

Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Farm Transition Grant

For Connecticut Farmers and Agricultural Cooperatives

2024 Grant Application Guidelines and Forms

***Application Deadline:
January 10, 2024, 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

Table of Contents

Important Dates and Workshops	3
Grant Description	4
Grant Categories	4
Eligible Applicants	5
Match Requirement, Expenses, & Payment	6
Project Duration & Post Award Requirements	8
Submission Process	9
Application Requirements	9
Evaluation Criteria and Process	9
Funding Priorities	9
Anticipated Timeline for Application Review, Award Notification, and Project Start	10
Budget Form	10
Grant Narrative	11
Landlord Consent Form	14

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Important Dates

Applications must be received by:

Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 4:00p.m.

Applications will not be accepted after 4:00p.m. on January 10, 2024.

Farm Transition Grant Overview Webinar:

A virtual workshop will be held on **Thursday, November 16, 2023, from 10:00-11:30a.m., via Webex**, for those interested in applying for the Farm Transition Grant. This workshop will include an overview of the grant program, application components, and submission process.

[Click here to register for the virtual workshop.](#)

Navigating the Budget Sheet:

A virtual workshop will be held on **Thursday, November 30, 2023, from 10:00-11:30a.m., via Webex**, to explain the intricacies of the budget sheet and budget narrative, complete a mock budget sheet, and provide tips and tricks to allow Excel to work for you, rather than against you.

[Click here to register for the virtual workshop.](#)

Open Office Hours:

Virtual office hours will be held on **Tuesday, December 19, 2023, from 6:00-7:30p.m., via Webex**, to give applicants a chance to drop in and ask questions.

[Click here to register for the virtual workshop.](#)

Virtual office hours will be held on **Thursday, January 4, 2024, from 6:00-7:30p.m., via Webex**, to give applicants a chance to drop in and ask questions.

[Click here to register for the virtual workshop.](#)

The Farm Transition Grant Overview and Budget Sheet workshops will be recorded and posted on the [Farm Transition Grant website](#) for those who cannot attend the live session. The [FAQs](#) available on the Farm Transition Grant website will be updated after the conclusion of the Open Office Hours.

Questions about the workshops can be directed to Alison Grabarz at Alison.Grabarz@ct.gov

Grant Description

The Farm Transition Grant (FTG) provides matching funds to Connecticut farmers and agricultural cooperatives for the diversification of existing farm operations, transitioning to value-added agricultural production and sales, and other venues in which a majority of products sold are grown in the state.

Funding for the Farm Transition Grant is provided through [C.G.S. Sec. 22-26k](#). The FTG Program and any awards are subject to limitations of state funding.

Grant Categories

Four distinct grant categories are available. Applicants must select the category they feel best represents their project. Each applicant may only submit one (1) project to be considered per grant cycle. DoAG reserves the right to adjust the grant category selected by the applicant.

Successful grant proposals must positively impact farm production and operation; projects must successfully demonstrate moving the farm and business to a new level beyond the status quo of current operations. Quantifiable project outcomes are requested in the application and essential to a competitive application.

New Farmer Micro Grants: Supports new and beginning individuals or partnerships with *one full year to three years* of production history, seeking long-term careers in the CT agricultural industry.

Maximum award amount: \$5,000

Match requirement: 25% of total project costs

Examples of eligible expenses: Production or processing equipment directly related to agriculture, small buildings, greenhouses/hoop houses, irrigation, pasture fencing, other equipment purchases related to increasing production.

New in 2024: Funds can also be used to establish websites and conduct marketing.

Infrastructure Investment Grant: Supports farms with *a minimum of three years* of production experience, with infrastructure to expand or diversify the farm's production.

Maximum award amount: \$20,000

Match requirement: 50% of project costs

Examples of eligible expenses: Livestock/pasture fencing to increase herd size/production type, barn remodeling/expansion to increase capacity, processing equipment to assist in increased efficiency and production of farm products, irrigation systems for increased production, tractor attachments specific to agriculture to diversify farm products, etc.

Research and Development Grant: Supports farms with a *minimum of three years* of production history to conduct market research and evaluate the viability of developing a new product, offering a new service, or reaching a new market.

Maximum award amount: \$25,000

Match requirement: 40% of project costs

Examples of eligible expenses: Consultant fees, equipment to pilot a product or concept, expenses related to exploratory product development including fees associated with product, recipe, and market testing.

NEW for 2024: Eligible activities also include in-store testing events to determine consumer viability.

