

Developing Markets for Continuous Living Cover- Grant Program

Fiscal Year 2026 Request for Proposals

Applications due by 4:30 p.m. on Monday July 9, 2025

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Grant Summary

Grant Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has received \$500,000 in federal funding through the [Minnesota Climate Smart Food Systems \(CSFS\) Initiative](#) to fund Developing Markets for Continuous Living Cover (CLC) grants. These grants are for organizations in Minnesota to develop enterprises, supply chains, and markets for continuous-living cover crops and cropping systems in the early stages of commercial development. The CLC grant will fund projects that expand supply and markets for continuous living cover crops and cropping systems. The program is anticipated to provide new revenue streams for producers and emerging businesses and organizations in rural Minnesota and improve soil health and water quality by funding early-stage commercial development of continuous living crops. For the purposes of this proposal, "continuous-living cover crops and cropping systems" refers to agroforestry, perennial biomass, perennial forage, perennial grains, and winter-annual cereal grains and oilseeds that have market value as harvested or grazed commodities.

Funding availability

The MDA will use a competitive review process by a committee representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge. An amount of \$500,000 is available through the Minnesota Climate Smart Food Systems (CSFS) Initiative. We anticipate that we will award 5-7 grants, but the final number depends on the size of awards. The minimum award is \$10,000 and the maximum award is \$100,000. This is a onetime appropriation. We expect most grant contract agreements to start in October 2025 and end October 2026. We expect to announce selected grantees for this funding in September 2025. Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the contract has been signed by all parties and the grant has reached its effective date.

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

This grant program will serve Minnesota organizations. Organization is broadly defined as: "A group of people, structured in a specific way to achieve a series of shared goals. The term organization includes a company, government, Tribe, urban American Indian Community, partnership, and any type of civil or political association of people. An individual is not considered an organization."

During this round of funding, this grant will prioritize projects that develop enterprises, supply chains, and markets for continuous living cover crops and cropping systems in the early stage of commercial development; and projects with targeted efforts to low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDACs) as defined in the 2024 Environmental Protection Agency Climate Protection Reduction Grant.

Timeline and deadlines

RFP posted on the MDA web site	May 6, 2025
Questions due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time	June 16, 2025
Applications due no later than 4:30 pm Central Time	July 9, 2025
If requested, pre-award assessment documentation must be submitted by	July 30, 2025
Committee recommendations submitted to commissioner for review	August 18, 2025
Selected grantees notified; grant agreement negotiations begin	August 25, 2025
Final workplans and budgets for the grant contract must be submitted	Sept 8, 2025

How to Apply

Applicants must submit proposals through our [online application system](#) **no later than 4:30 p.m. Central Time July 9, 2025**. If you are a new user, you need to create an account first.

It is best practice to submit your application at least 24 hours in advance to prevent unforeseen delays. Late applications will not be considered after the grant deadline under any circumstances. The applicant will incur all costs incurred in applying to this RFP.

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.

Questions

- All questions must be submitted by email to Jen Schaust at Jen.Schaust@state.mn.us by 4:30 p.m. Central Time on June 16, 2025. Include “Developing Markets for CLCs” in the subject line.
- All answers will be posted on the [Developing Markets for CLCs Q&A](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/clc-rfp-questions-answers) webpage (www.mda.state.mn.us/clc-rfp-questions-answers). New questions and answers will be added to this page as they are received.
- 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.

Application Content

Grant applicants are required to submit proposals through our [online application system](#). The application includes questions in the following categories: Applicant Information, Authorized Representative, Eligibility, Project Summary, Project Description, Business Readiness and Financial Sustainability, Impact on Minnesota Agriculture and the Environment, Measuring Outcomes, Project Plan, Budget, and Priority Areas. Applicants must complete all the required questions for the application to be considered complete. You will receive an automated email when your application has been received. Please do not submit any other materials. Unrequested materials will not be reviewed.

