Connecticut

Department of Agriculture

2011
Agriculture Viability Grants Program

*****Farm Viability Grant for Municipalities & Non-Profits*****

****Farm Transition Grant for Producers****

Dannel Malloy, Governor

CT Department of Agriculture

Agriculture Viability Grants

"to strengthen the economic viability of Connecticut farmers and to promote the sustainability of agriculture in Connecticut and its municipalities"

Proposals must be postmarked by:

NOVEMBER 11, 2011

CT Dept. of Agriculture
Agriculture Viability Grants
165 Capitol Avenue, Room 129
Hartford, CT 06106
860-713-2503
email: ronald.olsen@ct.gov
www.ct.gov/doag

Overview

The CT Department of Agriculture is now accepting proposals from a variety of agriculture stakeholders – specifically farmers, farmer cooperatives, non-profits working directly with farmers, municipalities, municipal associations, regional planning agencies/councils of government, and non-profits working directly with municipalities – who are planning activities that will promote agriculture sustainability and/or increase the economic viability of one or many farm businesses.

Funding for the State of Connecticut Agriculture Viability Grants was established in 2005 through Public Act 228-05, An Act Concerning Farm Land Preservation, Land Protection, Affordable Housing and Historic Preservation.

Program Qualification

****NOTE: Depending on the proposal, all applicants for an Agricultural Viability Grant must qualify for either the Farm Transition Program or the Farm Viability Program to receive matching funds.**

The purpose of the **Farm Transition Program** is:

- to provide support to farmers seeking to enhance their agricultural operation and marketing strategies to increase profits.
- to assist farmers seeking to diversify, transition into new production areas, and/or expand existing production.
- to support educational activities aimed at helping farmers diversify or transition toward new products or new market areas.
- to support educational activities that will advance agricultural practices and assist beginning and/or new farmers.
- to provide a 50% cash match to approved applicants

The purpose of the **Farm Viability Program** is:

- to provide a cash match for capital projects that are defined as fixed assets and have a life of ten years or more; including projects in conjunction with farmers markets, processing facilities and storage facilities.
- to develop and implement local or regional agriculture-friendly land use regulations.
- to develop and implement local or regional farmland protection strategies.
- to develop and implement plans that sustain and promote local or regional agriculture.
- to fund the production of outreach materials and provide educational workshops to inform municipalities of agriculture-friendly strategies, resources, and programs.
- to fund advertising for local or regional agriculture.
- to provide a 50% cash match to approved applicants.
- to provide a 60% cash match to approved registered non-profit applicants

Eligible Applicants

To qualify for the Farm Transition Program you must be a registered farm business (permitting both owners and tenants of existing production facilities located within the State of Connecticut), or an agricultural cooperative.
To qualify for the Farm Viability Program you must be a municipality in the State of Connecticut, a regional planning association or a regional council of government in the State of Connecticut, or an association of municipalities in the State of Connecticut, specifically CT Conference of Municipalities or CT Council of Small Towns, or a registered 501 (c) (3) non-profit working directly with farmers within the State of Connecticut.

Size of Award

The CT Department of Agriculture's share of the project budget is capped at $49,999 in matching funds.

Matching Guidelines

Farm Transition Program:

- Matching funds from the applicant must be at least 50% of the total cost of the project budget.
- The applicant's match may exceed the required amount.

Farm Viability Program:

- Matching funds from the applicant must be at least 50% of the total cost of the project budget Applicants that are registered 501(c) (3) non-profits must match at least 40% of the cost of the project budget.
- The applicant's match may exceed the required amount.
- All applicants for FVP may use in-kind services for all or part of their match.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible project expenses include, but are not limited to: materials and wages for capital improvements, marketing, printing, postage, equipment rental fees, program staff for non-profits and/or consulting. The Agriculture Viability Grants can work in conjunction with projects that secure bank financing and projects that are self-financed. The grant must be paid directly to the applicant or to a bank to reduce a loan principal.

