

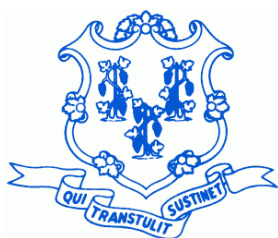
Connecticut Department of Agriculture

AGRICULTURAL ENHANCEMENT GRANT

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

2026 Grant Application Guidelines and Forms

***Application Deadline:
February 2, 2026, at 4:00:00pm***



***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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Scan to visit the website.

IMPORTANT DATES

**APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY:
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2026, AT 4:00:00 P.M.
EASTERN STANDARD TIME (EST).**

Applications will not be accepted after 4:00:00 p.m. (EST) on February 2, 2026.

- CT DOAG will not accept late applications under any circumstance.
- Apply early so there is enough time to get familiar with the application system.
- It's best practice to submit your application at least 24 hours in advance.
- CT DOAG is not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in late submission.
- It is your responsibility to ensure we receive your application before the deadline.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered. Applications must include all required application materials, including attachments.

CT DOAG reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet these requirements.

By submitting an application, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award.

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE FOR APPLICATION REVIEW, AWARDS, AND PROJECT START*:

- Applications accepted through Monday, February 2, 2026, at 4:00:00 p.m.
- Notification of awards by March 9, 2026.
- Anticipated Contract Start Date-
 - April 1, 2026, for awards of \$5,000 or less
 - April 15, 2026, 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.

GRANT OVERVIEW WEBINAR

A virtual workshop will be held on **Friday, January 9, 2026, from 11:00 am-12:30 pm, via Zoom**, for those interested in applying for the Agricultural Enhancement Grant. This workshop will provide an overview of the grant program, application components, and submission process.

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

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 Agricultural Enhancement Grant website will be updated after the conclusion of each Open Office Hours.

OPEN OFFICE HOURS

There will be two virtual office hours opportunities for potential applicants to drop in and ask application, submission and project-specific questions.

1. **Tuesday, January 20, 2026, from 11:00am-12:00pm via Zoom**

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

2. **Thursday, January 29, 2026, from 11:00am-12:00pm, via Zoom.**

[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**

GRANT SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The Agricultural Enhancement (AgE) 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](#).

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

CT DOAG expects to award approximately \$500,000 in this round using a competitive review process. Grant awards can range in size from \$500 to \$49,999.

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. See page 6 for additional information.

A town, nonprofit organization, or regional council of government may only receive one AgE Grant in FY 2026.

Agreements may last between 18 months to two (2) years from the agreement start-date. CT DOAG anticipates most agreements to start in April 2026. Applicants should anticipate agreements will end by October 2027 or April 2028 and may not be extended.

If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenditures after the grant agreement is fully executed and it is on or after the agreement effective date, and the grantee has been notified by the grant manager they may begin work.

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 agriculture education
- Urban agriculture

- Food hubs and aggregation
- Food supply chain improvements and expansions
- Farmland accessibility

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 7-339l](#), 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.

Previous awardees to the AgE Grant can reapply. Open awards, past awards, project completion and outcomes of previous awards will be considered in the evaluation of the current 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:

2024: Project awarded

2025: Project awarded

2026: Ineligible for an award

2027: Eligible for an award

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND EXPENSES

DEFINITION OF A PROJECT

A project is a set of interrelated tasks with a cohesive, distinct, specified, and defined goal. It follows a planned, organized approach over a fixed period of time and within specific limitations (cost, performance/quality, etc.).

Projects are different from ongoing operations because, unlike operations, projects have a definitive beginning and end—they have a limited duration.

Only submissions that meet the definition of a project will be considered.

WHAT IS AN ELIGIBLE PROJECT?

Projects that enhance agricultural viability in CT shall be considered. Projects that maintain existing operations or projects that are not sustainable beyond the period of grant funding will be less competitive.

Applications should demonstrate clear projects that will positively impact CT agriculture through increased agricultural education, training programs, critical infrastructure, beneficial partnerships, or other creative solutions to fulfill an industry need. Quantifiable project outcomes are requested in the application and essential to present a competitive application.

