



AGRI Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Fiscal Year 2027 Grant Request for Proposal (RFP)

Applications due by 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Thursday, October 29, 2026

8/12/2026

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
625 Robert Street N
St. Paul, MN 55155
mda.state.mn.us

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Table of Contents

Grant Summary	2
Eligibility	6
Application Review Process.....	10
Requirements for Grant Recipients.....	15
Right of Cancellation.....	20
Background and Program Goals	20
Project Evaluation Profile	21
Application Questions	22

Grant Summary

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration (SustAg) Grant. Eligible applicants include Minnesota farmers; individuals at educational institutions; organizations; Tribal sovereign nations; Tribal organizations or educational institutions; and local units of government located or residing in Minnesota. Applications must support research or demonstration projects conducted on farms within Minnesota, including those on Tribal lands or through Tribal organizations or educational institutions.

The SustAg Grant funds projects that demonstrate and publicize the energy efficiency, environmental benefit, and/or profitability of sustainable agriculture techniques or systems from production through marketing.

The program is authorized under [MINN. STAT. 17.116](#) and funded through [Laws of Minnesota, 2025 Regular Session, Chapter 34](#), Article 1, Section 2, Subdivision 3(e). Information about the program is available on the [Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration \(SustAg\) Grant program webpage](#). Applications will be accepted until October 29, 2026, at 4 p.m. CT.

Funding availability

We expect to award approximately \$350,000 using a competitive review process. The maximum award is \$50,000.

We expect to award between 8 and 15 grants; however, the final number depends on the size of the awards and will be determined through the proposal review process.

We will accept only one application per person, organization, Tribal sovereign nation, Tribal organization or educational institutions, or local unit of government.

Match requirement

Matching funds are required for projects receiving over \$25,000. The first \$25,000 does not need to be matched. For requests between \$25,000 and \$50,000, you must provide a dollar-for-dollar match on the amount above \$25,000.

Matching funds can be provided in two ways:

- Cash match – actual dollars contributed to the project in the form of equipment supplies or services purchased.
- In-kind match – certain goods or services donated for the project (such as labor, equipment use, or land access).

If you use in-kind matching funds, you must list them in the project budget. This includes estimating the number of acres used, hours worked, or hours of equipment time, along with the appropriate hourly rate or value.

If the value of the land used to conduct the grant project is used as an in-kind match, you must use [average cropland rental rates](#) or [farmland rental rates](#) from University of Minnesota Extension to calculate the value, if a rate is available. Value of services provided should align with the values in the [2026 Iowa Custom Farm Rate Survey \(PDF\)](#).

Sources of the cash match may include non-state funds (funds that were not obtained through the budgeting process of the Minnesota Legislature or granted by a state agency) in the form of cash, loans, other grants, or liquid capital assets dedicated to the project. If a proposed project has been submitted to or funded by a federal grant program, specify the grantor, the funding amount, and the purpose of that grant funding.

To receive your full reimbursement, you must submit documentation that shows the total cost of the project, including your matching funds.

Example 1

The project's total cost is \$25,000. The applicant may apply for up to \$25,000 without providing a match.

Total project cost	Match requirements	Total grant award
\$25,000	\$0	\$25,000

Example 2

The project's total cost is \$45,000. The first \$25,000 of expenses will be funded by the grant. The remaining \$20,000 requires a one-to-one match, with the applicant contributing \$10,000 and grant contributing \$10,000. In total, the applicant would be eligible for \$35,000 in grant funds from the state and would need to provide a match of \$10,000.

Total project cost	Match requirement	Total grant award
First \$25,000	\$0	\$25,000
Remaining \$20,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
Total Cost: \$45,000	\$10,000	\$35,000

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 grantmaking. The Department of Administration Office of Grants Management (OGM) [Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally show how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities. Applicants with projects that are led by, impact, or serve Native American Tribal communities are encouraged to apply.

The scoring criteria of this grant program prioritize projects led by a farmer or group of farmers.

Additionally, this program aims to:

- Support farmers, organizations, and educational institutions in completing innovative on-farm research and demonstrations.
- Explore sustainable agriculture practices and systems that could make farming more profitable or resource efficient.
- Test and demonstrate on-farm practices that will benefit a broad range of farmers.

These priorities and the desired outcomes of grant projects are reflected in the [Project Evaluation Profile](#), which describes the scoring criteria and weight that will be used by reviewers to evaluate your application.

How to apply

Applications must be received no later than **4 p.m. CT on Thursday, October 29, 2026**. Late applications will not be accepted.

- Apply using our [online application system](#).
 - If you're a new user, you need to create an account first. Use this [how-to guide \(PDF\)](#) to help set up your account.
 - Once logged in, select "AGRI Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant FY 2027".
 - After you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email. Contact MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us, if you do not receive this email.
- Apply early so there is enough time to get help with the online application system if needed. It's best practice to submit your application at least 24 hours in advance.

For help using the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6500
- Email MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us, with "SustAg Online Application Help" in the subject line. We encourage reaching out for help early as we may not be able to assist with last-minute requests.

The MDA is not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in a late submission. It is your responsibility as the applicant to ensure we receive your application before the deadline.

Applications that are started in the online application system but are not submitted will not be evaluated. Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP; these materials will not be considered nor evaluated. The MDA reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet the requirements of this RFP.

By applying, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award, as well as subject the applicant to suspension or debarment proceedings and other remedies available to the State by law.

