



AGRI Preparing for Extreme Weather (Prepare) 2024 Request for Proposals

Applications due by 4 p.m. on April 23, 2024

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Grant Summary

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is making one-time grants available to help Minnesota livestock and specialty crop producers buy and install supplies or equipment that will help make their production more resilient to extreme weather, including drought, flooding, hail, and severe weather events like storms, tornadoes, and straight-line winds.

Applications for the Preparing for Extreme Weather Grant, also referred to as the Prepare Grant, will be accepted until 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Tuesday, April 23, 2024. We expect to notify all applicants about funding decisions no later than May 31, 2024.

Please note that we issue payments on a reimbursement basis and not in advance. All purchases for eligible items must be made after grant contract agreements are signed, which is expected to take place July 2024.

Funding availability

A total of \$500,000 is available for this program. We expect to award 50 to 75 grants.

Applicants may request up to \$10,000 per farm (the minimum request is \$500), with a 50% cash match required. Only one application will be accepted per farm. Applicants who raise both livestock and specialty crops and are requesting funding for both parts of the farm must combine their requests into one application.

Eligible applicants

Applicants must:

- Be a principal operator of a livestock or specialty crop operation in Minnesota that produces and sells at least \$1,000 of agricultural products for sale annually.
- Be a resident of the state of Minnesota or be a business entity authorized to farm in Minnesota (see below).
- Be in good standing with the State of Minnesota:
 - No back taxes owed.
 - No defaults on Minnesota state-backed financing for the last seven years.
 - Acceptable performance on past MDA grants.

Who is a principal operator?

A principal operator is a person primarily responsible for the day-to-day operation of the farm. The principal operator could be an owner, hired manager, cash tenant, share tenant, or partner.

What business entities need authorization to farm in Minnesota?

The statute on farming by business organizations ([MINN. STAT. 500.24](#)) requires that all pension or investment funds, corporations (including nonprofit organizations), limited partnerships, limited liability companies, and irrevocable trusts must be certified by the MDA before engaging in farming or having an interest in agricultural land.

How do business entities get authorization to farm in Minnesota?

Applications and additional information are available at [Minnesota’s Corporate Farm Report](#).

How to apply

Apply for the Prepare Grant using our [online application system](#).

- If you’re a new user, first create an account.
- Once you’re logged in to your account, select “AGRI Prepare Grant.”
- If you can’t use the online application system, contact MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us or 651-201-6500 to request other arrangements.

Applications are due by **4 p.m. CT on Tuesday, April 23, 2024**.

- Apply early so that there is enough time to get help with the application process if you need it.
- We will not accept late applications.
- We are not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in a late submission. It’s your responsibility to ensure we receive your application before the deadline.

Application guidelines

- Use plain, easily understood language. Write for reviewers who have general knowledge but may not have a thorough or deep understanding of your farm.
- Answer all questions completely within the character limits specified in the grant application.
- Review the Application Scoring Sheet included in this document to help you score as many points as possible.

Timeline and deadlines

April 16, 2024, at 4 p.m. CT.....Deadline to ask grant program questions.

April 23, 2024, at 4 p.m. CT.....Final date to submit applications.

May 31, 2024.....Applicants notified of grant decisions.

July 2024.....Anticipated contract start date.

Questions

For questions about the grant program or application:

- Submit your question in writing before **4 p.m. CT on April 16, 2024**.
- Email MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us with “Prepare Grant” in the subject line.

For help using the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6500, or
- Email MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us and include “Prepare Grant” in the subject line.

Grant Eligibility

Eligible operations

These types of operations are eligible for Prepare Grant funds:

- **Livestock:** Beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, poultry, goats, mules, farmed cervids, ratites (including ostriches and emus), bison, sheep, horses, and llamas.
- **Specialty crops:** Fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, and floriculture. See [USDA's list of Specialty Crops](#).

Eligible projects and expenses

Projects

If we accept your proposal, we will reimburse eligible costs included in your project budget. You will have to submit documentation including invoices and proof of payment.

Projects must:

- Include matching funds from personal or other non-State sources; see the [Matching Funds](#) section.
- Be completed after the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties.
- Be conducted in Minnesota.