GRANT TIERS

Two distinct grant tiers are available. Applicants must select the tier they feel best fits the scale of their project.

Each applicant may only submit one (1) project to be considered per grant cycle. CT DOAG reserves the right to adjust the grant tier selected by the applicant.

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

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 are listed below:

1. Creating 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. Developing new 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 guest lectures, supplemental training, or workshops in their area of expertise.
4. Increasing the accessibility of technical materials, workshops and/or other agricultural resources.
 - a. These activities may include hiring a translation service for translation of agriculture-specific 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.
 - a. ***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 farmers to participate in a Certified CT Grown farmers' market.
 - a. 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.

This is not an exhaustive list of eligible projects. If there is a question on the eligibility of a project, attending the webinar or office hours is strongly encouraged. See page 4 for more information and to register.

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 are listed below:

1. Delivering quality 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. Establishing or expanding support and resources for urban agriculture.
4. Strengthening the local food supply by increasing production of CT Grown farm products.
5. Proposing or developing plans for meat processing facilities.
6. Installation of critical infrastructure to increase the storage and distribution capacity of food hubs.
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 farmland access 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.

This is not an exhaustive list of eligible projects. If there is a question on the eligibility of a project, attending the webinar or office hours is strongly encouraged. See page 4 for more information and to register.

MATCH REQUIREMENT, EXPENSES, & PAYMENT

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

All grant tiers have a cash and/or in-kind match requirement. The match requirement for each program can be self-financed, bank-financed, or provided through another grant (federal or private). If a grant is providing the match, the applicant must disclose the grantor, the grant name, and amount awarded.

You cannot use another state grant to provide the match for this grant program.

If you are unsure how to determine your required match, please reference the “Cash/In-Kind Match Charts” on page 16.

Employee salaries and fringe benefits to execute the project are allowable expenses but in total **cannot exceed 25% of the grant funds requested.**

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF EXPENSES THAT CAN BE REIMBURSED WITH GRANT FUNDS *(THIS IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST)*:

- Multi-media marketing expenses
- Employee salaries and fringe benefits paid to execute the project (cannot exceed 25% of grant funds requested)
- Agriculture-specific equipment or general-purpose 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. If there is a question on the eligibility of an expense, attending the webinar or open hours is strongly encouraged. See page 4 for more information and to register.

ACCEPTABLE MATCH EXPENSES

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 associated with the project
- Attorneys' fees associated with project execution (not related to litigation or retainers)
- Consumable or disposable supplies directly related to the project

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

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 or retainers.
- Indirect or contingency costs of any percentage.
- Purchasing one's own product or service.
- General purpose equipment (vehicles of any kind, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), skid steer loaders, or tractors).
- General purpose buildings (equipment storage, garages).
- Animal feed or crop seed.
- Livestock.
- Plant starters, tree grafts, fruit bushes, or other started or mature plants, bushes, or trees.
- Parking lots.
- Bathrooms.

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

If there is a question on the eligibility of an expense, attending the webinar or open hours is strongly encouraged. See page 4 for more information and to register.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The Agricultural Enhancement Grant award must be paid directly to the business identified on the grant agreement.

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

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

PROJECT DURATION & POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS

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

Projects must be **completed within 18-24 months** of contract execution. Contract and project extensions are not allowed.

Anticipate a project start date of April 1, 2026, for awards of \$5,000 or less and April 15, 2026, 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. Attending a Contract Training Workshop.
4. Completing the project within the 18-24-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 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 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.

SUBMISSION PROCESS

The 2026 Agricultural Enhancement Grant application shall be submitted through the online platform, Cognito. No ID or password is required, and application progress can be saved and completed or submitted at a later time.

Links to the application are on the Agricultural Enhancement Grant website page [here](#).

To receive high scores from a review panel, the application should fully answer the questions clearly and directly. Applications should present how the project will be accomplished within a reasonable timeline.

