

Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Farm Viability Grant

*For Connecticut municipalities, groups of municipalities,
regional councils of governments, and/or agricultural non-profit organizations*

2021 Grant Application Guidelines and Forms

***Application Deadline:
June 3, 2021 at 4:00pm***



Ned Lamont, Governor
Bryan P. Hurlburt, Commissioner



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Important Dates and Webinar Info:

Applications must be submitted between May 27, 2021 and June 3, 2021 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:

June 3, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

Applications will not be accepted after 4:00 p.m. on June 3, 2021

Questions can be directed to Amanda King, Amanda.King@ct.gov or 860-895-3093

Grant Description:

The Farm Viability Grant provides matching funds to Connecticut municipalities, groups of municipalities, regional councils of governments, and/or agricultural non-profit organizations for projects that directly impact and/or foster agricultural viability.

All projects funded by the Farm Viability Grant must advance farming and agriculture as defined by Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-1(q).

Funding for the Farm Viability Grant is provided through the State of Connecticut Agricultural Viability Grant Program, established in 2005 through Public Act 228-05, *An Act Concerning Farmland Preservation, Land Protection, Affordable Housing, and Historic Preservation*.

The Farm Viability Grant Program and any awards are subject to limitations of state funding. The amount awarded to any applicant through the Farm Viability Grant shall not exceed \$49,999.

NEW for 2021: Four **Questions of Focus** are proposed below. Each Question of Focus addresses a specific problem, interest, or need of the agricultural industry. Eligible applicants applying must describe how their project answers and responds to the Question of Focus.

This approach enables the agency to better serve the industry by supporting and funding viable solutions, outcomes, or responsive programming for the betterment of CT agriculture.

Applicants shall select the proposed Question of Focus and create a project that responds to the question. DoAg reserves the right to alter the Question of Focus selected by the applicant. Below are the questions to be addressed:

2021 Questions of Focus

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in Agriculture

DoAg acknowledges the importance of supporting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive agriculture community and works towards an industry that supports and endorses all farmers regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity and sexual orientation, religion, and ability.

Question of Focus for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in CT Agriculture

Please propose a project which directly impacts farmers in one or more of the following classifications: limited resource, BIPOC, veterans, people a part of the LGBTQ community or people with a disability.

Urban Ag: Urban agriculture is a growing, meaningful sector of Connecticut agriculture that can contribute to increasing food security, food sovereignty, agriculture education and reduced carbon emissions.

Question of Focus for Urban Agriculture

Please propose a project that focuses on establishing or expanding support and resources for urban agriculture.

*Community garden projects are encouraged to apply to the [CT DEEP Urban Green and Community Gardens Grant Program](#).

Food Supply Chain: The COVID 19 pandemic has increased awareness around the importance of a sustainable and resilient local food supply in CT. With the increased demand for CT Grown food and farm products, the lack of resources and prevalent challenges related to distribution and processing options for CT farmers became apparent.

Question of Focus for Food Supply Chain

Please propose a project that would make kitchen space available to process CT Grown farm products or propose plans/development for construction of meat processing facilities/food hubs, co-op operations or increase market opportunities for CT farmers.

Farmland Accessibility: Farmland accessibility and farmland conversion are a continuing challenge that the CT agricultural industry faces specifically for new farmers.

Question of Focus for Farmland Accessibility

Please propose a project which addresses farmland accessibility and pilots an effort to improve accessibility for new farmers, current producers looking to expand their operation, or supports succession strategies for farmers exiting agriculture.

*Projects relating to securing land for open space are encouraged to apply to the CT DEEP [Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program](#).

Eligible Applicants:

The following entities are eligible to apply for all Farm Viability Grants:

1. Municipalities with a current Plan of Conservation and Development
2. Regional councils of governments organized under the provisions of sections 4-124i to 4-124p, inclusive
3. Groups of municipalities that have established a regional inter-local agreement pursuant to sections 7-339a to 7-339l, inclusive
4. Agricultural non-profit organizations

To qualify for the Farm Viability Grant as a non-profit, the non-profit must be registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State and provide a copy of the federal IRS exemption letter. Non-profits must have submitted Form 990 and been in existence for the previous three years. If non-profits or municipalities are applying for a project relating to a farmers market, the market needs to be a certified CT Grown farmers market.

Prior grantees may reapply for a Farm Viability Grant. However, open awards, past awards, and corresponding project completion and outcomes will be taken into consideration.

Applicants which have received two years of consecutive funding will be ineligible for an award for one year. Applicants can reapply for funding after taking a year hiatus.