Innovation and Diversification Grant: Supports farms with a *minimum of three years* of production history with the implementation of a new product or service for market or business expansion. *Applicants do not need to have completed a Research and Development Grant through the FTG to be eligible to apply for an Innovation and Diversification Grant.* An applicant should have a business plan and provide evidence of previously conducted research to determine if implementing the project is a viable investment for the business.

Maximum award amount: \$49,999

Match requirement: 50% of project costs

Examples of eligible expenses: Expansion of product offerings including value-added processing equipment, equipment that will assist in diversification of farm products, construction of a farm store or processing facility, innovative technology or software, or marketing and outreach to promote the new product, service, or market.

Eligible Applicants

The following entities are eligible to apply for all Farm Transition Grant categories:

1. Agricultural producers, singularly or jointly, whether such producers are owners or tenants of existing agribusiness within the State of Connecticut.
2. Agricultural cooperatives.

Previous awardees to the FTG can reapply. Open awards, past awards, project completion and outcomes of current awards will be considered in the evaluation of this award application.

Applicants who have received two years of consecutive funding will be ineligible for an award for one year. Applicants can reapply for funding in the next grant cycle.

For example:

2021: Project awarded
2022: Project awarded
2023: Ineligible for an award
2024: Eligible for an award

Specific Requirements for Grant Categories:

To qualify for the **New Farmer Micro Grant**, eligible entities must meet the following criteria:

- Be the farm owner and have been in production for at least a full year. For example: the applicant must have been in production in growing season 2023 to qualify for the 2024 Transition Grant.
- Be registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State, if established as a business entity such as a limited liability company or corporation.
- Apply for or possess a Farmers' Tax Exemption Permit through the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services.
 - [Click here for more information on how to apply for your exemption permit.](#)
 - Any questions on receiving your exemption permit, contact: DRS@ct.gov
- Complete a crop plan.
 - [Download a crop plan here.](#)
- Tenants must include a [Landlord Consent Form](#) between all necessary parties regarding the submitted project.

To qualify for the **Infrastructure Investment Grant, Research and Development Grant, or Innovation and Diversification Grant** eligible entities must meet the following criteria:

- Be registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State, if established as a business entity such as a limited liability company or corporation.
- Three years of Farmer's Tax Exemption Certificates are required to be provided upon request by the Department.
 - Any questions on receiving your exemption permit, contact: DRS@ct.gov
- Tenants must include a [Landlord Consent Form](#) between all necessary parties regarding the submitted project.

All applicants should be in good standing with the Department of Agriculture, state, and federal requirements.

Match Requirement, Expenses, & Payment:

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

All grant categories have a unique specific **cash match requirement**. The cash match requirement for each program can be self-financed, bank-financed, or provided through another grant (federal, state, or otherwise). If a grant is providing the match, the applicant must disclose the grantor, the grant name, and amount awarded.

The Farm Transition Grant award must be paid directly to the grant applicant.

The following **expenses cannot be used as a match and will not be funded by any grant** category:

- Any expense incurred prior to contract execution
- Land acquisition/mortgages
- Cost of borrowing (points and other fees)
- Expenses related to establishing a new organization or 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
- Purchasing one's own product or service

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

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

Examples of eligible expenses by grant category can be found on pages four (4) and five (5). The eligibility of general-purpose equipment will be reviewed based on grant category and project usage.

Proposed projects and related expenses must result in increased production or operation of the farm or cooperative.

Specific Payment for Grant Categories:

A 50% advance of the grant award can be provided to **New Farmer Micro Grant** awardees. The remaining 50% of the award shall be reimbursed upon project completion and submission of the final reporting documents.

New for 2024: A 25% advance of the grant award for **Infrastructure Investment Grant, Research and Development Grant, or Innovation and Diversification Grant** may be provided. The remaining 75% of the award shall be reimbursed upon project completion and submission of the final reporting documents.

Incomplete projects will not be reimbursed fully and will be prorated accordingly. Funds advanced for incomplete projects must be returned depending on the actual percentage of the project that was completed.

Project Duration & Post Award Requirements:

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

Grant funds cannot be requested for projects that have already been completed or items that have already been purchased. Expenses and match incurred prior to or after the 18-month Contract timeline are not eligible for reimbursement.

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. Attending a Contract Training Workshop.
4. Completing the project within the 18-month contractual timeframe.
5. Submitting a final project report in the required format per the executed contract.
6. Submitting a final financial report itemizing actual expenses.
7. Agreeing to a site inspection once the project is complete and prior to final payment being released.
8. Other requirements as outlined in the State of Connecticut contract.