Grant Eligibility

Eligible Applicants - Minimum requirements

Applicants must meet the minimum requirements to be fully considered for this grant opportunity. Applicants must:

- Be an organization in Minnesota (including a company, government, Tribal Nation, urban American Indian Community, partnership, and any type of civil or political association of people) and authorized to do business in Minnesota.
- Focus on continuous living cover (CLC) crops and cropping systems as defined in the Grant Overview.
- 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 (if applicable).
 - Compliant with current state regulations.
- Be located in Minnesota.
- Acceptable performance on past state grants.
- Applicants are limited to one grant per organization for this RFP.
- MDA employees and their spouses are not eligible to receive grants from this program.

Applicants should review the [Conflicts of Interest](#) section prior to applying. The selected grantee must agree to these rules as a part of signing their grant contract agreement.

Examples of applicants:

- Organizations engaged in work related to CLC crops and cropping systems.
- For-profit businesses: companies (including LLCs and S, C, and Benefit corporations) whose primary function involves the production, processing, or marketing of CLC crops and cropping systems.
- Agricultural cooperatives: member-owned business entities that provide, offer, or sell CLC agricultural products or services for the mutual benefit of the members.
- Local government entities involved in the production, commercialization, marketing, or related activity of CLC crops and cropping systems.
- Economic development organizations and non-profit organizations involved in the production, commercialization, marketing, or related activity of CLC crops and cropping systems.
- Tribes and urban American Indian Communities involved in the production, commercialization, marketing, or related activity of CLC crops and cropping systems.
- Economic development organizations and non-profit organizations involved in the production, commercialization, marketing, or related activity of CLC crops and cropping systems.
- Tribes and urban American Indian Communities involved in the production, commercialization, marketing, or related activity of CLC crops and cropping systems.

Eligible Projects

Projects must:

- Aim to develop and accelerate enterprises, supply chains, and markets for CLC crops and cropping systems in the early stage of commercial development in Minnesota.
- Not start until the grant contract is signed by all parties and has reached its effective date listed in the grant contract agreement.
- Be completed by October 31, 2026.
- Be conducted by an organization in Minnesota and limited to one grant per organization for this RFP.

Project examples include but are not limited to:

- Customized harvesting, seed cleaning and storage, processing and equipment to make food products, developing markets, and bringing these products to consumers.

Collaboration

Eligible applicants may collaborate with other value-added businesses, but it is not required.

Eligible project expenses

Eligible expenses are those directly related to the project outcomes and include but are not limited to:

- Personnel costs
- In-State travel costs
- Supplies or equipment required to conduct research
- Contracted services
- Payments or stipends to external project participants
- Plot fees and services

Ineligible project expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- General operations, overhead, and indirect costs as defined at [2 CFR 200.56](#).
- Out of state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.
- Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal, state, or local government funding. Projects which have already received funding from another federal grant or subaward programs may not receive funding for the same activities and expenses
- Fines, penalties, or other settlement expense resulting from failure of the applicant to follow federal, state, local, or tribal laws and regulations
- Political activities in accordance with provisions of the Hatch Act ([5 United States Code 1501-1508](#) and [7324-7326](#))
- 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 or traffic violations
- Entertainment and alcohol

Matching funds

Applicants do not have to provide matching funds.

Application Review Process and Policies

All eligible applications will be reviewed by MDA staff and an external review committee based on the criteria in the evaluation profile. The review committee will be reviewing each applicant on a 100-point scale. See the [Project Evaluation Profile](#) for more information.

Review Process

A review committee, representing content and community specialists with regional knowledge, evaluates all eligible applications based on the criteria in the Project Evaluation Profile. 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 may use geographic distribution, soil management practices, impacted acres, services to prioritized populations, applicant's history as a state grantee, capacity to perform the work, and more when making their decisions. *The award decisions of the MDA are final and not subject to appeal.*

We anticipate committee recommendations to be submitted to the MDA Commission for review in August and Grantees will be notified in August with final work plans and budgets due on September 8, 2025.

This is a Request for Proposals (RFP). Publishing this request does not obligate the state to award a contract and the state reserves the right to cancel the solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest due to lack of funding, a change in federal or State priorities, or other considerations.

Organization Pre-Award Capacity Assessment

Applicants recommended for an award are required to complete a pre-award risk assessment.

