

Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Farmland Restoration Grant

July Flood Response Program Guidelines and Forms

Guidance Update: 8.21.23

Application Deadline:
~~August 21, 2023 at 4:00pm~~
EXTENDED to August 31, 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



Important Information

Applications must be received by: ~~August 21, 2023, at 4:00pm~~ **EXTENDED** to August 31, 2023 at 4:00pm

Applications **will not** be accepted after 4:00 p.m. on ~~August 21, 2023~~ August 31, 2023.

Questions can be directed to: AGR.Disaster@ct.gov

Grant Description

The Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant (RFRG) provides matching funds to Connecticut farmers, nonprofits and municipalities impacted by excessive rain fall and flooding in July 2023 to restore lands into active agricultural production. RFRG focuses on restoring and improving land with prime and important farmland soils, in accordance with a Farmland Restoration Plan (FLRP Plan).

Funding for the Farmland Restoration Flood Response is provided through the Farmland Restoration Grant, made possible by Connecticut General Statutes 22-6c. The Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant and any awards are subject to the requirements and provisions of state funding. The total amount available for these grants is up to \$300,000.00

For the purposes of this grant, farmland restoration is the act of bringing land into agricultural production for human food, animal feed, or livestock grazing.

The maximum grant awarded per grantee is **\$20,000.00**. Applications of any amount up to the maximum possible award will be considered for funding.

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply for the Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant Program:

1. Agricultural producers, who are owners of an existing agribusiness within the State of Connecticut with at least one year of production experience who experienced flooding or damage to crops, infrastructure and site due to excessive rainfall in July.
2. Not for profits owning or leasing farmland, in use by a farmer, who experienced flooding or damage to crops, infrastructure and site due to excessive rainfall in July.
3. Municipalities leasing farmland, currently in use by a farmer, who experienced flooding or excessive rainfall in July. The lease must be no less than five years in duration, with a five-year option to renew in the terms.

Producers must be registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State as a business in the State of Connecticut. If the producer is established as a limited liability company or corporation, the producer must obtain or be applying to obtain a Farmer's Tax Exemption Permit. Farms should be a business in good standing with the Connecticut Department of Agriculture (DoAg), State, and Federal requirements. Not for profits must be registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State, and provide a copy of the federal IRS exemption letter.

Prior grantees may apply for a Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant. Open awards, past awards, project completion and outcomes will be considered in the evaluation of an application.

There are two opportunities for funding under the Farmland Restoration Program.

- Projects on **publicly owned land**
- Projects on **privately owned land**

Applicants will choose the grant that best fits their property to apply.

Eligible Projects

To enable an efficient and prompt awarding process, predetermined project categories have been identified for which applicants can apply. Only the below projects are eligible for funding through the Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant.

Project Scope of Work #1: Repairs, Replacement, and Reinstallation

- Fencing
- Well heads
- Irrigation pumps and pipes

Project Scope of Work #2: Site Reconstruction

- Drainage
- Riparian Buffer Restoration
- Grading and shaping of farmland topography
- Diversions and waterways
- Culverts and stream banks
- Farm roads

Project Scope of Work #3: Soil Amendments

- Project which need to purchase and apply additional soil amendments to adjust soil pH, or other justified reasons. If replanting more fertilizer
- Topsoil
- Compost
- Manure
- Seed for cover crop, clover

Farmers looking for funds to support debris removal should consider the [USDA FSA Emergency Conservation Program](#). Additional information on disaster resources and support services are available on the [agency's website](#) as well.

Under no circumstances can funds be used to construct levies, increase flood plain elevations, or change drainage patterns.

Match Requirement, Expenses, & Payment

All eligible expenses funded by any Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant program must advance farming and agriculture, as defined by [Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-1\(q\)](#).

Matching funds are required by the applicant. Matches may be provided through cash or in-kind services. A cash match may be the farm owner paying employees to execute the project. In-kind services may include the farmer or landowner's own time executing the project.

If other grant funds provide the necessary match requirement, the applicant must disclose the grantor/funder, the grant name, and amount awarded. Please be aware per CGS 22-6c, no more than 90% of the total project cost may be covered by state and federal funds. Matches may not be from other DoAg funded grants.

Match Requirements and Examples:

Projects conducted on **Publicly Owned Land: These projects are on land(s) owned by a municipality or are state-owned land** – there is a **10% match requirement**. 10% of the total project cost must be provided through monetary or in-kind match.

For example: With a \$10,000 project cost, the applicant would need to provide a \$1,000 match of cash or in-kind services and grant funds would cover the other \$9,000 in project costs.

Projects on **Privately Owned Land: These projects are on land privately owned by a farmer or nonprofit** – there is a **50% cost match requirement**. 50% of the total project cost must be provided through monetary or in-kind match.

For example: With a \$10,000 project cost, the applicant would need to provide a \$5,000 match of cash or in-kind services and grant funds would cover the other \$5,000.

For in-kind match requirements, the cost per hour can be valued at a predetermined rate, or, if the rate is unknown, please reference the [Independent Sectors](#) information. These estimated hours must be accounted for with a monetary amount in the budget towards the match requirement.