Expenses

Eligible items include, but are not limited to purchase and installation of the following:

Livestock operations

- Water tanks and pads
- Pipelines
- Water wagons/trailers
- Wells (new improvements, fixes, replacement pumps)
- Irrigation equipment
- Livestock pond digging or dredging
- Portable pasture fencing supplies (e.g., polywire electric netting t-posts and step-in posts, reels, solar chargers, etc.)
- Fans
- Misters
- Livestock shade systems
- Windbreaks
- Lane improvements

Specialty crop operations

- Water tanks
- Pipelines
- Water wagons/trailers
- Wells (new improvements, fixes, replacement pumps)
- Irrigation equipment (including drip irrigation)
- Hoses
- Soil moisture sensors
- Nozzles
- Rain barrels
- Mulch
- Cover crops
- Worker safety equipment (sun shades, water stations, etc.)
- Hail netting

Ineligible expenses

The following items are examples of expenses that are **not** eligible for reimbursement:

- Expenditures incurred before the grant contract agreement is fully executed or after March 31, 2025
- General purpose equipment (e.g., skid steer loaders, combines, tractors)
- Owner and employee wages and benefits
- Mileage and fuel
- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking violations and traffic violations

Matching funds

The Prepare Grant reimburses up to 50% of the project cost. However, to receive your grant payment, you must provide documentation showing payment for the full cost of the project.

Sources of matching funds may include cash, loans, other grants, and liquid capital assets dedicated to the project. State grant funds cannot be used for the grantee portion of the project, but non-forgivable loans from the State may be used as a match.

Collaboration

Eligible applicants may collaborate with other farms, but it's not required. If eligible farms are submitting a joint application, they must determine which farm will have the grant contract agreement with the MDA and will work directly with the MDA to meet grant reporting requirements. Note that this organization will receive a 1099 from the State of Minnesota for income tax purposes.

Application Review Policies

Review process

A review committee evaluates all eligible applications based on the [Application Scoring Sheet](#). The commissioner of agriculture considers the committee's recommendations and makes award decisions. Both the review committee and commissioner may consider geographic distribution, type of operation, applicant's history as a previous grantee, and capacity to perform the work in their decisions.

Conflicts of interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures be in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers ([MINN. STAT.16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making, 2022 \(Word\)](#)).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the MDA due to competing duties or loyalties.
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making.

[Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities.

- This program prioritizes applications from members of historically underserved groups, including American Indian or Alaskan Natives; members of a community of color; women; veterans; persons with disabilities; young and/or beginning farmers; and LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more) farmers.

Requirements for Grant Recipients

Accountability and reporting

We conduct follow-up surveys to help us determine the long-term impacts of the grant. Grantees are required to respond to requests for follow-up information for three years beyond the term of the grant agreement. Failure to respond to these in a timely manner may impact your ability to secure future funding from the MDA.

Grant award agreement and payments

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review on the [Office of Grants Management Forms and FAQs](#) webpage.

Upon approval of an application and prior to beginning work on the grant project(s) and receiving reimbursements, the applicant must:

- Complete an IRS W-9 form or register as a vendor in SWIFT, the State's accounting system and submit other required documentation within three weeks of award notification; and
- Sign a grant contract agreement indicating their intention to complete the proposed tasks. The agreement also authorizes the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. The grant award document must be signed within 30 days.

Note: Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis. All requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget. To receive grant payments, grantees must provide proof that grant project work has been done by submitting details of each purchase on receipts or invoices, and proof that the vendors have been paid. Annual progress reports and a final report are required. Grant payments will not be issued for grants with past due progress reports, unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

Bidding requirements

All grantees must abide by the state's bidding requirements for items costing over \$10,000. See a detailed list of the state's [bidding requirements](#) for details.

Affirmative action and non-discrimination policy

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified ([MINN. STAT. 363A.02](#)). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and people with disabilities.

The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship ([Minnesota Rules, part 5000.3500](#)).

The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the [Minnesota Human Rights Act](#).

Project audits

The grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the MDA, the legislative auditor or the state auditor, and the commissioner of administration, as appropriate ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 8](#)). The grantee is responsible for the retention of these documents. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Voter registration requirement

The grantee will provide voter registration services for its employees ([MINN. STAT. 201.162](#)).