Under [Policy 08-06: Policy on Pre-Award Risk Assessment for Potential Grantees \(PDF\)](#) the MDA is required to complete a pre-award risk assessment of applicants selected to receive a grant award of \$50,000 or greater. Potential grantees will be asked to submit documents relevant to their entity.

If the MDA determines that the potential grantee has substantial risks that inhibit its ability to perform the required duties under the grant contract agreement, then the MDA may either request more information for the purpose of satisfying the concerns, develop a risk mitigation plan to protect the interests of the state, or not award the grant.

For-profit businesses

- A copy of the business' two most recent years of federal and state tax returns. If the business has not been in operation long enough to have a tax return, then they must submit documentation of internal controls.
- Current financial statements for the two most recent years including a balance sheet, income statement, and statement of cashflows.
- Confirmation that the business entity is not under bankruptcy proceedings and has disclosed liens on any assets.
- Confirmation that the business is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Confirmation that none of its current board members or staff with authority to access grant funds have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

Nonprofit organizations

- A copy of the nonprofit's two most recent years of their Form 990 or Form 990-EZ with the Internal Revenue Service. If the nonprofit has not been in existence long enough or is not required to file Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, then they must submit the following information:
 - Proof of its tax-exempt status
 - Most recent board-reviewed financial statements
 - Documentation of its internal controls
- Most recent certified financial audits for the past two years if required to complete one under Section 309.53, Subd. 3.
- Confirmation that it is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Confirmation that none of its current board members or staff with authority to access grant funds have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

Political subdivisions

Political subdivisions, including counties, towns, cities, school districts, and other municipal corporations or political subdivisions of the state authorized to enter into contracts will need to certify that none of its current public officials, board members, or staff with authority to access grant funds have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

Individuals

Individuals will need to certify that they have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

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 ([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 give 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.

An example of a conflict of interest would be an external party (such as a vendor) writing an application for an applicant when that external party stands to profit from the grant award. In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicant or grantee will be notified and actions will be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement. Throughout the term of their grant agreement, grantees shall monitor and report any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest to the State's Authorized Representative.

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 this 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 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 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 remaining data in application responses (except for data otherwise classified by law, including 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 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 to 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.

Liability

The MDA will not be held liable for any costs incurred by any firm for work performed in the preparation and production of a proposal, nor for any work performed prior to the formal execution of the contract.

Requirements for Projects Receiving Grant Funds

General Compliance

Grantees must comply with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Grant Contract Agreement

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

Upon approval of an application, and before beginning work on the grant project(s) and receiving reimbursements, the applicant approved for an award must:

- Complete an IRS W-9 form or register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, or confirm that the information in SWIFT is still correct.
- Submit other required documentation within 30 days of award notification.
- Sign a grant contract agreement showing their intention to complete the proposed tasks. This agreement must be signed within 30 days of being sent to the grantee.
- Wait for the contract to be fully executed and reach its effective date before starting activity or making purchases.

Some changes may become necessary during your project. These include moving funds between cost items or activities, purchasing an item not listed in the approved budget, or changes in key personnel or personnel time devoted to the project. Changes that alter the scope, objectives, or outcomes of a project require prior approval by the MDA and may require an amendment to the contract.

Grant Payments

Per Minnesota State [Policy 08-08](#) reimbursement is the preferred method for making grant payments. 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. Biannual progress reports are required to be submitted during the duration of the project. The State shall review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

Accountability and Reporting

Follow-up surveys help the MDA determine the long-term impacts of the grant. Grantees must respond to requests for follow-up information for three years beyond the term of the grant agreement. Failure to respond to these promptly may affect a grantee's ability to secure future funding with the MDA.

Grant Monitoring

[Minn. Stat. §16B.97](#) and [Policy 08-10](#) Grant Monitoring require the following:

- One monitoring visit during the grant period on all state grants of \$50,000 and higher
- Annual monitoring visits during the grant period on all grants of \$250,000 and higher
- Conducting a financial reconciliation of grantee's expenditures at least once during the grant period on grants of \$50,000 and higher. For this purpose, the grantee must make expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents available upon request by the State.

