

The Connecticut Milk Promotion Board is pleased to announce:

Dairy Farmer Engagement Grants

*For non-profit organizations, businesses, extension agencies for projects conducted in Connecticut for
Connecticut Dairy Farmers.*

2021 Request for Applications Guidelines and Forms

***Application Deadline:
May 21, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.***



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



*Distributed on behalf of the Connecticut Milk Promotion Board by:
The Connecticut Department of Agriculture*

450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 703, Hartford, CT 06103
<https://ctdairy.org>



Table of Contents

Important Dates and Contact Info:.....	2
Funding Opportunity Description:.....	3
Eligible Applicants:.....	4
Requirements, Expenses, & Payment:	4
Project Duration & Post Award Requirements.....	5
Submission Process:	5
Application Requirements:.....	6
Evaluation Criteria and Process:.....	6
Appendix A Applicant Information:.....	7
Appendix B: Budget	8
Appendix C: Proposal Questions	8



Important Dates:

Applications must be submitted between May 17, 2021 and May 21, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. Please review the “Submission Process” section of this document for additional details on submission requirements.

Applications must be received by:

May 21, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

Applications will not be accepted after 3:00 p.m. on May 21, 2021.

A Cognito link will be opened on the Department’s webpages starting May 17, 2021. All applications and supporting documents must be received prior to 3:00 p.m. on May 21, 2021. No late submissions will be accepted.

Questions Should Be Directed To:

Name: Lindsay Raymond
Address: 450 Columbus Blvd. Suite 702, Hartford, CT 06103
Phone: 860-817-0193
E-Mail: Lindsay.Raymond@ct.gov

Funding Opportunity:

The Dairy Farmer Engagement Grant provides grant funding for businesses, extension agencies, and agricultural non-profit organizations to conduct projects that directly impact and/or foster Connecticut's dairy industry. The Connecticut Milk Promotion Board, CT MPB, administered by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, was established in 2008. The board consists of nine appointed members and is charged with developing, coordinating and implementing promotional, research and other programs designed to promote Connecticut dairy farms and milk and dairy product consumption. The CT MPB 5 Year Target is to realize an increase in dairy consumption and purchases throughout the supply chain in CT. This program will contribute to that target goal.

Funding for the Dairy Research Grant is provided through Dairy Research and Promotion Program, also known as the Dairy Checkoff. CGS Sec. 22-137d authorizes the CT MPB to award grant funds from Connecticut's Dairy Checkoff funds. All projects should be conducted in accordance with the Dairy Research and Promotion Program, which can be found at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion/dairy>.

The Dairy Farmer Engagement Grant is a new funding opportunity for 2021.

The CT MPB has up to \$500,000 available for programming in FY22. In coordination with this larger funding effort, the Board is anticipating awarding up to \$50,000, as partial, or full awards for engagement projects that increase engagement and communication channels with state dairy farmers on the utilization of Connecticut's Dairy Checkoff funds. Funding will be allocated by the board at its discretion across its funding priorities and based on submissions received.

Applications should focus on increasing engagement and communication channels with state dairy farmers. Successful projects should focus on building strong relationships to engage dairy farmers in Connecticut and deliver tools for dairy farms to interact with each other, the public, and the CT MPB.

All projects should be conducted in accordance with the Dairy Research and Promotion Program, which can be found at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/research-promotion/dairy>.

Applications for qualifying projects should align with at least one of the following:

- Create and distribute a web-based annual report on CT MPB's webpage summarizing the dairy checkoff program activities in the state, potentially including national and regional programs.
- Provide dairy farmers tools to amplify and align the efforts of the CT Milk Promotion Board, i.e., a social media toolkit for farmers, messaging webinars, crisis management.
- Develop a menu of messaging and resources for dairy farmers to share their stories through social media.
- Increase noticing and awareness of regular CT MPB meetings and public comment opportunities.
- Facilitate outreach between board members and dairy farmers for idea generation and grassroots promotions.

