



# Preventing Elk Damage to Stored Crops

## Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 Request for Proposals

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# GRANT SUMMARY

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## Overview

The Elk Stored Crop Grant is offered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to help producers protect stored forage from damage by elk. Historically, elk herds present in northwest Minnesota have caused some amount of damage to standing or stored crops, as well as fences. As a result, the MDA is appropriated funds to pay claims from producers who have sustained this damage.

During FY 2019 – 2021, an average of \$114,740 per year was paid by the MDA in elk damage claims. Of this amount, an average of \$23,817 per year was paid for damage to stored forage. Options, such as fencing or other barriers, exist to protect stored forage from elk damage. Currently the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources can provide up to \$5,000 in materials to help protect stored forage from elk damage. This grant program is meant to help affected producers take measures to protect stored forage from elk damage.

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## Funding Availability

The Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$40,000 to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for these grants, with \$20,000 available for fiscal year 2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022) and \$20,000 available for fiscal year 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023). A producer may apply to receive a maximum of \$20,000 per fiscal year.

We expect to award **one to five grants** each year, but the final number depends on the size of awards.

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## 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](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

This grant will serve producers with stored crops experiencing damage from elk. Additionally, this grant will prioritize:

- Emerging farmers, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, immigrants, women, veterans, persons with disabilities, young and beginning farmers, LGBTQ+ farmers, and others
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## How to Submit Questions

All questions should be submitted through writing by email ([mn\\_mda\\_elkandwolf@state.mn.us](mailto:mn_mda_elkandwolf@state.mn.us)). Answers will be posted on the MDA website ([www.mda.state.mn.us/elk](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/elk)). MDA employees are not authorized to provide advice on any applications. Applicants who solicit or receive advice from unauthorized MDA employees may be disqualified from eligibility for a grant award.

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## How to Apply

Grant applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications electronically to [mn\\_mda\\_elkandwolf@state.mn.us](mailto:mn_mda_elkandwolf@state.mn.us). Applicants should contact the MDA at least one week prior to the due date if they would like to discuss other submission methods.

Grant applications will be accepted monthly as listed below. Grant applications must be received by the MDA by 11:59 pm on the last day of the month to be considered in that month's application pool. Grant applications will be accepted each fiscal year until all funds have been granted.

Fiscal Year 2022 - \$20,000 available - grant application periods:

- November 1 – November 30, 2021
  - December 1 – December 31, 2021
  - January 1 – January 31, 2022
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- February 1 – February 28, 2022
- March 1 – March 31, 2022
- April 1 – April 30, 2022

Fiscal Year 2023 - \$20,000 available - grant application periods:

- November 1 – November 30, 2022
- December 1 – December 31, 2022
- January 1 – January 31, 2023
- February 1 – February 28, 2023
- March 1 – March 31, 2023
- April 1 – April 30, 2023

Applications not selected for funding in a given grant application period will be considered in subsequent application periods. Unfunded applicants may request a summary of the reviewers' comments on their proposal and submit a revised application.

Applications meeting the minimum criteria but received after funds in a fiscal year have been exhausted will be carried over until funds are available in the next fiscal year. The MDA will also announce on the website when all funds for the fiscal year have been depleted.

The MDA is not responsible for any technical or logistical problems resulting in the MDA not receiving the application on time. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that submission is received by the MDA before the deadline.

## GRANT ELIGIBILITY

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### Eligible Applicants

Applicants must:

- Be a producer with stored crops.
- Have a signed Cooperative Damage Management Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and be compliant with terms and conditions of that agreement.
- Be in good standing with the State of Minnesota.
  - » No back taxes owed.
  - » No defaults on Minnesota State-backed financing for the last 7 years.
  - » Acceptable performance on past MDA grants.
  - » Compliant with current state regulations.
- Currently reside in Minnesota or be authorized to conduct business in Minnesota.
- Not be an employee or spouse of an employee of the MDA.

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### Collaboration

Applications should be submitted by individual producers.

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## Eligible Projects and Expenses

Projects must:

- Aim to stop elk damage to stored crops.
- Not start until the grant contract is signed by all parties and has reached its start date.
- Be conducted in Minnesota.

Examples of eligible projects include fencing, barriers or other measures that will exclude elk from areas where crops are stored.

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## Ineligible Expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Expenditures incurred prior to contract execution
- Owner and Employees' wages and benefits. Please contact staff for exceptions.
- Advertising, public relations, entertainment and amusement costs
- Donated or volunteer (in-kind) services. While these may be furnished to an applicant by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor, the value of these services is not an eligible cost.
- Donations and in-kind contributions, including property and services, made by the applicant (regardless of the recipient)
- Fines, penalties, and other settlement expenses resulting from failure of the applicant to comply with Federal, State, local, or Indian tribal laws and regulations
- Indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the project)
- Fundraising, including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, legal costs, or contingency funds
- Parking or traffic violations
- Out of state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.
- General use equipment

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# APPLICATION REVIEW POLICIES

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## Review Process

At the end of each monthly application period, a review committee, composed of MDA staff and external reviewers, will evaluate all eligible applications based on the criteria in the Project Evaluation Profile. Any applications received after the monthly application period will be placed in the next month's application pool.