The budget must be justified and supported with outside documentation and the project outcomes should be impactful to the organization or target audience, measurable, and a direct result of completing the proposed project.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. Completion of the Grant Application Form.
2. Attachment of conceptual drawings, estimates/quotes, product information, and other budget justification items. Quotes, conceptual drawings, and other documentation justifying and supporting the proposed budget are required to present a complete application. All prospective purchases for the completion of the project should be accompanied by a quote or estimate.
3. Attachment of letters of support from project partners, community stakeholders or other project beneficiaries.
4. Attachment of a landlord consent form, if applicable. This is required if the project is taking place on leased or rented land.
5. Attachment of a State Vendor Form and W9, if applicable. This is required for applicants who have not received a CT DOAG grant within the last 5 years.

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](#).

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 five (5) years, an updated W9 form and State Vendor form will be required with your application. The forms are available for download [here](#).

SCORING RUBRIC

Applications will be reviewed by a review panel comprised of representatives from CT DOAG, other ag-service providers, and members of the CT agriculture community. Each application will be scored by a confidential review panel using the same rubric by a minimum of three (3) independent reviewers to determine an overall average score.

Applications recommended by the review panels are presented to the Commissioner of Agriculture who has the final decision.

REVIEWER SCORING CRITERIA

Project Proposal (50 points)

Thorough workplan detailing how the project will be completed.	10 points
Describes how the completion of their project will impact the organization or target audience in the long and short-term to enhance agricultural viability.	15 points
Provides at least one measurable outcome as a result of the project related to agricultural viability. If applicable, the outcome provides amounts at current levels and predicted increases or decreases upon project completion.	10 points
Provides a timeline demonstrating the project can be completed within the allowed 18-24 months.	5 points
Demonstrates their project is well-aligned with the goals of the AgE Grant, funding priorities (if applicable), and provides supporting details.	5 points
Supplementary materials such as diagrams, sketches, equipment manuals, or conceptual drawings to illustrate the proposed project and increase reviewer understanding of the project are provided.	5 points

Target Audience and Community (25 points)

Details the expanded, additional, or new audience to be reached upon completion of the project.	10 points
Includes letters of support from their community, target audience, project partners or other project beneficiaries to demonstrate the project need and anticipated impact.	10 points
Explanation of how the project will have a positive impact on agricultural viability in CT.	5 points

Budget (25 points)

Provides an itemized budget containing all project expenses.	10 points
Includes at least the minimum required cash/in-kind match.	5 points
Provides supplementary materials to support their proposed budget including quotes, estimates, screenshots of websites, etc.	10 points

The maximum score to be achieved by an AgE Grant proposal is 100 points.

CASH/IN-KIND MATCH CHARTS

EACH TIER OF THE AGRICULTURAL ENHANCEMENT GRANT HAS A UNIQUE MAXIMUM AWARD AND MATCH REQUIREMENT.

To determine the required match amount, first determine the category you are applying for.

Next, calculate the total cost for your project. The cash match required is found by multiplying your total project cost by the match requirement percentage.

TIER 1:

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

Total Project Costs	Grant Funds Available	Cash and/or In-Kind Match Required
\$1,000	\$750	\$250
\$2,000	\$1,500	\$500
\$2,500	\$1,875	\$625
\$3,000	\$2,250	\$750
\$4,000	\$3,000	\$1,000
\$5,000	\$3,750	\$1,250
\$6,000	\$4,500	\$1,500
\$6,666.67*	\$5,000	\$1,666.67
\$8,000	\$5,000	\$3,000

*The maximum grant amount 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

Total Project Costs	Grant Funds Available	Cash and/or In-Kind Match Required
\$20,000	\$12,000	\$8,000
\$30,000	\$18,000	\$12,000
\$40,000	\$24,000	\$16,000
\$50,000	\$30,000	\$20,000
\$60,000	\$36,000	\$24,000
\$70,000	\$42,000	\$28,000
\$80,000	\$48,000	\$32,000
\$83,331.67*	\$49,999	\$33,332.67
\$90,000	\$49,999	\$40,001

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