If awarded, failure to provide necessary information to establish an agreement, or failure to sign and return a grant contract by the deadlines provided, may result in a rescinding of the award and the reallocation of funds to the Farm Transition Grant program. The awardee may

reapply for future funding opportunities, but there is no guarantee of future awarding if an award is rescinded for any reason.

Submission Process:

The 2024 Farm Transition Grant application shall be submitted through the online platform, Cognito. No ID or password is required and applications can be saved and completed/submitted at a later time. Links to the application for each grant category shall be hosted on the DOAG Farm Transition Grant website page [here](#).

Application Requirements:

1. Completion of the Grant Application Form.
2. Attachment of the Grant Narrative.
3. Attachment of the Budget Form and Project Timeline Workbook.
4. Attachment of conceptual drawings, estimates/quotes, production information, and other budget justification items to the application.
5. Attachment of a crop plan. (Only required for applicants to the New Farmer Micro Grant).

Additional information, such as quotes, conceptual drawings, and other documentation justifying and supporting the proposed budget is required to present a complete application. All prospective purchases for the completion of the project should be accompanied by a quote or estimate.

Evaluation Criteria and Process

The FTG 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 Grant Narrative and the project plan; the questions for which can be found below.

To receive high scores from a review panel, the Grant Narrative should fully answer the questions clearly and directly. Applications should clearly present how the project will be accomplished and undertaken within a reasonable timeline, the budget is justified and necessary, and there will be a positive, measurable change to the farm as a result of completing the project.

2024 Funding Priorities:

- Projects increasing the availability of livestock processing facilities in Connecticut.
- Projects increasing the utilization of equipment specific to sustainable agricultural practices.

Anticipated Timeline for Application Review, Award Notification, and Project Start*:

- Applications accepted through Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 4:00p.m.
- Evaluation of applications through February 9, 2024.
- Notification of awards released February 16, 2024.
- Anticipated Contract Start Date: March 15, 2024, or April 1, 2024.
 - Project Period: March 15, 2024, through September 15, 2025, or April 1, 2024, through October 1, 2025.

*The anticipated timeline for application review, award notification, and project start is subject to change.

Required Form: Budget Form and Project Timeline Workbook:

The information provided below for the Budget Form and Project Timeline Workbook is for informational purposes only. The three Excel worksheets within the workbook will need to be filled out and submitted with the application. The Workbook is available for download [here](#). Once completed, the Workbook should be added as an attachment to the overall grant application.

Budget Sheet:

Budget Application Form 2023 Farm Transition 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:</p> <p>a. Where the match is coming from (cash, loan, other grant, etc.)</p> <p>b. Sufficient explanation and justification of the financial support requested and the need for a cash advance (for new Farmer Micro Grant).</p>					
BUDGET	REMOVED SUBTOTALS GRANT FUNDS	GRANT FUNDS REQUESTED	REMOVED SUBTOTALS MATCH FUNDS	CASH MATCH OF APPLICANT	TOTAL COST
SALARIES AND FRINGE: Employee salary & fringe paid to execute the project is eligible. REVENUE: A list of all cash, loans, etc. added.	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
SALARY AND FRINGE 1: Employee salary & fringe paid to execute the project is eligible. REVENUE: A list of all cash, loans, etc. added.	N/A	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
EQUIPMENT: Equipment to be purchased per the project. Attaching quotes to justify the expense is required.	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$0.00
Item 1:	\$0.00	\$0.00			
RENTAL OF EQUIPMENT: Rented equipment required to complete the project (rollers, harrows, etc.)	Leave blank	\$0.00	Leave blank	\$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
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 supporting 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	Leave blank	\$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
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

If you're hiring a contractor do not break up the contractor's estimate into the various budget categories. The contractor's full estimate should be listed as one item in the Other/Other Contractor category.

Budget Narrative:

Budget Narrative
2023 Farm Transition Grant Application

The budget narrative should contain evidence or justification for costs reported on the budget sheet. For example, to complete your project you plan on utilizing two of your employees. While the budget sheet shows that the cost for your employees to do that work is \$6,000, here is where you justify that cost with an explanation.

For supplies or materials ordered online, insert a link to the product or service in the justification column. Remember to include shipping/freighting costs in the total cost of the item.

