbon sequestration.
- **Improved Nitrogen Management** – Implementing the 4Rs of nitrogen management and reducing nitrous oxide, a potent greenhouse gas. The 4Rs are Right Source, Right Rate, Right Time and Right Place.
- **Improved Livestock Waste Management Systems** – Reducing potent methane emissions from manure.
- **Enhanced Grazing Land Management** – Reducing emissions and building soil carbon stocks in grazing systems.
- **Improved Agroforestry, Forestry and Upland Wildlife Habitat** – Building carbon stocks in perennial biomass and soils.
- **Restored Disturbed Lands** – Improving the quality of previously mined or degraded lands to increase soil and perennial biomass carbon stocks.

Practices not specified by USDA NRCS shall still be considered if the need, data, and reporting to justify the practice(s) are reflected in the proposed project.

Each project should address a specific problem, interest, or need regarding climate smart farming practices or the implementation of climate smart practice for Connecticut’s agriculture industry.

Funding Tiers

DoAg plans to issue awards in varying amounts for program implementation from May 1, 2023, up through May 1, 2028.

There will be four application funding tiers:

Tier 1: \$100,000 to \$249,999
Project duration: Up to 18 months

Tier 2: \$250,000 to \$499,999
Project duration: 18 months up to 2 years

Tier 3: \$500,000 to \$999,999
Project duration: 2-3 years

Tier 4: \$1,000,000 and up
Project duration: 3-5 years

Expenses & Payment

There is **no match is requirement** for this grant.

The following are examples of **eligible expenses** that grant funds can cover provided they are directly related to the project:

- Multi-media marketing expenses
- Direct administrative costs
- Equipment purchases and rentals to support implementation of climate smart farming practices
- Consultant, contractor, and attorney fee expenses
- Stipends, honorariums
- State/local/federal permits
- Indirect or overhead expense is allowed; however, it must be stated as an overall percentage for the project. The percentage may impact the competitiveness of an application.

The following are **ineligible expenses** that will not be funded by the grant:

- Any expense incurred prior to contract execution
- Land acquisition/mortgages
- Cost of borrowing (points and other fees)
- Expenses related to establishing a new organization/business
- Any portion of expense for which the applicant pays a contractor in merchandise or service in lieu of cash
- Tuition/tuition reimbursement or career-related/scholarship funds
- Disposable supplies (office, farm, otherwise) unrelated to the project
- Legal expenses related to litigation

Awarded projects shall be eligible for an advance payment of up to 50% after the issuance of a purchase order. The balance of the award will be distributed in regular intervals based on key performance indicators as determined through the contract process.

Project Duration & Post Award Requirements

The anticipated contract start date is **May 1, 2023**.

Applicants of awarded projects will be responsible for the following:

1. Signing a contract with the State of Connecticut
2. Providing a Certificate of Insurance listing the state as an additional insured on the grantee's liability insurance policy
3. Completing the contract within the specified timeframe
4. Submitting project reports in the required format per the executed contract

5. Submitting regular and a final financial report itemizing actual expenses. Copies of invoices and proof of payment must be submitted with the payment request, as required by the contract.
6. Permit site inspections for projects
7. Other requirements as stated in the State of Connecticut contract

If awarded, failure to sign and return a complete grant contract by the deadlines provided at the time of contract issuance may result in the rescinding of the award and the reallocation of funds back to the program.

Awarded grantees will receive additional training on contract requirements and obligations, provided by the DoAg, prior to contract issuance.

Submission Process

All Climate Smart Farming: Agriculture and Forestry Grant applications are required to be submitted through Cognito. The link to the application can be found on the agency website for the Climate Smart Farming: Agriculture and Forestry Grant, [here](#).

Copies of the Budget Form and Grant Narrative Template can also be found on the agency website for the [Climate Smart Farming: Agriculture and Forestry Grant](#).

Application Requirements

A complete application includes:

1. Budget Form added as an attachment.
2. Grant Narrative added as an attachment.
3. Conceptual drawings, estimates/quotes, letters of support and other budget justification materials can be added as attachments.

Evaluation Criteria and Process

The Climate Smart Farming: Agriculture and Forestry Grant is a competitive grant. Only complete applications, as described above which are submitted on time, will be evaluated. The evaluation will be weighted heavily on the project plan described in the grant narrative section of the application.

Priority will be given to projects which support historically underserved farmers, including but not limited to:

- a. BIPOC producers
- b. Veterans
- c. New and beginning farmers (farming for 1-3 years)
- d. Anyone in a protected class
- e. Anyone that speaks English as a second language

Additional information, such as quotes, conceptual drawings, and other documentation justifying and supporting the budget and project, is strongly encouraged to present a competitive application.

