

Connecticut Department of Agriculture

Farm Viability Grant

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

2023 Grant Application Guidelines and Forms

***Application Deadline:
May 12, 2023, at 4:00 pm***



**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 May 12, 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:
Friday, May 12, 2023, at 4:00 p.m.

Applications will not be accepted after 4:00 p.m. on May 12, 2023.

Questions can be directed to Alison Grabarz:
Alison.Grabarz@ct.gov or (860) 993-5275

Informational Webinar:

Wednesday, April 19th at 10:00 am via Webex

A virtual workshop will be hosted on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at 10:00 am for interested applicants to learn more about the grant program, application requirements, and submission process. The webinar will take place on Webex. Registration for the workshop is required to receive the meeting link.

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

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 05-228](#), *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 is dependent upon the Micro Grant or Question of Focus applied for.

NEW for 2023: Farm Viability Micro Grants

The Farm Viability Grant program is now accepting applications for Micro Grants. Each Micro Grant category has a maximum award of \$5,000. All Micro Grant categories require a 40% cash match and applicants must qualify as an eligible applicant.

Please Note: Projects applying for one of the two Micro Grant Categories below are not required to correspond with a Question of Focus. Each Question of Focus also offers a Micro Grant opportunity.

- 1. Municipal Farm Map Projects. Maximum award \$5,000.** Municipalities may apply for funds to create an electronic and printed map/brochure highlighting all of the farms in their town and host a map unveiling event to encourage community support of local farmers.
Eligible expenses: Hiring subcontractors to develop the map, materials, limited supplies for the unveiling event, printing the developed materials, and event promotion.
- 2. Certified Farmers' Market Promotion and Outreach. Maximum award \$5,000.** Certified CT Grown farmers markets may apply for funds to develop new marketing materials and promote their market through print, digital, social, or other media outlets while using the CT Grown logo.
Eligible expenses: Hiring a graphic designer to create media, printing of developed materials, distribution of materials, and costs of promoting the market through print, digital, social, or other media outlets.

2023 Questions of Focus

Five Questions of Focus are outlined below. Each Question of Focus addresses a specific problem, interest, or need of the agricultural industry. Eligible applicants must describe how their project answers and responds to one of these Questions of Focus. The maximum award for applications addressing a

Question of Focus is \$49,999. **NEW for 2023:** Each Question of Focus also offers a Micro Grant Opportunity for up to \$5,000.

NEW Question of Focus for 2023:

1. **4-H Camp, Agricultural Science and Technology Education (ASTE) Center, and Agricultural Fair Organizations*:** Bolstering the availability of youth agricultural education, gaining agricultural experience and utilizing ag specific equipment with opportunities for hands-on skill development will encourage pursuit of lifelong careers in CT agriculture.

Question of Focus for 4-H Camp, ASTE Center and Agricultural Fair Organization Infrastructure Improvement

Please propose a project to deliver quality agricultural education, encourage hands-on skill development, or expand the program's available offerings through infrastructure improvements to school, camp, or agricultural fair facilities. Projects must directly and meaningfully support agriculturally related infrastructure.

Question of Focus Micro Grant Opportunity - Up to \$5,000 towards the purchase of one piece of agriculture-specific equipment for a 4-H camp, ASTE Center, or agricultural fair association.

*Agricultural fairs must be a member of the CT Fair Association.

2. **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Agriculture:** DoAg acknowledges the importance of supporting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive agricultural community and works towards achieving an industry that supports and endorses all farmers regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or ability.

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

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

NEW for 2023: Question of Focus Micro Grant Opportunity:

Up to \$5,000 to make materials or workshops and/or other ag resources more accessible. For example, these activities may include hiring a translation service for translation of agriculture-specific or culturally relevant materials, offering an in-person translator or interpreter during a workshop or training, or developing [plain language guides](#) for technical programs.

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

Question of Focus for Urban Agriculture

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

NEW for 2023: Question of Focus Micro Grant Opportunity - Up to \$5,000 for municipalities that are not eligible for DEEP's Urban Green and Community Gardens Grant program, to establish or make improvements to a previously established urban farm or garden.