Eligible in-kind expenses refer to resources that are contributed to the project, but not paid for by funds from a grant or contract that is directed to the project. Examples of in kind funds include the value of office space used *exclusively* for the funded project, or the value, fairly assessed, of transportation, photocopying, postage or other costs covered by the applicant organization or by a project partner. Personnel time—either volunteered or paid by a participating entity from other funding—is also an in kind contribution.

Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses are those not specifically stated under eligible expenses such as, but not limited to, the following:

1. Any expense incurred prior to application submittal, review and approval, and contract execution and approval;
2. Land acquisition/mortgages;
3. Mortgage refinancing;
4. Cost of borrowing (points and other fees);
5. Wages paid to applicant or employees, unless a not-for-profit organization or municipality;
6. Attorney's fees;
7. To fund the start-up of new organization;
8. General overhead costs such as heat, rent, maintenance, electricity that would occur in absence of the project; this exclusion extends to equipment such as computers or video equipment with usefulness beyond the boundaries of the project.

Additional Requirements

1) All agriculture-related activities funded by the Agriculture Viability Grants must be consistent with the definition of agriculture as defined in Connecticut General Statutes Section 1-1(q).

2) All producer applicants must provide a business plan along with their application.

3) All non-profit applicants, municipalities, and quasi-governmental associations working directly with municipalities must submit an end-of-year final report detailing grant-funded achievements.

4) At end of project, all applicants must submit an audit with an itemized spread sheet detailing actual costs with copies of bills when applicable and in kind expenses attributed to the project.

5) We anticipate that most projects will be completed in one year, but multi-year proposals will be considered.

6) There are no restrictions on a grantee's eligibility to receive funding in future grant funding cycles, however additional years of funding will be dependent upon grantee's success in reaching prior benchmarks.

7) All grantees conducting any sort of capital enhancement or improvement project must agree to a site inspection prior to final approval or rejection of his application. If approved, the grantee must agree to site inspections during the construction phase of the project.

8) All grantees must agree to sign an agreement with the State of Connecticut which includes provisions for recapture of any grant money if the CT Department of Agriculture is not satisfied with the terms of the agreement. The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to reject any proposal. The grantee must complete the proposal within the time-frame set forth in the agreement.

Criteria Guideline for Evaluation of Agriculture Viability Grant Proposals

<table>
<tr><th>Farm Transition Program</th><th>Farm Viability Program</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

- Is the project well defined?
- Does the applicant clearly articulate obtainable goals?
- Is the applicant's level of commitment specific and detailed?
- Will the applicant use partnerships to obtain its goals?
- Will the project help to sustain and promote local agriculture?
- Will there be short-term as well as long-term benefits as a result of this project?
- Will the project enhance the competitiveness of agriculture in a municipality or region, or will it improve the business climate for agricultural entrepreneurs?
- Will the project benefit multiple agricultural producers, either directly or indirectly?
- Is the proposed use of grant funds realistic?
- Does application show the financial support necessary to complete the proposal/project?
- Does the planning proposal/business plan clearly state the methods that will be used to achieve the stated goals?
- Is the in kind match (if applicable) in keeping with the intent and focus of the project?
- If consulting services are being utilized, are they well justified?
- At the end of this project will the results be sustainable or does the proposal include a clear plan for sustainable outcomes?

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<tr><td>

- Will the project increase farm revenues?
- Will locally grown (CT Grown) products be an important facet of the project?
- Will the project diversify an existing agricultural operation?

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- Has the applicant supplied documentation that indicates support or endorsement from agricultural producers and/or from a farm association for the project?

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Additional Considerations
How much emphasis is production agriculture given in the project?
What portion of match are in cash versus in kind services?
Does the applicant include a plan to evaluate for success?

