

# Connecticut Department of Agriculture

## ***Agricultural Enhancement Grant***

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

### ***2025 Grant Application Guidelines and Forms***

***Application Deadline:  
February 28, 2025, at 4:00:00 pm***



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



**Connecticut Department of Agriculture**  
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**[www.CTGrown.gov](http://www.CTGrown.gov)**

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Scan here to visit the Ag.  
Enhancement website!

## **Important Dates:**

Applications must be received by:

**Friday, February 28, 2025, at 4:00:00 p.m.**

**Applications will not be accepted after 4:00:00 p.m. on February 28, 2025.**

### **Anticipated Timeline for Application Review, Awards, and Project Start\*:**

- Applications accepted through Friday, February 28, 2025, at 4:00:00p.m.
- Notification of awards released by April 4, 2025.
- Anticipated Contract Start Date-
  - May 1, 2025, for awards of \$5,000 or less.
  - May 15, 2025, for contracts \$5,001 and up.

\*The anticipated timeline for application review, award notification, and project start is subject to change. Please check the [grant webpage](#) for the latest information.

### **Agricultural Enhancement Grant Overview Webinar:**

A virtual workshop will be hosted on **Friday, January 24th, 2025, from 10:00-11:30am** for interested applicants to learn more about the grant program, application requirements, and submission process. The webinar will take place on Zoom. Registration for the workshop is required to receive the meeting link.

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

The Agricultural Enhancement Grant Overview webinar will be recorded and posted on the [Agricultural Enhancement Grant website](#) for those who cannot attend the live session. The [FAQs](#) available on the website will also be updated after the conclusion of each Open Office Hours.

### **Open Office Hours:**

Virtual office hours will be held on **Tuesday, February 4, 2025, from 10:00am-11:00am** via Zoom, to give applicants a chance to drop in and ask questions.

[Click here to join the office hours.](#)

Virtual office hours will be held on **Thursday, February 13, 2025, from 11:00am-12:00pm** via Zoom, to give applicants a chance to drop in and ask questions.

[Click here to join the office hours.](#)

**Questions about the workshop or office hours can be directed to Alison Grabarz at**  
[\*\*Alison.Grabarz@ct.gov\*\*](mailto:Alison.Grabarz@ct.gov)

## **Grant Description**

The Agricultural Enhancement Grant Program 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 Agricultural Enhancement Grant must advance farming and agriculture as defined by [Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-1\(q\)](#).

Funding for the Agricultural Enhancement Grant is provided through the State of Connecticut [Public Act 05-228](#), *An Act Concerning Farmland Preservation, Land Protection, Affordable Housing, and Historic Preservation*.

The Agricultural Enhancement Grant Program and any awards are subject to limitations of state funding. The amount awarded to any applicant through the Agricultural Enhancement Grant is dependent upon the Grant Tier applied for.

Grant Tier	Maximum Award	Match Required (cash or in-kind)	Project Duration
1	\$5,000	25%	18 months.
2	\$49,999	40%	24 months.

Grant tiers and examples of acceptable projects are outlined below. You may submit only one application.

## **Funding Priorities:**

Projects which impact and/or foster agricultural viability through one of the following conduits shall be prioritized. Projects involving these priorities are not guaranteed for funding.

- Youth Agricultural Education
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Agriculture
- Urban Agriculture
- Food Supply Chain
- Farmland Accessibility

Applicants with projects involving the Food Supply Chain may also consider CT DOAG's [Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grant](#), which supports projects that expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, or distribution of food products grown in Connecticut. The "Equipment Only" grants award up to \$100,000 and do not require cash match. Learn more [here](#).

## **Tier 1:**

Tier 1 Grants have a maximum award of \$5,000.

All Tier 1 Grants require 25% match through cash or in-kind contributions.

Tier 1 grant applications must directly impact and/or foster agricultural viability. Examples of acceptable projects include:

1. Creating a multilingual electronic and printed map/brochure highlighting all farms in a municipality and hosting a map unveiling event to encourage community support of local farmers.
2. Develop new, multilingual marketing materials for a Certified CT Grown farmers' markets to promote the market and availability of redemption for the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, if applicable) through print, digital, social, or other media outlets while using the CT Grown logo.
3. Hiring agricultural experts to provide multilingual guest lectures, supplemental training, or workshops in their area of expertise.
4. Increasing the accessibility of multilingual technical materials, workshops and/or other agricultural resources. 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.
5. Establishing or making improvements to a previously established urban farm or garden. *For eligible municipalities, community garden projects are also encouraged to apply to the [CT DEEP Urban Green and Community Gardens Grant Program](#).*
6. Offsetting expenses for new and beginning, BIPOC, or veteran farmers to participate in a Certified CT Grown farmers' market. Expenses such as town permit fees, signage, display necessities (such as tables), food safety related materials (such as portable handwashing station or coolers) would be eligible.
7. Purchasing equipment for or making infrastructure improvements to town or non-profit-owned farm properties.
8. Creative, innovative projects that support the viability of local farms and/or the agricultural industry.

## **Tier 2:**

Tier 2 Grants have a maximum award of \$49,999.

All Tier 2 Grants require 40% match through cash or in-kind contributions.

Tier 2 grant applications must directly impact and/or foster agricultural viability. Examples of acceptable projects include:

1. Delivering quality, multilingual agricultural education, encouraging hands-on skill development, or expanding a program's available offerings through infrastructure improvements to facilities where youth agricultural education takes place.
2. Purchasing specialized agricultural equipment.
3. Responding to, or supporting the agency with responding to one of the recommendations identified in the [DEI Working Group Report](#), or another identified area of need by your

population of focus. Projects must directly benefit, and be informed by, farmers in one or more of the following classifications: BIPOC, veterans, members of the LGBTQ+ community or people with a disability.