Financial Management

Grantees must follow the general procurement standards in [2 CFR 200.318](#) and use their own documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, provided that the requirements conform to applicable federal law and the standards found in [2 CFR 200.302-326](#). Grantees must have and maintain adequate internal controls to assure that federal grant funds are kept separate from other grant funds and general organization expenses and income and has a process for approving expenditures as described in [2 CFR 200.303](#). Grantees must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the administration of contracts. Grantees must not make subawards or contract with vendors who are included in [Minnesota's Suspended/Debarred Vendor Report](#).

Grantee Bidding Requirements

Grantees will be required to abide by the state's bidding requirements for larger purchases (over \$10,000). See a list of the state's [bidding requirements](#) for details.

[For Nongovernmental organizations]

Any grant-funded services and/or materials that are expected to cost:

- \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- Between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids.
- Between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.

For grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, prevailing wage rules apply per; [Minn. Stat. §§177.41](#) through [177.44](#). These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:

- [State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List](#)
- Metropolitan Council's Targeted Vendor list: [Minnesota Unified Certification Program](#)
- Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: [Central Certification Program](#)

The grantee must maintain:

- Written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.

- Support documentation of the purchasing and/or bidding process utilized to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in MN: [Suspended/Debarred Vendor Information](#).

[For Municipalities]

Grantees that are municipalities must follow:

- The contracting and bidding requirements in the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law as defined in [Minn. Stat. §471.345](#)
- The requirements of prevailing wage for grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, per [Minn. Stat. §§177.41](#) through [177.44](#) These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole.

Record Retention and Audits

Grantees must maintain a project file containing all records of correspondence with the MDA, including grantee's books, records, documents, accounting procedures and practices, receipts, invoices, records of payments, payroll records, and copies of all reports and documents associated with the project. Upon request by state or federal agencies, the grantee shall produce a legible copy of any or all such records. 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 state granting agencies, federal agencies, the Department of Administration and the state auditor ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, Subd. 8](#)).

The grantee is responsible for the retention of documents and records relevant to the grant. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date with receipt and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements in [2 CFR 200.334](#), whichever is later. All grantees (other than federal agencies and for-profit businesses) are responsible to comply with [2 CFR 200 Subpart F – Audit Requirements](#). The standards require any grantee that expends \$750,000 or more in federal awards during their fiscal year to have a single or program-specific audit conducted for that year.

Affirmative Action and Non-Discrimination requirements for all Grantees

- A. 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.
- B. 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](#)
- C. 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.

Voter Registration Requirement

The grantee will comply with [Minn. Stat. §201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

Project Evaluation Profile

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Score
Project Addresses Goals of the Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant clearly and compellingly describes how the project contributes to commercialization, supply chain and /or market development of CLC crops and cropping systems in Minnesota 	15
Organization Readiness, Financial Sustainability, and Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant describes how this grant project relates to their organizational business plan and mission, including current work on CLC crops and cropping systems Applicant demonstrates sound business management, financial aptitude, and stability 	15
Impact on Minnesota Agriculture and the Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to increase supply chains, markets and or sales of CLC crops and cropping systems is achievable Expected amount of Minnesota agricultural products to be increased is realistic Meaningfully adds resiliency in the supply chain or market Project has the potential to drive and scale up the demand for growing perennial and winter annual crops on agricultural lands in Minnesota Clear environmental benefit statement provided for the project 	30
Measurable Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objectives of project are measurable and clearly stated Describes how the project will achieve objectives of the grant program and benefit the organization 	10
Work Plan and Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work plan is thorough and realistic A description of each step of the grant project is provided with estimated dates 	10
Budget <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 	10
Priority Areas (Low-income and Disadvantaged Communities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant's operation is in a Low-income and Disadvantaged Community, or the applicant meaningfully serves Low-income and Disadvantaged Communities as defined in the 2024 Environmental Protection Agency Climate Protection Reduction Grant. Map: www.mda.state.mn.us/LIDAC-Communities-MN 	10
Total	100

Application Questions

Applicant information

- Applicant Name
- Organization Name
- Organization Mailing Address
- Organization County
- Organization Telephone
- Organization Email
- Minnesota State House District (Find your district at [Who Represents Me?](http://www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/districtfinder) (www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/districtfinder)).