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CT Department of Agriculture
Agriculture Viability Grants
Cover Sheet (this must be filled out by all)

Please type or print clearly

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION

Are You a Beginning Farmer? **Yes** **No**

Project Title:

Program Applying for:
(check ONE only)

- ☐ **Farm Transition Program (for producers, ag coops)**
- ☐ **Farm Viability Program (for municipalities, non-profits)**

Project Applicant:

Applicant Address:

Name of Project Leader for Applicant:

Phone: **Fax:**

E-mail:

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2. BUDGET

Total project budget: **$**_____

Amount requested from CT Agriculture Viability Grants: **$**_____

Cash amount the applicant is providing as a match: **$**_____
(must be at least 50% of total project budget)

In-kind amount the applicant is providing as a match: **$** _____
(for non-profits,municipalities <u>only</u>, must be at least 40% of total project budget)

3a. IDENTIFICATION AND SIGN OFF PAGE *(Required for Producers only)*

(A) Farm Property Location (if applicable):

Address:_____

Town:_____Zip:_____

(B) Owner of Record (if different from applicant):

Name:_____

Address:_____

Town:_____Zip:_____

Phone:_____Fax:_____

Applicant Signature_____

(C) Farm Name:_____

(D) Tax Permit Number_____

(E) Farmer Tax Exempt Number (if applicable)_____

(F) Describe fully the production agriculture carried out on the farm. Give acreage and quantities of the various crops grown, the number and kinds of livestock, forest products, specialty crops, greenhouse, etc.:

i. Total Acreage of Farm: _____

ii. Description of production:

(G) Do you farm: full time - _____ part time - _____ (check one)

(H) Is any of the land that you own or farm that will be associated with this proposal also in the state in the Farmland Preservation Program or under any other conservation restrictions? If yes, please state under what program and what the restrictions are.

3b. IDENTIFICATION AND SIGN OFF PAGE
(Required for Non-profits, Municipalities, and Regional planning associations only)

We require evidence that your project has been approved by the institutional official in charge of grants and contracts. If you are applying as a non-profit, the signature of an authorized official of your governing board is required. If you are applying as a municipality, the signature of an authorized executive official is required. If you are applying as a regional planning association or council of government, the signature of an authorized official of your governing board responsible for taking administrative actions is required.

Signature_____ Date: _____

Name and title of authorized individual: _____

Name of Institution, Municipality, Regional Planning Association, or Council of Government:

_____

Address: _____

Project Leader for Applicant signature:

_____ Date: _____

If you are a registered 501 (c)(3) provide your tax i.d. #_____

List all of the partners (including producers) that have agreed to participate in your project.
NOTE: Each partner on this list must also provide a letter of support to be attached to this application.

Name _____ Tel: _____

Name _____ Tel: _____

Name _____ Tel: _____

Name _____ Tel: _____

Name _____ Tel: _____

Name _____ Tel: _____

Name _____ Tel: _____

4. PROPOSAL CHECKLIST:

Please be sure to include ALL of the following with your application; any application submitted with missing components will not be regarded as complete.

- ☐ A one page or less, **SCOPE OF WORK**, titled as such, of **EXACTLY w**hat you are planning to do with the grant money (your action plan). Begin with 1 or 2 sentences saying what the project is. The Scope of Work must tell us what exactly what you are asking for. You must use Attachment A.

- ☐ Grant Application Cover Sheet

- ☐ Grant Application Identification & Sign Off Page

- ☐ Letters of Support from all partners listed on the Identification & Sign Off page(may not be necessary)

- ☐ **<u>FULL business plan</u> (for producers or producer cooperatives) – SEE DETAILS BELOW**

- ☐ **<u>FULL proposal description</u> (for non-profits, municipalities, and quasi-governmental planning associations) – SEE DETAILS BELOW**

- ☐ **Proposed Budget Page** (including specific details regarding cash and/or in-kind match)
  You must use Attachment C

- ☐ If applicant is a <u>new</u> producer (beginning farmer), provide a statement of intent and demonstrated background in agriculture production;

- ☐ If applicant is an existing producer, provide a **CT Farmer Tax Exempt Certificate as well as previous years Schedule F, Form 1120S, or Schedule C**;

- ☐ If applicant is a registered non-profit, provide copy of Federal and State Tax ID forms;

- ☐ If proposal includes capital improvement (some type of building), provide conceptual drawing of proposal.