Expenses:

The following expenses **may not be used as a match** and will **not be funded by this grant**:

- Any expense incurred prior to contract execution
- Land acquisition/mortgages
- Cost of borrowing (points and other fees)
- Any portion of expense for which the applicant barter/pays a contractor in merchandise or service in lieu of cash
- Routine business expenses (example: equipment maintenance)
- Disposable supplies (office, farm, otherwise) unrelated to the project
- Legal expenses related to litigation
- Indirect or contingency costs of any percentage
- Projects conducted on brownfields or contaminated lands
- Lobbying

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

- Employee salaries/payroll paid to execute the project
- Attorneys' fees (not related to litigation)
- Consumable or disposable supplies (example: gas, oil)

Examples of **eligible expenses** for grant funded projects:

- State/local/federal permits related to the project
- Rental of equipment
- Hiring contractors
- Soil amendments
- Well digging

- Pond dredging
- Fence and fence installation
- Irrigation
- Pumphouses
- Stone and stump removal
- Land clearing/brush hogging
- Invasive plant removal
- Tree pruning/maintenance
- Field drainage

To be eligible for payment, Eligible Expenses (listed above) must be included in the signed contract and in the approved Farmland Restoration Plan ("Plan").

Payment

75% of total grant award may be provided to the awardee upon contract execution AND a Restoration Plan has been approved by the Commissioner of Agriculture. The remaining 25% of the award shall not be paid to the awardee until the restoration project is complete and approved by the soil scientist and submission of documentation per the agreement with DoAg has been provided. The Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant may only be paid directly to the individual or organization who is the awardee and listed on the grant contract. Incomplete projects will not be fully reimbursed.

Once awards are made no additional funds will be awarded, even if project costs increase. Only expenses in the budget and spent during the project period shall be reimbursed. If project expenses are less than originally budgeted, only the amount spent shall be reimbursed.

Project Duration & Post Award Requirements

Projects must be **completed within 18 months** of contract execution. Contract and project extensions are not allowed. **Applicants should be prepared for an anticipated contract start date of September 15 to October 1, 2023.**

Upon the contract start date, DoAg will assign a soil scientist to work with the awardee to develop a Farmland Restoration Plan (Plan). Awardees cannot begin work on their project until a Plan is completed and approved by DoAg. The Plan will also incorporate wetlands and NDDB reviews of the farmland to be restored. Further, all municipal, state and/or federal approvals required for the work must be obtained prior to the start of work and any fees associated with those approvals must be paid after the contract start date to be reimbursed.

Awardees should be prepared to begin work on their project within 6-8 weeks of the contract start date.

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. Executing the contract within the contractual time frame
 4. Working with the assigned soil scientist to develop the Farmland Restoration Plan
 5. Meeting with the assigned soil scientist for a final walk through of the completed project area
 6. Submitting a final project report in the required format per the executed contract
 7. Submitting a final financial report with all itemized expenses per the State of CT contract.
 8. Other requirements as outlined in the State of Connecticut contract

Upon receiving an award, awardees will receive guidance on necessary contract requirements from the DoAg program coordinator. The contract process moves quickly, and applicants should be prepared to review agreements and complete all needed forms within the time frames provided by DoAg to ensure projects start timely.

By receiving the Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant, awarded applicants agree to ensure that land improvements that result from this award shall be used for agricultural purposes for at least five (5) years or the duration of the lease (if a lease is applicable).

Evaluation Criteria and Process

The Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant is a competitive grant. Only complete applications, as described above and submitted no later than the deadline will be considered.

The project applications should clearly present how the project will be accomplished and undertaken in a reasonable timeline.

Additional information, such as quotes, conceptual drawings, and other documentation justifying and supporting the budget and project, is strongly encouraged. DoAg strongly recommends when seeking quotes to advise potential Contractors of the anticipated contract start date and need for soil scientist approval prior to start of work for the best estimate of costs.

Applications to the Farmland Restoration Grant shall be evaluated based on:

1. **The soil composition of the project area.** Does the project area contain prime, important, or locally important farmland soils?
2. **Use of the land for the remainder of the growing season.** Will it sit unplanted for the remainder of the season or can it be replanted.
3. **Farm business planning.** Does the farming operation(s) using the land have a current farm business plan?
4. **Who is farming the land?** Is the farmer of the project land a new farmer with one to three years of production experience? Is the farmer a limited resource or socially disadvantaged producer? Is the farmer a veteran?
5. **Does the farm have crop insurance?**
6. **Percentage of farm's acreage impacted by flooding or excessive rain.**

Submission Process

Applications must be [submitted online here](#).

Applicants should consider applying well in advance of the grant deadline, as DoAg will not accept applications submitted late, even if technical issues prevented the applicant from submitting on time. Applicants are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the online submission form prior to submission and to communicate timely with DoAg if there are accessibility or other concerns.

Application Requirements

A complete application includes:

1. Completing the [online form located here](#).
2. Upload the Budget and Project Timeline Workbook. Copies of this excel spreadsheet can be found on the [grant program webpage](#).
3. Upload a Farmland Classification Soil(s) map of project area, showing prime, statewide important, and locally important soils. These can be obtained from NRCS or online at the [Web Soil Survey](#) (please see an example Farmland Classification Soils Map and an instruction guide for using Web Soil Survey in the [Documents/Forms section](#).)
4. Upload photos of the project area prior to and post flooding/rain impacts.

Budget Form and Project Timeline Workbook

The three excel sheets within the workbook will need to be filled out and submitted with the appropriate MS Excel fillable form link available at [Farmland Restoration Flood Response Grant](#) and added as an attachment to the application form online.