Authorized representative

If awarded a grant, the person that will sign the Grant contract agreement for this organization.

- Name
- Telephone
- Email

Eligibility

Confirm that the following statements apply to your organization and answer.

- My organization is in 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.) (Yes/No)
- My organization is in Minnesota and authorized to conduct business in Minnesota. (Yes/No)
- The principals of the applicant are not employees of the MDA nor are their spouses. (Yes/No)
- My organization is able to meet the timeline deadlines as outline under “Timeline” on page 4 (Yes/No)

Has work started on your proposed project or will work start before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties? The MDA is unable to reimburse for any work that is performed prior to the start date of the contract. (Yes/No)

Project summary

Grant request

- Project Name
- Total Project Cost
- Total Grant Request. Minimum \$10,000 and maximum of \$100,000.
- Expected Project Start Date
 - Must be after the contract is signed by you and the State of Minnesota.
 - Award notification is in late August/early September, and contracts should be signed in October 2025.
- Expected Project End Date
 - Contracts must end October 31, 2026
 - You will have up to one month (30 days) after your contract end date to submit for a reimbursement.
 - All items and services must be paid for by the end date of the contract.

Please note: Length of question responses to the questions below is limited to a certain number of characters. For example, the “Project description” paragraph referenced on page 14 in this RFP is limited to 500 characters.

Project description

Provide a brief description of your project outlining project objectives, what you plan to purchase and why. Try to limit your description to three sentences. *(500 characters, including spaces)*

Business readiness and financial sustainability

Business summary

Provide a summary of your organization *(2,000 characters, including spaces)*. The summary should stand alone to describe work related to continuous living cover crops and cropping systems:

- The mission and goals of your organization
- The services and products provided by your organization
- The ownership and leadership of your organization

Organization plan summary

Provide a summary of your business plan. *(2,000 characters, including spaces)*.

- What previous investments or commitment to CLCs have your organization made?
- How is your business looking to grow or remain competitive?

Impact on Minnesota agriculture and the environment

Current CLC crops or cropping systems

Does your organization currently work with CLC crops and cropping systems? (Yes/No)

Scale of CLC crops and cropping systems

How will the scale of CLC crops and cropping systems your organization works on change because of this grant project (by crop or system)? Please provide a before and after estimate. *(2,000 characters, including spaces)*

Example: In 2024, we were able to XXXXXX. After we complete the grant project in October 2026, we estimate we can do XXX.

Supply chain and market development

Briefly describe who you collaborate with and/or sell products to. Estimate the number of market partners and outlets used by your organization between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2024. Examples of market outlets include wholesale distributors, direct-to-consumer channels, retail stores, and farmers markets. *(2,000 characters, including spaces)*

Market expansion and diversification

Describe how this project plans to diversify and expand access to markets or supply chains in Minnesota. *(2,000 characters, including spaces)*

- Describe how the project plans to diversify markets and/or increase market access.
- If you expect to increase the number and/or types of market outlets from this project, estimate the increase(s) and explain how the project will achieve these goals.

Example: In 2024 we sold to 10 schools and with the grant we expect to be able to sell to 20 schools across the Twin Cities metro area.

Increasing sales

Describe how this project plans to increase the sales of agricultural products from CLC crops or cropping systems in Minnesota. *(1,000 characters, including spaces)*

Sources of Minnesota agricultural products

Where do you plan to source your agricultural products from? This grant will prioritize Minnesota grown CLC crops and CLC cropping systems. List your current or anticipated sources of Minnesota agricultural products (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Examples: Vista Acres Vineyards, New Ulm, MN (2024 - \$50,000 grapes); Happy Plants Inc., Thief River Falls, MN (2024 - \$3,000 hops and \$15,000 barley); Big Harvest Cooperative, Chaska, MN (2024 - \$10,000 corn)

Impact on Minnesota’s environment

Briefly describe the environmental benefit of your project and how your project will protect, conserve, preserve, and enhance Minnesota's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, or other natural resources? (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Measuring outcomes

Describe how your organization plans to measure the outcomes of your project including impact on your organization, increased sales or market and or supply chain outlets for agricultural products from CLC crops and cropping systems, and environmental outcomes. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Project plan

Work plan and timeline

Create a workplan and timeline using the example format below. You should include the steps that you will take to successfully complete your project. For example, you might include target dates for requesting quotes, installing and testing equipment, and full launch of the equipment or product.