For example:

Item	Justification	Total Cost	Is this cost covered by another grant? If so, please indicate the grant name, awarding agency, and grant amount.
Salary	2 employees, \$25/hr, 4 hrs per week for 40 weeks	\$8,000	N/A
Other Costs: 3 Hydro Flex Clear Vinyl Tubing, 1/4 inch ID, 100 Feet	3 at \$24.99 each, plus \$20.00 estimated shipping https://hydrobuilder.com/hydro-flex-clear-vinyl-tubing-item-top-toy-hydroflex-100-gandy-30mft-p1610K	\$103.97	Grant A, USDA, \$2000

Fill out the table below as it pertains to your project. Add or remove rows as needed.

Item	Justification	Total Cost	Is this cost covered by another grant? If so, please indicate the grant name, awarding agency, and grant amount.

- a. Please provide a one-paragraph summary of the farming or agricultural experience you have.

2. Introduction –

- a. Introduce your business to the reviewers. Include information such as:
 - i. How long you've been in business.
 - ii. An overview of what you produce and how many acres are in production on your farm.
 - iii. Summary of future project and business plans.

3. Project Explanation –

- a. Explain the project you wish to complete. Be sure your explanation answers the following.
 - i. What would you like to purchase with grant funds?
 - ii. What steps will be needed to reach project completion?

4. Project Outcome or Impact –

- a. Identify at least one outcome you strive to achieve upon completing this project.
 - i. *Example:* There will be a 25% increase in yields by purchasing and installing shade cloths in the greenhouse.

5. Project Summary and Conclusions –

- a. In 3-4 sentences, tell us how this award would move your business beyond the status quo and bring it to the next level.
 - i. Consider how this award would help you expand or diversify production, produce value-added products, develop new products, or reach new customers.

Example Infrastructure Investment, Research and Development, and Innovation and Diversification Grant Narrative Questions

The **Infrastructure Investment Grant** aims to support farmers in production for a minimum of three years with infrastructure to expand the farm's production and operation.

The **Research and Development Grant** is a grant program through which farms can conduct research to assess the viability of and develop a new product line, service, or market.

The **Innovation and Diversification Grant** is a grant program for the implementation of a new product or service for market or business expansion after a research and development phase has been explored.

Please answer the following questions regarding the project for which you are applying. Once you have answered all questions, attach your document to your Farm Transition Grant application.

1. Introduction –

- a. How long have you been in business?
- b. Please provide an overview of what you produce and how many acres are in production.
- c. Have you applied for and received previous Department of Agriculture (DOAG) grants? If so, please give a short summary of projects completed with support from DOAG grants.

2. Project Explanation –

- a. What is your project?
- b. How will you complete your project? What steps will be needed to reach project completion?

3. Project Outcome or Impact –

- a. Provide at least one measurable outcome to be achieved upon completing this project.
 - i. *Example:* There will be a 25% increase in yields, resulting in more than 3,000 pounds of tomatoes each year, after purchasing and installing shade cloths in the greenhouse.

4. Target Markets –

- a. What expanded, additional, or new market(s) will your project allow you to serve or reach? Include information such as:
 - i. The number or volume of people, markets, products, etc.
 - ii. How will you change your marketing?

5. Project Summary and Conclusions –

- a. In 3-4 sentences, tell us how this award would move your business beyond the status quo and bring it to the next level.
 - i. Consider how this award would help you expand or diversify production, produce value-added products, develop new products, or reach new customers.

Landlord Consent Form:

If your project will be taking place on land that is leased or rented, you need to submit a consent form from your landlord regarding the project. A template consent form is available for download [here](#).

LANDLORD CONSENT TEMPLATE:

Below is a template landlord consent agreement for use by applicants for the Farm Transition Grant.

On this form, please fill in all of the corresponding information where you see the following [.....] fields. Once, filled in, please unhighlight the sections.

Please note—this document must be on Landlord letterhead and signed by the Landlord. It must be scanned and uploaded with the grant application to be accepted. Any questions should be directed to Alison Grabarz, by email at Alison.Grabarz@ct.gov.

[Insert Landlord/Company Name and Address]

[Insert Date]

RE: Consent from [Insert Landlord/Company Name] for [.....] Project

TO: CT Department of Agriculture

We consent to the proposed project referenced above. At the conclusion of the lease, the title of any equipment purchased with State of Connecticut awarded grant funds will remain in ownership and possession of the tenant, [Insert Farm/Tenant Name], as long as they are not in default of any rent payment.

Regards,

[Landlord/Company Signature]

[Signee Name, Title (if applicable)]