For example:

- 2019: Project awarded
- 2020: Project awarded
- 2021: Ineligible for an award
- 2022: Eligible for an award

Applicants who have an open agreement and a project in progress are ineligible to apply.

Match Requirement, Expenses, & Payment:

The amount awarded to any applicant through the Farm Viability Grant shall not exceed \$49,999.

All grant Questions of Focus have a **match requirement**. Matching funds from the applicant must be *a minimum* of 40% of the total cost of the project budget; this must be clearly outlined in the application. The match can consist of in-kind and/or cash contributions directly associated with the project. If a grant is providing the match, the applicant must disclose the grantor, the grant name, and amount awarded. Employee salaries and fringe benefits to execute the project are allowable expenses but cannot exceed 25% combined of the grant funds requested.

The following **expenses** are examples of expenses that can be reimbursed with grant funds:

- Multi-media marketing expenses
- Employee salaries and fringe benefits paid to execute the project (cannot exceed 25% of grant funds requested)
- General purpose equipment and equipment rental if it directly supports the project
- Consultant or contractor expenses directly related to the project
- Stipends, honorariums
- Rental fees

The following **expenses** cannot be used as a match and 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

- Routine business expenses (utilities, office supplies, etc.)
- Disposable supplies (office, farm, otherwise) unrelated to the project
- Legal expenses related to litigation
- Indirect or contingency costs of any percentage

The following **expenses** are an acceptable match if they directly and meaningfully support the proposed project:

- State/local/federal permits
- Attorneys' fees (not related to litigation)
- Consumable or disposable supplies
- Employee salaries and fringe benefits paid to execute the project

The eligibility of general-purpose equipment will be reviewed based on the Question of Focus and project usage.

These are reimbursement grants. Incomplete projects cannot be fully reimbursed.

After the issuance of a purchase order, one cash advance of up to 50% of the total grant award may be requested by the grantee. The balance of the award will be reimbursed upon project completion and submission of required reporting documents.

Project Duration & Post Award Requirements

Projects must be **completed within 18 months** of contract execution. Contract and project extensions are not allowed.

Applicants of awarded projects will be responsible for the following:

1. Signing an agreement with the State of Connecticut
2. Providing a Certificate of Insurance holding the state harmless or listing the state as an additional insured on the grantee's liability insurance policy
3. Completing the project within the contractual timeframe
4. Submitting a final project report in the required format per the executed contract
5. Submitting a final financial report itemizing actual expenses. Copies of invoices and proof of payment must be submitted with the payment request at the conclusion of the project
6. Agreeing to a site inspection once the project is complete and prior to final payment being released
7. Other requirements as outlined in the State of Connecticut contract

Grantees will have additional training on requirements once contracts are executed.

Submission Process:

NEW for 2021: All Farm Viability Grant applications and appendices are required to be submitted through a Cognito Form link.

Appendix A: Applicant Information- completion of the applicant information questions on the Cognito Form satisfies the Appendix A requirement.

Appendix B: Budget- required to be uploaded as a MS Excel attachment in the identified area, and

Appendix C: Grant Narrative- required to be uploaded as a MS Word attachment in the identified area.

The Cognito Form link is below and will prompt the applicant to choose the question of focus they are applying for:

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/CTDoAg/2021CTDoAgFarmViabilityGrantApplication>

Application Requirements:

A complete application includes:

1. Applicant Information (Appendix A) questions answered on the Cognito Form link.
2. Budget Form (Appendix B) added as an attachment on the Cognito Form link in MS Excel format.
3. Grant narrative (Appendix C) added as an attachment on the Cognito Form link in MS Word format.
4. Conceptual drawings, estimates/quotes, and other budget justification can be added as an attachment on the Cognito Form link

Evaluation Criteria and Process:

The Farm Viability Grant is a competitive grant. Only complete applications, as outlined 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 outlined in Appendix C.

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.

Appendix A Applicant Information:

**The information provided below for Appendix A is for informational purposes only.
 Completion of the questions on the Cognito Form link available at
www.CTGrown.gov/Grants satisfies the Appendix A submission requirement.**

<u>Applicant Information</u>			
Applicant Name:			
Project Contact:			
Applicant Type:		<input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit <input type="checkbox"/> Municipality <input type="checkbox"/> COG <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Full Mailing Address:			
Phone:		Website:	
Email:			
<u>Project Information</u>			
Which grant priority area will your project address?		<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Ag <input type="checkbox"/> DEI <input type="checkbox"/> Food System <input type="checkbox"/> Land Accessibility	
Project Title: <i>Provide a title describing your project.</i>			
		<u>Total Project Costs:</u>	
		<u>In Kind Match Expenses Covered by Applicant:</u>	
		<u>Cash Expenses Match Covered by Applicant:</u> <i>At least 40% of expenses (in-kind and/or cash) must be covered by applicant.</i>	
		<u>Farm Viability Grant Funds Requested:</u> <i>Not to exceed \$49,999.00</i>	
<u>Organization Information</u>			
Non-profits: Have you attached a copy of your federal IRS exemption letter?		Yes/No	