Timeframe	Description of Task/Action Item	Responsible Party
Ex: October 2025	Request bids for grain processing equipment	Project director
Ex: November 2025	Sign contract with Improved Grain Processors	CEO

Budget

Create a budget using the example format below. If specific contractors are needed and named in the application, grantees will not need to undergo a formal bidding process¹ as long as you use these contractors for your project.

¹ ¹Grant Bidding Requirements ([Office of Grants Management](#), Department of Administration)
[For nongovernmental organizations]
Any grant-funded services and /or materials that are expected to cost:

- \$100,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- Between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids.
- Between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quote or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.

Please use these descriptors for “Item category”: Contracted Services, Salary, Supplies, Travel costs, Education/Training, or Equipment.

Please use the following fiscal quarters for the “Expected time of expense”: Oct-Dec 2025, Jan-Mar 2026, Apr-Jun 2026, Jul-Sep 2026.

Expected time of expense (Fiscal quarter) -Oct-Dec 2025 -Jan-Mar 2026 -Apr-Jun 2026 Etc. (see above)	Item	Item category Choose from the following: -Contracted Services -Salary -Supplies -Travel costs -Education/Training -Equipment	Quantity	Cost per unit	Total Estimate	Source of Estimate
Oct- Dec 2025	Ex: Hammer Mill	<i>Equipment</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>	<i>Improved Grain Processors</i>
Oct- Dec 2025	Ex: Contractor Hours	<i>Contracted Services</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>\$100</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>Minnesota Grain Growers</i>

Budget narrative

Justify your budget and explain how you plan to spend funding for your project. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

- Explain how the equipment and services in the budget table will help you develop and accelerate commercialization, supply chains and markets for agricultural products from CLC crops and cropping systems into value-added products or diversify/expand your market outlets.
- Briefly explain if you will leverage other funding sources (financing, other grants, private investment, personal investment, or organization funds, etc.) related to this project.

(Note: Match funding is *not* required)

Low-income and Disadvantaged Communities

This grant program prioritizes at least 40% of program benefits to low-income and disadvantaged communities (LIDACs) as referenced in the Inflation Reduction Act Disadvantaged Communities Map. A copy of the map can be found at: www.mda.state.mn.us/LIDAC-Communities-MN

Is your business located in a LIDAC? Please explain how your organization provides opportunities for employment, services, or goods for sale in a LIDAC, if at all. Please reference the ID number(s) of the LIDAC areas you are located in and/or conduct business. This number can be found in a pop-up box as you click on LIDAC areas on the map. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

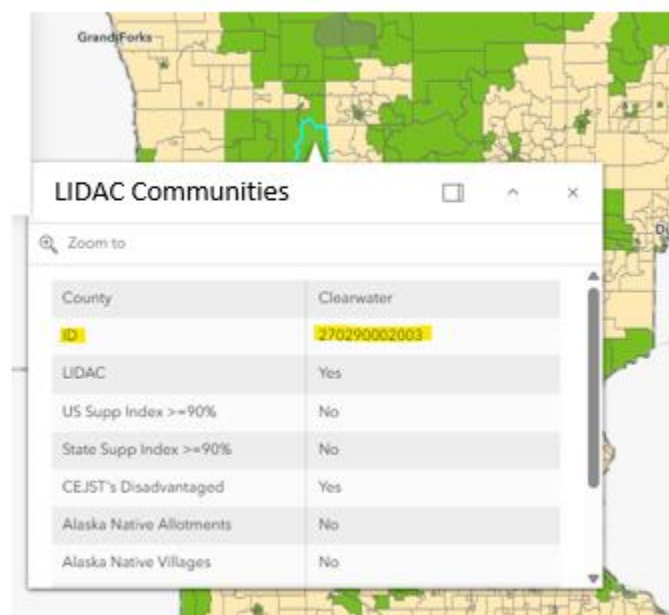


Figure 1 Example of pop-up box with the ID number of a LIDAC area highlighted.