For those who are eligible, community garden projects are also encouraged to apply to the [CT DEEP Urban Green and Community Gardens Grant Program](#).

- 4. Food Supply Chain:** The COVID 19 pandemic has continued to increase awareness of 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 significant 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 processing space available to process CT Grown farm products or propose/develop plans for construction of meat processing facilities/food hubs or co-op operations that would increase market opportunities for CT farmers.

NEW for 2023: Question of Focus Micro Grant Opportunity - Up to \$5,000 towards the purchase and installation of a refrigerator, freezer, walk-in cooler or freezer to allow for increased purchase and storage of CT Grown products.

- 5. 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 or current producers looking to expand their operation or supports succession strategies for farmers exiting agriculture.

NEW for 2023: Question of Focus Micro Grant Opportunity - Up to \$5,000 towards closing costs for the purchase of farmland by a new/beginning (1-3 years production history) or socially disadvantaged farmer.

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

DoAg reserves the right to alter the Question of Focus selected by the applicant. 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.

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.

Non-profit specific requirements:

- The non-profit must be registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State.
- Non-profits must have submitted Form 990 and been in existence for the previous three years.

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.

Match Requirement, Expenses, & Payment

The amount awarded to any applicant addressing a Question of Focus shall not exceed \$49,999.00.

The amount awarded to any applicant for a Micro Grant opportunity shall not exceed \$5,000.00.

All grants (micro grants included) 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 in total **cannot exceed 25% 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 **complete within 18 months** of the contract start date. Contract and project extensions are not allowed. Please anticipate a project start date of June 2023.

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 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

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

program. The awardee may reapply through future funding opportunities but there is no guarantee of future awarding.

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

Submission Process

The grant application for both Micro Grants and Questions of Focus is available on the [Farm Viability Grant website](#).

Only complete applications submitted through the Cognito link on the website will be accepted.

Application Requirements

A complete application includes:

1. Budget Form added as an attachment.
2. Grant Narrative responses added as an attachment.
3. Conceptual drawings, estimates/quotes, other budget justification items, and letters of support added as attachments.
4. Landlord consent form added as an attachment (if the project will be taking place on land that is leased or rented).

[Copies of the Budget Form and Grant Narrative Template can be found here.](#)

Evaluation Criteria and Process

The Farm Viability Grant is a competitive grant. Only complete applications, as outlined above which are submitted on time through the Cognito link, will be evaluated. The evaluation will be weighted heavily on the project plan described in the Grant Narrative.

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 is available for download here.](#) Applicants must upload this budget form as an attachment to their application.

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 & FRINGE. Employee salary & fringe 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 & 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	#REF!	Leave blank	\$0.00	\$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 cost/estimate should be listed as one item in the *Consultant/Contractual* category.

Grant Narrative Template

The information provided below for the Grant Narrative Template is for informational purposes only. [The Grant Narrative questions are available for download here.](#) Applicants must upload their responses as an attachment to their application.

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

- 1. Introduction for Municipality/ Council of Gov't** – Introduce the municipality/COG to the reviewers. Include information such as:
 - a. Brief agricultural history of the municipality/COG 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?

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 your proposed project in detail and the activities needed to complete the project. Try to include a sentence summarizing the main goal activities and objectives of the project.

Identify which Question of Focus or Micro Grant your project addresses.
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.

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.

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

- 4. Project Timeline** – Include all project milestones and related deadlines. Applicants must budget for the project planning, implementation, and final reporting to be conducted during an 18-month period. 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. Anticipate a project start date of June 1, 2023.

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 may include:
- a. Veterans
 - b. New and beginning farmers (farming for 1-3 years)
 - c. Anyone that speaks English as a second language
 - d. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) producers
 - e. Anyone in a protected class (who are not reflected in the list above).

Please explain how you will be serving this expanded audience and any prior experience working with/reaching these groups.

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 the Question of Focus or Micro Grant and create solutions to address an industry need?