

Farm
**State Assistance For
Enhancements (SAFE) Grant**
Grant Guidelines and Forms

**Application Deadline:
March 6, 2015 by 4:00pm**



Dannel P. Malloy, Governor
Steven K. Reviczky, Commissioner of Agriculture

Connecticut Department of Agriculture
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Appendices

- A: Application Cover Page
- B: Budget Application Form
- C: Guide to Writing a Business Plan
- D: Application Check List

**Applications must be received via email by:
March 6, 2015 at 4:00pm**

Applications will only be accepted via email. Applications can be sent
to
Jaime Smith, Jaime.Smith@ct.gov, at the Connecticut Department of
Agriculture.

Questions can be directed to:
Jaime Smith at 860-713-2559 or Jaime.Smith@ct.gov

Grant guidelines and forms can also be found online at
www.CTGrown.gov/Grants

Grant Description

The goal of the Farm State Assistance for Enhancements (SAFE) Grant is to provide matching funds to Connecticut farmers and farmer cooperatives to improve and diversify production, harvesting, processing, and manufacturing of agricultural farm products in accordance with the anticipated Food Safety Moderation Act (FSMA) to expand venues and other markets in which a majority of products sold are grown in the state.

The purpose of the Farm SAFE Grant is:

- to provide financial support to farmers to enhance their agricultural operations in accordance with anticipated FSMA regulations to increase profits;
- to assist farmers seeking to diversify, transition into new production areas, and/or expand existing production in accordance with anticipated FSMA regulations;

Funding for the Farm SAFE Grant is provided through the State of Connecticut Farm Transition Grant, established in 2005 through Public Act 228-05, An Act Concerning Farmland Preservation, Land Protection, Affordable Housing, and Historic Preservation.

Eligible Applicants

To qualify for the Farm SAFE Grant you must be a farm business or a farmer cooperative:

1. registered with the Connecticut Secretary of State;
2. hold a Farmer's Tax Exemption Permit from the Connecticut Department of Revenue Services;
3. have submitted the previous year's Schedule F, Form 1120S, or Schedule C.
4. in production for a minimum of three years.

There are no restrictions on an applicant's eligibility to receive funding through the Farm SAFE Grant if other grant funding has been awarded to the applicant in previous years. However, past awards and corresponding project completion will be taken into consideration.

Award Limits and Matching Requirements

The maximum amount to be awarded to any applicant through the Farm SAFE Grant is \$25,000.00.

Matching funds from the applicant must be a *minimum* of 50% of the total cost of the project budget - the applicant's match may exceed the required 50% minimum. This must be clearly outlined in the application.

The Farm SAFE Grant can work in conjunction with projects that secure bank financing and projects that are self-financed to provide the minimum 50% cash match. The grant

must be paid directly to the applicant. A project which is obtaining a cash match through a grant (federal, state, or otherwise), must disclose the who the grant is awarded by, the grant name, and amount(s) awarded.

Eligible and Ineligible Expenses

All eligible expenses funded by the Farm SAFE Grant must be in line with the Definition of Agriculture as defined by Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-1(q).

Ineligible expenses include, but not limited to, the following:

1. Farm employee salaries and fringe benefits to execute the project.
2. Any expense incurred prior to application approval.
3. Land acquisition/mortgages.
4. Mortgage refinancing.
5. Cost of borrowing (points and other fees).
6. Expenses to fund the start-up of a new organization.
7. General overhead costs and costs associated with doing business such as heat, rent, maintenance, electricity that would occur in absence of the project, and equipment such as computers or video equipment with usefulness beyond the boundaries of the project.
8. Expenses related to maintaining the status quo of the current operation.
9. Tuition/tuition reimbursement or career-related/scholarship funds.
10. Travel including transportation, hotels, meals, or per diem.

Project Duration

Projects must be completed within one year of the required signed contract.

Final project inspection by agency staff and grant payment must be executed within six months after project completion.

Submission Process

Applications are only accepted via email to Jaime Smith, Jaime.Smith@ct.gov. Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, March 6, 2015.

*Please keep in mind there is occasionally a delay with email and to plan accordingly.
A confirmation email will be sent upon receipt of the application.*

Application Requirements

A complete application includes:

1. Application Cover Page (Appendix A)
2. Budget Page (Appendix B)
3. A business plan (*A Guide to Writing a Business Plan* can be found in Appendix C)
4. Application Check List (Appendix D)

Funding Priorities

Below are funding priorities of the Farm SAFE Grant as they directly relate and respond to the enhancement of on-farm food safety techniques in compliance with anticipated FSMA regulations. Funds will be available to assist in meeting minimum standards to maintain worker health and hygiene, amend existing agricultural water systems, improve soil amendment systems, improving packing areas, and create or improve a traceability program.

The following are specific projects which will be given priority:

- Field sanitation units.
- Field/portable hand wash stations.
- Improvement to irrigation equipment to change over/implement drip/trickle irrigation systems—water pump, water filter, controller/timer, pressure regulators, backflow preventer, valves, pipe filters, flush cap, micro tubes/drip tape, pipes, emitters, plastic/drip tape layer.
- Wash stations—wash table, sort table, wash tank, washer/sprayer, absorbers, feed belt, and other systems specifically designed for washing of fruits and vegetables in accordance with anticipated FSMA regulations.
- Disinfection systems for water used in contact with harvested fruits and vegetables.
- Purchase and installation of temperature monitoring system on wash/dunk tanks.
- Purchase and implementation of a traceability system in accordance with anticipated FSMA regulations.
- Installation of wells.
- Facilities and equipment to improve composting of manure to meeting anticipated FSMA regulations.
- Engage a process authority for value added products.
- Other projects which establish or improve the production, harvesting, processing, or on-farm manufacturing facility in accordance with anticipated FSMA regulations.

Evaluation Criteria and Process

The Farm SAFE Grant is a competitive grant process. Only timely, complete applications will be evaluated. The evaluation will be based on the business plan, an essential component of the application. The business plan should address the following questions:

- Does the project emphasize infrastructure improvements to the farm to meet anticipated FSMA regulations?
- Does the applicant clearly articulate obtainable and realistic goals?
- What approaches will be used to achieve the stated goals?
- How does the project help to sustain and promote Connecticut agriculture?
- What are the long-term benefits as a result of this project?
- Is the financial support necessary to complete the project sufficiently explained and justified?
- How are consulting/contractual services being used? Is it justified?
- What is the anticipated increase in farm revenue as a result of this project in three, five, and ten years?
- What are the new and/or expanded venues and markets as a result of this project?
- How does the project diversify an existing agricultural operation?

Award Requirements

Applicants of projects awarded will be responsible for the following:

1. A signed contract with the State of Connecticut, which includes provisions to recapture grant funds if the Connecticut Department of Agriculture is not satisfied with the terms of the agreement.
2. Completing the project within the time-frame set forth in the contract.
3. Insurance holding the state harmless or with the state as an additional insured on their liability insurance policy.
4. Agreeing to periodic site inspections during the construction phase of the project and a site inspection prior once the project is complete prior to final payment being released for capital enhancement or improvement projects.
5. Agreeing to an audit with an itemized spreadsheet detailing actual costs, with copies of bills when applicable, must be submitted with the payment request at the conclusion of the project.

Awarded projects will have these requirements, among others, reviewed in detail.

CT DoAG reserves the right to fund the project in part, add and delete expenses, and ask for clarification on any portion of the application. No agreement will be entered into until CT DoAG is satisfied with all the specifications of the project. Any grant award is dependent upon the availability of funds.