Budget Form:

The information provided below is for informational purposes only. The Budget Form will need to be filled out and submitted with the appropriate MS Excel fillable form as an attachment to the application. The form is available for download [here](#).

Budget Application Form			
2023 Climate Smart Farming Grant			
<p>Directions: In the cells below itemize the project expenses for each category. The sum function will total the itemized expenses in each of the gray category boxes. Rows can be added in each category if needed. Be sure to check the sum function of each category to ensure it includes the additional rows added.</p>			
<p>In addition to the itemized budget below, please also fill out the budget narrative (on the next sheet) that contains the following information: a. Where the match is coming from (cash, loan, other grant, etc.) b. Sufficient explanation and justification of the financial support requested</p>			
BUDGET	ITEMIZED SUBTOTALS - GRANT FUNDS	GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED	TOTAL COST
SALARIES AND FRINGE. Employee salary & fringe paid to execute the project is eligible. Salary is an eligible cash match as well.	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
Salary and Fringe 1:	\$ -		
EQUIPMENT. Equipment to be purchased per the project. Attaching quotes to justify the expense is required.	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
Item 1:	\$0.00		
*RENTAL OF EQUIPMENT. Rented equipment required to complete the project (rollers, heavy duty equipment)	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
Item 1:	\$0.00		
Item 2:	\$0.00		
*MATERIALS & SUPPLIES. A list of materials and supplies required for the project.	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
Item 1:	\$0.00		
Item 2:	\$0.00		
Item 3:	\$0.00		
Item 4:	\$0.00		
Item 5:	\$0.00		
CONTRACTUAL/CONSULTANT. Expenses associated with procuring services performed by an individual or organization other than the applicant. If more than one, each contractor/consultant hired must be described separately. Attaching quotes to justify the expense is required.	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contractor 1:	\$0.00		
Contractor 2:	\$0.00		
Contractor 3:	\$0.00		
OTHER COSTS. A list, with descriptions, of each item listed as "Other Costs"	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other 1:	\$0.00		
Other 2:	\$0.00		
Other 3:	\$0.00		
Other 4:	\$0.00		
Other 5:	\$0.00		
INDIRECT/OVERHEAD:	%	\$0.00	\$0.00
PROJECT TOTALS	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
<p>*If you're hiring a contractor do not break up the contractor's estimate into the various budget categories. The contractor's full cost/estimate should be listed as one item in the <i>Consultant/Contractual</i> category.</p>			

Grant Narrative Template

The information provided below for the Grant Narrative Template is for informational purposes only. The Grant Narrative Template will be completed and submitted as an attachment to the application. The questions are available for download [here](#).

Answer the following questions regarding the project for which you are applying.

1. Introduce yourself and your organization to the reviewers. Include information such as:
 - a. An overview of the history and mission.
 - b. Brief description of agricultural experience and background and long-term plans for agriculture.
 - c. Are there staff and/or committees dedicated to agriculture and to this project?
2. **Project Explanation** – Explain in detail your project proposal and how it will address climate smart farming.

Applicants must describe:

1. What the climate smart practices is
 2. Why the climate smart practice(s) were chosen
 3. How it will be implemented
 4. Who will benefit, and are there measurable outcomes
 5. The duration for implementation
 6. Overall project budget
3. **Project Outcome or Impact** – Identify an outcome you strive to achieve through completing this project. Identify the objectives necessary to meet the outcome(s) and the process.

For Municipal applicants: How does your project conform with the approved Plan of Conservation and Development?

An *outcome* is defined as a quantifiable result and is a result of accomplishing the project.

Example: There will be a 25% engagement of eligible producers with 100% implementation of the identified climate smart agricultural practices.

4. **Project Timeline** – Include all project milestones and related deadlines. No extensions will be given for projects and project timelines should reflect reasonable deadlines to accomplish objectives. No incomplete project work shall be funded.

The following template will need to be used to provide the project timeline:

Task	Anticipated Timeline
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5. **Target Audiences** – Describe your target audience. How are you ensuring equity of all producers regardless of size, years of experience and ethnicity? Are you serving any USDA identified historically underserved farmers, including but not limited to:
- BIPOC producers
 - Veterans
 - New and beginning farmers
 - Anyone in a protected class
 - Anyone that speaks English as a second language
6. **Project Summary and Conclusions** – Summarize the key points of this project. Explain why the project should be supported and how the goals/outcomes directly support the implementation of climate smart farming and forestry practices.