Data Privacy

Privacy notice and data classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant under the AGRI Preparing for Extreme Weather (Prepare) Program. The decision to apply for this grant is voluntary, and applicants are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. Applicants may decline to complete this application without any legal consequence. However, only completed applications will be considered for a grant; incomplete applications will not be considered.

Data provided in this application is initially classified by the Minnesota Data Practices Act as private or nonpublic, although some or all of the data will generally become public at various points of the application process unless the data are otherwise classified by state or federal law. Access to private or nonpublic data is limited to those authorized by law, including but not necessarily limited to MDA staff and contractors who have a valid work assignment to access the data, parties authorized by the applicant, parties identified in a valid court order or federal subpoena, Minnesota Management and Budget, Minnesota Department of Administration, the state auditor, and the legislative auditor. If necessary, the MDA may also share the data with law enforcement or the Office of the Attorney General.

Per Minnesota's statute on grants ([MINN. STAT. 13.599](#)):

- Names and addresses of grant applicants, and the grant amount requested, will be public data once application responses are opened.
- All other data in application responses (except trade secret information, see below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is complete (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information, see below) will generally be public data after the evaluation process is completed.

Procedure for claiming protection of trade secrets:

- Trade secret information is classified as not public data. In order to qualify as trade secret information, the data in question must be provided to the MDA by the affected person (i.e. the data must be about the applicant) and otherwise meet the legal definition found in statute ([MINN. STAT. 13.37, subd. 1\(b\)](#)). In order for an applicant to assert trade secret protection for data submitted as part of this application: the applicant must: 1) clearly identify the specific formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or process that the applicant believes to be trade secret information; 2) describe what efforts the applicant takes to maintain the secrecy of the data; and 3) adequately explain how the data derive(s) independent economic value from not being generally known to, and not readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons. Merely asserting trade secret protection does not, in and of itself, classify the data in question as not public; determining what data meet the definition of trade secret information is ultimately the legal responsibility of the MDA, and the MDA cannot guarantee that data identified as trade secret information by an applicant will be classified as such. If the MDA determines that data do not meet the definition of trade secret information, the data in question will be available to the public unless the applicant secures a court order saying otherwise.

All persons, businesses, and individuals applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must comply with applicable laws. Under the law titled Right of Setoff ([MINN STAT 270C.65, subd. 3](#)), a grantee consents to disclosure of its social security number, federal employer tax identification number, and/or Minnesota tax identification number, already provided to the State, to federal and state tax agencies and state personnel involved in the payment of state obligations. These identification numbers may be used in the enforcement of federal and state tax laws which could result in action requiring a grantee to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities, if any.

AGRI Background and Program Goals

The Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation Program (AGRI) was established to advance Minnesota's agricultural and renewable energy industries ([MINN. STAT. 41A.12](#)). AGRI has made significant economic impacts by increasing productivity, improving efficiency, and assisting the development of agricultural products. The AGRI Prepare Grant encourages specialty crop and livestock producers to proactively buy and install supplies or equipment in order to reduce the production risks posed by extreme weather.

Application Scoring Sheet

Evaluation criterion	Maximum score
Applicant is a Minnesota resident and operates a farm or ranch located in Minnesota	Yes/No
Applicant raises livestock	Yes/No
Applicant grows specialty crops	Yes/No
Project need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant clearly and compellingly describes the need for the project, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A description of the type(s) of extreme weather the operation has or expects to experience. ○ A description of how extreme weather has or is likely to impact the operation’s livestock and/or specialty crops. 	40
Project impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant clearly and compellingly justifies how the project will reduce the impact of extreme weather on the operation’s livestock and/or specialty crop production or make the farm more resilient. 	30
Budget narrative and match <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget clearly details all project costs. • Budget is cost effective and planned purchases are backed by quotes or other sources. 	25
Priority points: Historically underserved applicants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant is a member of one or more of the following historically underserved groups: American Indian or Alaskan Natives; members of a community of color; women; veterans; persons with disabilities; young and/or beginning farmers; and LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and more) farmers. 	5
Recommend for funding	Yes/No
Total	100

Application Questions

Contact information

Applicant information

- Applicant name
- Mailing address
- Applicant telephone
- Applicant email
- Minnesota State House District (use the [District Finder](#) if you don't know your district.)