Eligible Applicants:

The following entities are eligible to apply for *Dairy Farmer Engagement Grant*:

1. Businesses
2. Extension Agencies
3. Agricultural Non-Profit Organizations
 - Please note, organizations do not have to be based in Connecticut to be awarded. However, all projects should be conducted in Connecticut. All work must directly benefit and impact Connecticut dairy farmers.
4. **Further Information:**
 - If awarded a Dairy Farmer Engagement Grant, organizations will comply with State contracting and ethics requirements.
 - To qualify, organizations must be in good fiscal standing with the State. The State may request documentation as needed for the contracting process to verify standing.
 - Organizations not in good standing with the State of Connecticut, organizations that have defaulted on grants or contracts, or organizations that cannot contract with the State will be ineligible for awards.
 - Organizations shall be required to contract with the State upon award and the anticipated goal is to have contracts begin approximately on July 1. Organizations should be prepared in June, if awarded, to help expedite the contracting process. Negotiations will be limited as set forth by the State. Therefore clear, concise, and direct proposals will be considered more favorably in the evaluation process. Explicit goals, tasks, and focused outcomes for what the grantee shall achieve through their research will help an applicant through the evaluation process. Applications that are not well defined will receive lower marks. Reviewers may not understand the terminology used and it is recommended to be succinct, direct, and concise in writing.
 - If selected, Applicants that have an open agreement and a project in progress with the Department of Agriculture, may be required to provide additional verifications as requested by contract staff.
 - If the contractor is also funded by other agriculture programs, including funding from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture or any national or regional agriculture or dairy partners doing work in Connecticut, that contractor may build off their work, but cannot duplicate it under this funding. Contracts for this grant cannot include items already paid for under a previous contract or used as matching funding contingent on other work to be completed.

Requirements, Expenses, & Payment:

- These are reimbursement grants. Incomplete projects cannot be fully reimbursed.
- Applicants shall provide documentation of expenses, reports as requested, time reporting and invoices in order to receive the funds awarded.

- Employee salaries and fringe benefits to execute the project are allowable expenses. Consultant or subcontractor expenses directly related to the project are allowable expenses.
- General purpose equipment and equipment rental if it directly supports the project is allowable.
- The eligibility of general-purpose equipment will be reviewed based on the Question of Focus and project usage.

Project Duration & Post Award Requirements

Projects must be **completed by June 30, 2022**. Please plan accordingly to submit your project.

Applicants of awarded projects will be responsible for the following:

1. Signing an agreement with the State of Connecticut
2. Completing the project within the contractual timeframe
3. Submitting a final project report in the required format per the executed contract
4. 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.
5. Other requirements as outlined in the State of Connecticut contract
6. The grant program and any awards are subject to the limitations and guidelines of state funding.
7. Proposal narratives are limited to a **five (5) page maximum** to describe the project and how it will meet the objectives of this funding as listed in the funding opportunity. A Budget and justification summary will be submitted separately and does not count in the **five (5) page limit**. Applicants may also submit a **one (1) page summary detailing their expertise and credentials** to do the project work. This will not count in the 5-page project proposal.
8. If Awarded, contracts must be returned quickly and carefully follow the timetables provided by the state to ensure the anticipated start date of July 1. Awardees must be prepared to start their projects in accordance with the start date.
9. Simple budgets in a simple table format are sufficient.
10. Questions will be answered solely at the discretion of the grant administrator and may be combined. Questions on the grant can be submitted up until May 14 and will be published as Frequently Asked Questions document, no later than 1 week prior to submission.

Submission Process:

Only eligible businesses, extension agencies and agricultural non-profit organizations in good business standing may apply for this funding opportunity.

All Documents and forms shall be in one email submission and if possible, one PDF. Submissions shall include:

- Applicants should visit either the CTDairy.org or portal.ct.gov/DOAG for the link to apply for this funding on May 17, 2021. The link will provide the applicant access to an online form.

It is strongly recommended to upload the application at one time. The department is not responsible for applications that are not saved in the portal and will not consider incomplete or unsubmitted applications for review.

- Applicants should be prepared to upload PDFs of their proposals on the grant submission site. The proposal shall be in a file named for the applicant and the project name. For example, a University of San Diego Dairy Consumption project would be named “UnivSanDiegoDairypjt.” Please be as specific as possible if multiple people apply from the same institution.

Application Requirements:

The Application is composed of the following:

Appendix A: Applicant Information- completion of the applicant information questions

Appendix B: Budget- simple table template outlining costs with a brief budget justification for each line item indicating relevance and need to project.

Appendix C: Grant Narrative- (If awarded, applicants will need to provide a Microsoft Word and PDF file of their research proposal. This should be no more than five (5) pages to be reviewed. It will be used to build a scope of work for a grant contract.).

Only complete applications that are submitted will be considered.