4. Establishing or expanding support and resources for urban agriculture.
5. Strengthening the local food supply by increasing production of CT Grown farm products.
6. Proposing or developing plans for meat processing facilities.
7. Expanding marketing efforts to increase the purchase and sale of CT Grown farm products.
8. Addressing farmland accessibility or piloting an effort to inventory, survey, and/or prepare vacant farmland for agricultural production.
9. Improving accessibility of farmland for new farmers, current producers looking to expand, or supporting succession strategies for farmers exiting agriculture.
10. Creative, innovative projects that support the viability of local farms and/or the agricultural industry.

### **Eligible Applicants**

The following entities are eligible to apply for all Agricultural Enhancement Grant Tiers:

1. Municipalities with a current Plan of Conservation and Development. Please visit the [CT Office of Policy and Management website](#) to determine if your municipality qualifies.
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 7-339j](#), inclusive.
4. Agricultural non-profit organizations.

Projects taking place on leased or rented land must include a [Landlord Consent Form](#) between all necessary parties regarding the submitted project with their application.

### **Non-profit specific requirements:**

- Non-profits 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 awardees may reapply for an Agricultural Enhancement Grant. However, open awards, past awards, and corresponding project completion and outcomes will be taken into consideration.

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:

2023: Project awarded

2024: Project awarded

2025: Ineligible for an award

2026: Eligible for an award

## **Match Requirement, Expenses, & Payment**

Grant Tier	Maximum Award	Match Required (cash or in-kind)	Project Duration
1	\$5,000	25%	18 months.
2	\$49,999	40%	24 months.

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.

If you are unsure how to determine your required cash match, please refer to the “Cash/In-Kind Match Charts” on page 10.

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 eligibility of general-purpose equipment will be reviewed based on project usage.

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 Contract timeframe are ineligible.

*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 or retainers
- 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 or retainers)
- Consumable or disposable supplies
- Employee salaries and fringe benefits paid to execute the project

### **Payment Schedule:**

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.

Incomplete projects will not be fully reimbursed and prorated accordingly. Funds advanced for incomplete projects must be returned.

Grant funds cannot be requested for projects that have already been completed or for items that have already been purchased. Expenses and match incurred outside of the 18–24-month Contract period are not eligible for reimbursement.

### **Project Duration & Post Award Requirements**

Projects must be **complete within 18-24 months** of the contract start date. Contract and project extensions are not allowed.

Grant Tier	Maximum Award	Match Required (cash or in-kind)	Project Duration
1	\$5,000	25%	18 months.
2	\$49,999	40%	24 months.

Please anticipate a project start date of May 1, 2025, for awards of \$5,000 or less and May 15, 2025, for contracts \$5,001 and up.

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 provide necessary information by the deadline provided or failure to sign and return a grant contract by the deadline provided, may result in rescinding of the award and the reallocation of funds back to the Agricultural Enhancement 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.

Awarded grantees will receive additional training on contract requirements and obligations, provided by CT DOAG, prior to contract issuance.

### **Submission Process**

The 2025 Agricultural Enhancement Grant application for all Grant Tiers is available on the [Agricultural Enhancement Grant website](#).

Only complete applications submitted through the [Cognito link on the website](#) will be accepted. No ID or password is required, and application progress can be saved and completed or submitted at a later time.

### **Application Requirements**

1. Completion of the Grant Application Form.
2. Attachment of estimates/quotes, product information, or other budget justification items.
3. Letters of support, if applicable.
  - a) Required for outside organizations named as partners on the proposed project.
4. Attachment of a landlord consent form, if applicable.
  - a) Required if the project is taking place on leased or rented land.
5. Attachment of a State Vendor Form and W9, if applicable.
  - a) Required for businesses who have not received a CT DOAG grant within the last 5 years.

### **Evaluation Criteria and Process**

The Agricultural Enhancement 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 section of the application.

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.

### **Landlord Consent Form**

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

## **W9 and State Vendor Form**

If the applicant has not previously received funds from CT DOAG or has not received a grant within the last 5 years, an updated W9 form and State Vendor form will be required with your application. The forms are available for download [here](#).

## **Cash/In-Kind Match Charts**

Each Grant Tier of the Agricultural Enhancement Grant requires a percentage of cash or in-kind match (or a combination of the two). These are listed below.

To find your required match contribution, first determine the Grant Tier you are applying for. Next, calculate the total cost for your project. The match required is found by multiplying your total project cost by the match requirement percentage.

The highlighted row of each chart shows the total project cost required to request the maximum grant award.

### **Tier 1:**

- Maximum award amount: \$5,000
- Match Requirement: At least 25% of total project costs

<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>Grant Funds Available</b>	<b>Match Required</b>
\$100	\$75	\$25
\$1,000	\$750	\$250
\$5,000	\$3,750	\$1,250
\$6,000	\$4,500	\$1,500
<b>\$6,666.67*</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<b>\$1,666.67</b>
\$8,000	\$5,000	\$3,000

\*The maximum grant award is reached when the total project costs equal \$6,666.67.

### **Tier 2:**

- Maximum award amount: \$49,999
- Match Requirement: At least 40% of total project costs

<b>Total Project Costs</b>	<b>Grant Funds Available</b>	<b>Match Required</b>
\$100	\$60	\$40
\$10,000	\$6,000	\$4,000
\$50,000	\$30,000	\$20,000
\$75,000	\$45,000	\$30,000
<b>\$83,331.67*</b>	<b>\$49,999</b>	<b>\$33,332.67</b>
\$100,000	\$49,999	\$50,001

\*The maximum grant award is reached when the total project costs equal \$83,331.67.