Authorized representative

If awarded a grant, the person who will sign the Prepare Grant contract agreement for this organization. This is often yourself or other leadership on your farm.

- Name
- Telephone
- Email

Farm operation

- Name of farm (if applicable)
- Farm address

Type(s) of livestock

If you raise livestock, select all livestock types that this project will affect:

- Beef cattle
- Bison
- Cervids (elk, farmed deer)
- Dairy cattle
- Horses
- Llamas
- Mules
- Poultry
- Ratites (emu, ostrich)
- Sheep/goats
- Swine

Type(s) of specialty crops

If you grow specialty crops, select all specialty crops that this project will affect:

- Fruits and tree nuts
- Vegetables
- Culinary herbs and spices
- Medicinal plants
- Nursery plants
- Floriculture

Eligibility

- Confirm that the following statements apply to your application.
 - I do not owe the State of Minnesota any back taxes and have not defaulted on any State of Minnesota-backed financing in the last seven years. (True)
 - My farming operation is compliant with current state regulations, or this project will help my operation become compliant. (True)
 - I am a current Minnesota resident or my business is authorized to farm in Minnesota. (True)
 - I am the principal operator or have the authority to apply on behalf of the farm. (True)
 - I meet the USDA definition of a farmer and raise livestock or grow specialty crops. A farm is any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year. (Yes)
- Is any other application to this program being submitted on behalf of this farm? (No)
- I understand that if my application is successful, the MDA cannot reimburse for any project expenses incurred or work performed before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties. (Yes)
- Are any of the principals of the farm an employee of the MDA or part of an MDA employee's family or household? (Yes or No)
 - If yes, briefly describe the individual's role with the MDA and their relationship to the applicant/organization.

Project summary

Project title

- Farm name and item requested (100 characters, including spaces). Examples:
 - McGregor Farm, irrigation supplies for market produce
 - Dusty Road Ranch, portable electric fencing for drought conditions

Farm description

- Briefly describe your farming or ranching operation, including what you produce. (500 characters, including spaces)

Risks to livestock and/or specialty crops

- Describe the weather-related production risks that your project will address. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Project description

- Describe your project in three to five sentences – what are you going to do? (1,000 characters, including spaces) Include:
 - the need for the items,
 - how and why the items will reduce the risks posed by extreme weather, and
 - how the project will benefit your farming or ranching operation.

Total project cost

(number only)

Total grant you are requesting

(number only)

The grant requires a 50% match, with a minimum grant award of \$500 and a maximum of \$10,000.

- Example 1:
 - Total project cost: \$18,000
 - Grant request: \$9,000
- Example 2:
 - Total project cost: \$25,000
 - Grant Request: \$10,000

Total amount of match you will provide

(number only)

Match confirmation

- I confirm that no other State of Minnesota funds will be used as match for this project. (Yes)

Anticipated start date

(date only)

Must occur after the grant contract agreement is signed (expected to take place July 2024) and before March 31, 2025.

Project budget

Budget

- Create a budget using the table below.
 - Do not attach bid sheets or quotes from vendors instead of a budget table.
 - TIP: If you name the contractors or suppliers you plan to use in your budget, you won't need to use a formal bidding process. This can save you time and effort later.

Item	Quantity	Cost per unit	Total estimate	Source of estimate
Solar energizer	1	\$229.99	\$230	Acme Fence Supply
Well drilling	160 ft	\$50	\$8,000	Duane Water & Well

Budget narrative

(2,000 characters, including spaces)

- Describe the need for each item listed in your budget.
- Explain how you plan to pay for your project (financing, other grants, private investment, personal investment, organization funds, etc.). While other state grant funds cannot be used to pay for this project, non-forgivable loans from the state may be used as a match.

(Optional) Quotes and other sources

- Submit quotes or estimates for equipment or services. If you have multiple quotes, combine them into one file before uploading.

(Optional) Historically underserved applicants

This program prioritizes grant-making to members of groups who have historically been underserved by agricultural programs and grant opportunities. This question is optional but answering it may earn you points in the application review process.

Please mark any group(s) with which you identify:

- American Indian or Alaskan Natives
- Beginning farmer (farming 10 years or less)
- LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, or asexual)
- Member of a community of color
- Persons with disabilities
- Veteran
- Woman
- Young farmer (35 and younger)