Evaluation Criteria and Process:

The Dairy Farmer Engagement Grant is a competitive grant. Only complete applications, as outlined above and are submitted on time, will be evaluated. The evaluation will be weighted heavily on the project plan described in the proposal submitted and outlined in Appendix C. Creativity, Innovation, the ability to address one of the key issues outlined in the funding opportunity, clear concise well-defined language, and the feasibility of the proposed project will factor into scoring the proposals. The proposals will be evaluated by the CT MPB. They will use a simple 1-5 system for scoring, with 5 being the highest. They will evaluate the proposal and the scope of work for the following criteria:

- Concise, clear messaging: a direct, succinct, and easy to understand proposal and scope that is not jargony (or contains clear definitions for the reader) but is thorough.
- How does your experience, skills, and expertise, as well as your proposed plan help you support CT Dairy Farmers?
- How well does your proposal grasp the objective and lay out how you will accomplish the activities outlined in your scope?
- How well does your proposal support a “comprehensive” plan that reflects the complex problems of the industry and our farmers?
- Projects that demonstrate innovative and creative plans to achieve the desired outcome.
- Are related program support, facilities, and equipment adequate?
- Were the proposal application guidelines and format followed?

Appendix A: Applicant Information:

The application portal will look approximately like this:

Applicant Information:

Organization name, FEIN#, Address, Location of project, Contact Person: Name, Phone, Email;

<u>Applicant Information</u>			
Applicant Name:			Division
Project Contact:			
Applicant Type:			<input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Extension <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Full Mailing Address:			
Phone:		Website:	
Email:			
<u>Project Information</u>			
Which grant priority area will your project address?			
Project Title: <i>Provide a title describing your project.</i>			
<u>Total Project Costs:</u>			
<u>Grant Funds Requested:</u>			
<i>Partial or Full Awards of any amount up to \$150,000 will be considered for a single project.</i>			
<u>Organization Information</u>			
Non-profits/Research Orgs: Have you attached a copy of your federal IRS exemption letter?			Yes/No
Can this project be implemented in one year?			Yes / No
Are you a business in good standing in the State of Connecticut?			Yes / No
Do you have an open grant contract with DoAg?			Yes / No

Signature of Applicant	Title	Date
------------------------	-------	------

Signature of Organization Representative	Title	Date
--	-------	------

Typed name serves as signature.

Appendix B: Budget

The information provided below for Appendix B is for informational purposes only.

Budget Item	Justification	Grant Funds Requested	Total Cost

Appendix C: Grant Narrative

Answer the following questions regarding the project for which you are applying. Ensure that you have identified which priority your project addresses. Proposals should be no longer than five pages in length.

- 1. Project Explanation** – Explain in detail your project proposal and how it will address the chosen question of focus. (No more than five pages.) Please be specific to answer---What will the project accomplish and how will it be accomplished?
- 2. 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. An *outcome* is defined as a quantifiable result and usually accomplished after the project is done. *Example:* as a result of this project, farmers will have the ability to respond to social media feedback in a productive way.
- 3. Project Timeline** – Include all project milestones and related deadlines. Applicants must budget in the last 30 days of the project for the completion for all reporting and invoicing. This cannot extend past the contract termination date of June 30, 2022. All project work should be finalized with enough time for the grant administrator to approve the final reports. 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

Please fill in your proposed timeline. If awarded the Contract Administrator shall approve or adjust the timeline as necessary.

4. **Project Staff & Organizational Credentials or Expertise**--Please draw up a one (1) page summary of key personnel involved and their brief relevant credentials. Applicants may also include a few brief comments on the organization and its history. Please be brief, succinct, and clear. Nonprofits or businesses may choose to provide a brief overview of the history and mission of the organization including--How does agriculture fit into your overall mission? How does the project work towards your mission?
5. **Financial History** – Nonprofits should submit their last current Form 990 filed with the IRS.
 - a. The State reserves the right to request an applicant provide a three-year profit and loss statement with the current year to date profit and loss statement if deemed necessary.
 - b. Extension agencies will not be required to submit institutional financials.
 - c. Businesses or other organizations should sign the statement in the packet that they are in good financial standing with the State and current on all liabilities to the State.
6. **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 issues identified in the funding opportunity and create solutions to address an industry need? Please also identify if there are follow up areas and projects or additional phases of this research that could be considered for funding.

IMPORTANT DATES:

May 14 **All Questions Due *** (by email to Lindsay.Raymond@ct.gov)

May 17 **Submissions open on CT DoAG website***

(Portal will be open with a link on ctdairy.org and portal.ct.gov/DOAG. If you have problems during submission, instructions will be on website for assistance.)

May 21 **All Applications Due**