Appendix B: Budget

The information provided below for Appendix B is for informational purposes only. Appendix B will need to be filled out and submitted with the appropriate MS Excel fillable form link available at www.CTGrown.gov/Grants and added as an attachment on the Cognito Form link

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.						
In addition to the itemized budget below, please also include a budget narrative 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						
BUDGET	ITEMIZED SUBTOTALS - GRANT FUNDS	GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED	ITEMIZED SUBTOTALS - MATCH FUNDS	CASH MATCH BY APPLICANT	IN-KIND MATCH BY APPLICANT	TOTAL COST
SALARIES. Employee salary paid to execute the project is eligible, however the salary and fringe request cannot exceed 25% of the total grant request. Salary is an eligible cash match as well.	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Salary 1:	N/A		\$0.00			
FRINGE. Employee fringe paid to execute the project is eligible, however the salary and fringe request cannot exceed 25% of the total grant request. Fringe is an eligible cash match as well.	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fringe 1:	N/A		\$0.00			
EQUIPMENT. Equipment to be purchased per the project. Attaching quotes to justify the expense is highly recommended	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Item 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
*RENTAL OF EQUIPMENT. Rented equipment required to complete the project (rollers, heavy duty equipment)	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Item 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 2:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
*MATERIALS & SUPPLIES. A list of materials and supplies required for the project.	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Item 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 2:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 3:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 4:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Item 5:	\$0.00		\$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 highly recommended	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contractor 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Contractor 2:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
OTHER COSTS. A list, with descriptions, of each item listed as "Other Costs"	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other 1:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Other 2:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Other 3:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Other 4:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
Other 5:	\$0.00		\$0.00			
PROJECT TOTALS	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Appendix C: Grant Narrative

The information provided below for Appendix C is for informational purposes only. Appendix C will need to be filled out and submitted with the appropriate MS Word fillable form link available at www.CTGrown.gov/Grants and added as an attachment on the Cognito Form link

Answer the following questions regarding the project for which you are applying. Ensure that you have identified which Question of Focus your project addresses. Grant narratives should be no longer than five pages in length.

1. ***Optional* Introduction for Municipality** – Introduce the municipality to the reviewers. Include information such as:
 - a. Brief agricultural history of the municipality and long term plans for agriculture.
 - b. Are you enrolled in the Community Farms Preservation Program? What steps have you taken to participate?
 - c. Are there staff and/or committees dedicated to agriculture?

***Optional* Introduction for Non-profit** – Introduce the non-profit to the reviewers. Include information such as:

- a. An overview of the history and mission of the non-profit.
- b. How does agriculture fit into your overall mission?
- c. How does the project work towards your mission?

2. **Project Explanation** – Explain in detail your project proposal and how it will address the chosen question of focus.

What will the project accomplish and how will it be accomplished?

3. **Project Outcome or Impact** – Identify an outcome you strive to achieve as a result of completing this project. Identify the objectives necessary to meet the outcome(s) and the process in which you will determine if it was met.

Municipalities: How does your project conform with the approved Plan of Conservation and Development?

An *outcome* is defined as a quantifiable result and usually accomplished after the project is done.

Example: There will be a 7% increase in sales in 2020 as a result of the new retail farm store.

4. **Project Timeline** – Include all project milestones and related deadlines. Applicants must budget in three months to plan the project once the contract is executed, 12 months to execute and complete the project, and 30 days past project completion for all reporting. As a reminder no extensions will be given. No incomplete projects will be funded.

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

Task	Anticipated Timeline

5. **Target Audiences** – What expanded, additional, or underserved audience does your project allow you to support? This includes:
 - a. Veterans
 - b. New and beginning farmers (farming for 1-3 years)
 - c. Anyone in a protected class
 - d. Anyone that speaks English as a second language
 - e. BIPOC producers
6. **Financial History** – Provide a three year profit and loss statement and current profit and loss statement.
7. **Project Summary and Conclusions** – Summarize the key points of this project. Explain why the project should be supported and how the goals/outcomes respond to the issue identified in the question of focus and create solutions to address an industry need?