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE RANKED AND GRADED ON A COMPETETIVE BASIS, BASED MAINLY ON YOUR BUSINESS PLAN OR PROPOSAL

Full Proposal Description(for non-profits, municipality): Please TRY TO use the following format when completing this portion of your proposal. ***All of these must be thoroughly explained and completed in order to qualify for grant funds.***

1. Need or opportunity
2. Mission Statement of Applicant
3. Goals
4. Methods
5. Role of partners
6. Time-table
7. Prior planning, preparation, research, or work leading up to this proposal

Full Business Plan(for producer only): Please TRY TO use the following format when completing this portion of your proposal. ***All of these must be thoroughly explained and completed in order to qualify for grant funds.***

1. **Introduction/Cover Sheet -** Introduction of the plan and give contact information.
2. **Mission, Strategies, etc. -** What are the central purposes and activities of the planned business? What are its major objectives, key strategies and prime goals?
3. **Present Status of Project -** Summarize achievements and performance (sales, etc.) to date (if applicable).
4. **Product Description if a production entity -** Describe product being produced or processed.
5. **Brief Profile of Target Markets -** Size, trends, competition and user/customer profiles
6. **Marketing Strategies and Sales Plans if applicable -** How will the business market its products and sell to customers? What sales will be achieved in its main markets? How will it deal with competitors? Indicate costs.
7. **Operational Plans -** Cover distribution and production activities. Indicate organization, resources, costs, etc.
8. **Financial Position and Projections -** Use simple tables to present key financial projections, profit and loss, cash flow, etc.
9. **Funding Requirements and Proposals -** Summarize funding requirements, possible sources, terms, etc. For non-profits and municipalities, if are using in-kind services as portion of match, you must address that here.
10. **Implementation -** Explain the major decision points, time scale and actions required.
11. **Conclusion -** Indicate why the project will succeed and why it should be supported.

Attachment A

Project Scope of Work for
Ag Viability Grant
1 Page Maximum

The Scope will be a detailed Project Description that is to the point:

DO NOT RAMBLE AND GENERALIZE OR THE CONTRACT WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU

Do not use Acronyms; spell out the names of any groups or organizations since we may not be familiar with them

Use the Format Below

What…In several sentences, what exactly is your project and what will grant money be used to purchase.
Be specific, if purchasing equipment give model number and name of equipment if you will know ahead of time.
If a project is on a property, what exactly are you doing to the property and how much acreage involved.
If a building, give dimensions and if have plans, include them.
If permits needed for anything, tell us who will be obtaining permits.

Where…is the project being done? Please give exact name and address of farm or if is a municipality where in town, address, and property location.

Who…is specifically doing the contract work (a contractor, yourself). Give name, address. You must state names of specific contractors to be used.
If unsure of who will be doing work, you can say "a certified, licensed contractor and electrician, etc. will be doing the work.

When…is the work being done and what is the completion date?
Always start with "Work will begin when contract is signed----" Say how long it will take to finish and when you will complete project as long as it will not be a later date than the contract length. You can say "will finish in approximately" if you choose.

Attachment C

Farm TRANSITION Grant Budget Page

(for producers and ag cooperatives)

Budget Titles (you must itemize)	**Agriculture Grant monies to be used**	**Producer Match (cash)**
EXAMPLES		
Contractors		
Professional		
Expenses		
Equipment		
Advertising		
Totals	_____	_____

Total project Cost_____

Attachment C

Farm VIABILITY Grant Budget Page

(for municipalities and non-profits)

Budget Titles (you must itemize)	**Agriculture Grant monies to be used**	**Non-Prof\Town Match (Inkind / cash)**
EXAMPLES		
Personnel		
Volunteers		
Professional		
Expenses		
Equipment		
Advertising		
Totals	_____	_____

Total Project Cost_____