

Answers to 2024-2026 FarmLink RFP Questions

1. Does the 6 page limit include cover sheet, Table of Contents, and ExSum? Or is it specific to the project narrative?

The 6 page limit does not include the cover sheet, table of contents and executive summary. There is a 6 page limit for the Main Proposal which includes: 1) Project Narrative, 2) Work Plan and Timeline, 3) Data and Technology, 4) Subcontractors. Please see page 15 of the RFP for more details on the Main Proposal.
2. What is the award ceiling for the collective awards?

The maximum collective award amount is \$250,000. No single award will exceed \$200,000.
3. Is there a minimum or maximum number of awards?

There is no minimum or maximum number of awards.
4. Is there a minimum or maximum dollar amount per award that will be considered?

Please see the answer to question #2.
5. Can funding amounts be negotiated during the contract phase (i.e. If requested funds are higher than the department can expend, can an award be granted at a lower amount and negotiate the related deliverables)?

If the application is not fully funded, the scope of work can be subject to adjustment based on the approved funding amount.
6. We're registered with the CT Source contracting portal. I'm not finding the required forms under our user profile section nor under the solicitation. Can you provide further instructions about where I'd find these materials and how to complete this? I can't find the following forms:
 - Secretary of State recognition – Click on appropriate response. **Please select the appropriate response.**
 - Non-profit status, if applicable **A statement from the applicant certifying that:**
 - (i) The organization is a nonprofit organization operating within the State; and
 - (ii) No part of its net earnings may lawfully benefit any private shareholder or individual.
 - Notification to Bidders, Parts I-V **There is no form necessary to complete here.**
 - Consulting Agreement Affidavit (OPM Ethics Form 5) – Requires Notarization; available at: Microsoft Word - OPM Form 5 Consulting Agreement Affidavit 3-28-14 ([ct.gov](https://portal.ct.gov/portal.ct.gov/opm/fin-psa/forms/ethics-forms)) **This form has been rescinded. Please fill out [OPM Form 1](#) instead.**
 - OPM Gift Form 1 Gift and Contribution Certification Form 6A ([ct.gov](https://portal.ct.gov/portal.ct.gov/opm/fin-psa/forms/ethics-forms)) **This form has been rescinded. Please fill out [OPM Form 1](#) instead. More information and the form can be found here: <https://portal.ct.gov/portal.ct.gov/opm/fin-psa/forms/ethics-forms>**
7. Can you provide guidance on where and how to upload our response? Should it all be packaged in one pdf and uploaded as attachments through the Solicitation Request for Proposal: CT Farmlink 2024-2026 (cognitofarms.com)

The uploads must be submitted through the Solicitation Request for Proposal: CT Farmlink 2024-2026 (cognitofarms.com)
Proposals cannot be submitting through CT Source. Please see page #7 of the RFP.
8. How do we talk about partnering with other organizations if we can't know if they're applying and whether they'll get funded?

You are allowed to talk with other organizations and potential bidders. You are welcome to submit a collaborative proposal with one or more organizations.

9. We want to hire a contractor to do communications. With this short turnaround we have not identified a consultant to perform this work and how do we address the section that asks about the qualifications of key staff?

You can discuss the qualifications and budget of what you're looking for in a potential contractor even if you don't have a specific contractor in mind.

10. The proposal asks for collaborators you may partner with. We plan to work with lots of collaborators, as we have in the past. However, under V. Mandatory Provisions and B, Assurances on page 17 and 18 you have a strict "competitors" policy that we can't talk to each other about our respective proposals' costs lest we be disqualified. This is confusing. What can we say in the proposal statement section regarding collaborators if we can't talk with our potential collaborators in advance?

You can collaborate and submit one proposal. Proposals that do not formally incorporate a partner or collaborator should not be discussed with other potential bidders.

11. We think the Carrot Project's services could be a big benefit to the FarmLink program. Are we permitted to encourage them to apply? If so, are they eligible to apply as an organization "located outside of the state but with a consistent and dedicated presence in the state to conduct activities, all of which shall be conducted in CT"?

You may encourage other organizations to submit proposals. The Carrot Project is eligible to submit a proposal per the definition above.

12. If we would like to partner with someone, how do we talk about that in our proposal if we're not supposed to talk in advance?

If you are formally partnering with someone and your budget reflects that, you may discuss your proposal in advance.

13. How do we represent the cost of administering the program services in the contract budget?

Administration can be reflected by full time equivalent (FTE's) salary and fringe or by justified indirect costs.

14. Can we cover the time spent invoicing Dept of Agriculture? Can the time our accountant spends compiling timesheets and generating and submitting invoices to DoAg be covered?

This could be an itemized expense or incorporated into indirect costs.

- a. The process is long and tedious. Can it be simplified in the contract? This process is per procurement and OPM standards.
- b. For example, can we provide an aggregate number of hours spent working instead of a number of hours on each goal/task. This is not relevant to the procurement process.

15. For the personnel part of the budget, our preference is to charge a flat rate/hour. Do you prefer a breakout of payroll taxes and benefits?

If the cost per hour is not reflective of the fringe benefits, then you may include a breakout in your budget.

16. What rent, utilities, etc. can count as program costs?

This would be reflected in your indirect cost rate.

17. The way we've been invoicing this past contract has been complicated and needs to be simplified. Is this possible and when would we know? The answer influences whether we might contract with other people and organizations.

This is not relevant to the procurement process.

18. Can we add a pay increase in year two?

Yes.

19. How granular should we make the budget table? For example, do you want to know how many hours our Coordinator spends on each activity? Or can we give you an aggregate number of hours per person?

This is at your discretion but the more detailed the proposal is, the more competitive.

20. What are the reporting requirements?

It is anticipated that monthly invoicing and annual reporting will be required.

21. Can we coordinate activities with other organizations for the proposal, or assume the participation of other organizations that are currently involved with FarmLink?

Yes, you can coordinate activities with other organizations including those previously involved with FarmLink.