Reviewers may recommend whole or partial funding of a project. The Commissioner of Agriculture reviews the committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. The review committee and Commissioner will use the scoring criteria, the applicant's history as a state grantee, and capacity to perform the work when making their decisions. The MDA will notify applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing.

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## Conflicts of Interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers, per [Minn. Stat. 16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making \(PDF\)](#).

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.

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## Privacy Notice and Data Classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive an Elk Stored Crop Grant. 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 with 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 [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 remaining data in application responses (except trade secret information, see below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is completed (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 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 [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.

# REQUIREMENTS FOR GRANT RECIPIENTS

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## Accountability and Reporting

Follow-up surveys are required 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.

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## Grant Award Agreement and Payments

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review at [Office of Grants Management Policies, Statutes, and Forms/Forms and FAQs tab](#).

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

- Complete an IRS W-9 form or register as a vendor in SWIFT, the State's accounting system, and submit other required documentation within 30 days 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 of being sent to the grantee.

Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the contract has been signed by all parties. Grant contract agreements will be effective for one year after the start date.

Grant funds are dispersed on a reimbursement basis. All grantee 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 are required to be submitted during the duration of the project. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

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## Site Visits and Financial Reconciliations

The grant agreement allows the MDA to monitor the progress of the project. Grantees may receive monitoring visits at the discretion of the MDA.

The MDA will perform at the discretion of the MDA. For this purpose, the grantee must provide expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents requested by the state.

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## Bidding Requirements

All funded applicants will be required to abide by the state's bidding requirements for larger purchases. See a detailed list of the state's [bidding requirements](#) for details.

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## 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 persons 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](#).

## Audits of Project

Per [Minn. Stat. 16B.98](#), subdivision 8, 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 granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. 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 comply with [Minn. Stat. 201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees.

## Project Evaluation Profile

EVALUATION CRITERIA	0 POINTS	2.5 POINTS	5 POINTS	10 POINTS
Documented damage to stored crops by elk	No documented damage within last 6 months	NA	NA	Documented damage within last 6 months
Completeness of application	Not legible, hard to read and/or understand not all required items submitted	Everything is filled out and readable	Detailed description of plans and itemized costs and all required items submitted	NA
Effectiveness of tactics	Plan appears insufficient	Plan may or may not succeed and may need further evaluation on stopping elk damage	Plan is likely to succeed, follows specifications outlined in CDMA and already approved Elk mitigation materials	NA
Cost efficiency	Costs are clearly too high for the proposed project	Costs may be high	Costs appear in line with proposed project	NA
Emerging Farmer	Add 5 points if qualifying factors are documented			
Previous Elk Stored Crop Grant Funds Received	Subtract 1 point per \$1,000 previously received			



# APPLICATION QUESTIONS

CONTACT INFORMATION			
Applicant Name:			
Name of farm (if applicable):			
Mailing address:	City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:	Email:		

ELIGIBILITY		
YES	NO	Confirm that the following statements apply to your organization.
		My business and I are good standing with the State of Minnesota. (No back taxes owed, no defaults on Minnesota State backed financing for the past seven years, in compliance with current state regulations, and acceptable performance on past MDA grants.)
		I am a current Minnesota resident or business entity authorized to farm in Minnesota.
		My spouse and I (nor anyone involved with this application) are not employees of the MDA.
		I have an executed Cooperative Damage Management Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and compliant with all terms and conditions in that agreement. Attach a copy of your executed agreement.
		Work has not started on your proposed project and will not begin before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties. The MDA is unable to reimburse for any work performed prior to the start date of the contract. Only expenses incurred after the contract start date will be eligible for reimbursement.

PROJECT SUMMARY	
DAMAGE	
1.	Has damage been sustained to stored crops by elk and verified by an MDA approved agent or DNR representative during the previous six months? YES      NO
2.	<p>If yes, then</p> <p>a. Describe the damage that has occurred. Has damage been limited to one area or have multiple areas with stored crops been affected?</p> <p>b. Attach a copy of a damage claim(s) verification completed by an approved agent or a copy of a Wildlife Complaint Inquiry Log from Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Section of Wildlife Area Wildlife Manager or Wildlife Damage Program staff as documentation.      Documentation Attached</p>

**PREVENTION MEASURES**

1. Describe how the project will stop stored crop damage from elk. Attach additional explanation if needed.

2. Will more than one stored crop area or crop type be included in the project? If so, please explain.

3. If the project will rely on fencing or other barriers, include a rough drawing or describe how the barriers will be deployed.

## BUDGET

1. What types of materials will be utilized? Include approximate quantities and cost estimates per unit. If more than one stored crop area or crop type will be included, break out the budget information for each area or crop type.

2. What are the total project costs? This should be the sum of all your costs outlined in the previous question.

3. How much money are you requesting from this grant? A match is not required.

## Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

1. This grant program prioritizes emerging farmers including historically underserved communities, such as, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, immigrants, women, veterans, persons with disabilities, young and beginning farmers, LGBTQ+ farmers, and others. Are these priorities reflected in your operation? If yes, please explain.