The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with submitting a response to this RFP.

How to submit questions

For questions about the grant program or application:

- Submit your question in writing before **4 p.m. CT on Thursday, October 22, 2026**.
- Email MDA.AGRIGrants@state.mn.us with “SustAg Question” in the subject line.

The MDA will post responses to program questions on the [Questions and Answers \(Q&A\) section](#) of the SustAg Grant webpage as we receive them. You can also read answers to past questions there.

MDA employees are not authorized to give applicants advice on their applications. Applicants who solicit or receive advice from unauthorized MDA employees may be disqualified from eligibility for a grant award.

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 project, organization, or farm.
- Answer all questions completely within the character limits specified in the grant application.
- Although some questions are labeled as optional, we strongly recommend responding to those questions or uploading the appropriate documents.
- Ensure your application is your own, unique proposal designed to respond to the RFP.
- Make your budget realistic, include only eligible items, and clearly explain how the money will be spent.
- Review the Project Evaluation Profile included in this RFP, as it is used to score and compare grant applications.

Timeline and deadlines

August 10, 2026		RFP posted on the MDA website.
October 22, 2026 at 4 p.m. CT		Deadline to ask grant program questions.
October 29, 2026 at 4 p.m. CT		Applications due.
November 2026		Phase one review.
December 2027		Phase two review (pre-award risk assessments).
January 2027		Applicants notified of award decisions.
March 2027		Expected project start date.

Grants may last up to three years from the contract start date. We anticipate grant contract agreements to start in March 2027 and end no later than January 2030. Grant contract agreements will not be extended beyond three years.

If selected, grantees may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract agreement is fully executed (signed by all parties), the grant agreement has reached its effective date, and the grantee has been notified that they may begin work.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

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

- Be a Minnesota farmer, individual at an educational institution, organization located in the state, Tribal sovereign nation, Tribal organization or educational institution, or local unit of government with capacity to design, carry out and report on research on Minnesota farms.
- Farmers must cultivate, operate, or manage a farm for profit, and grow or raise at least \$1,000 of agricultural products for sale annually.
- Be authorized to do business in Minnesota.
- Meet the requirements of the [Pre-award Risk Assessment](#).

Examples of applicants include but are not limited to:

- Individuals (including farmers)
- For-profit businesses
- Nonprofit organizations
- Local units of government or SWCDs
- Agricultural Co-ops
- Tribal governments and entities

MDA employees, their spouses/domestic partners, or any farms or businesses owned or principally operated by them, or their spouses/domestic partners are not eligible applicants or principal investigators and are not eligible to receive funds from this grant program. In the application, applicants must also disclose the names and roles of any MDA employees or their spouses/domestic partners who are part of their organization's leadership, board of directors, or governing body.

Collaboration

If you are a farmer or group of farmers:

- You must involve at least one **technical cooperator**.
 - The cooperator should have technical expertise that will strengthen the project, such as knowledge of soil science, biology, agronomy, horticulture, entomology, engineering, business and marketing, finance, data collection, statistics, etc.
 - Technical cooperators may be from University of Minnesota Extension, community colleges, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, or other similar organizations. Technical cooperators may also be private individuals or individuals from private companies who are knowledgeable in the subject matter.
 - Technical cooperators can help design the project, carry it out, and review and interpret the results. This person is expected to serve as an advisor, not someone you hire to do the project for you.
 - A technical cooperator cannot be a family member (spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, or similar).

- Your application must include a **letter of commitment** from at least one technical cooperator.
 - In the letter, the technical cooperator must explain how they will contribute to the project. If the budget contains funds for the technical cooperator, the letter must include the hourly rate or fee schedule for the work they will do.

If you are not a farmer:

- You must have at least one **farmer cooperator**.
 - The farmer or farmers must be meaningfully involved in designing and carrying out the project.
 - The budget should include funds to compensate the farmer(s) for their time and expertise.
 - Farmers are expected to be involved in the project, not simply supplying the land where the project can be conducted.
 - Farmer cooperators must cultivate, operate, or manage a farm for profit, and grow or raise at least \$1,000 of agricultural products for sale annually.
- Your application must include a **letter of commitment** from the farmer(s).
 - In the letter, the farmer cooperator must explain how they will be involved in the project.
 - If the farmer is being compensated for time or use of equipment, the amount of compensation must be included in the letter.

Letters of support

In addition to letters of commitment from cooperators, applicants may (but are not required to) obtain and submit letters of support for the proposed project. In particular, letter(s) of support from farmers who will benefit from this project may help strengthen your application.

Letters of support can be typed on letterhead, hand-written, or sent by email to the applicant. Copies of the letters should be combined into one document and uploaded as a part of the application process.

Eligible projects

Eligible projects will:

- Show the ability to:
 - Increase direct or indirect energy savings or production.
 - Have a positive effect or reduce harmful effects on the environment; and/or
 - Demonstrate increased profitability for the individual farm by reducing costs or improving marketing opportunities.
- Be conducted on a Minnesota farm or farms.
- Benefit other Minnesota farmers.
- Publicize and hold an outreach event in the form of a field day, event, or other resource in the final season or year of the project. Examples include but are not limited to field days, video diaries, how-to guides, blog posts, podcast interviews, presentations at ag-based conferences or meetings, etc.
- Not start until the grant contract is signed by all parties and has reached its start date.
- Be conducted over a minimum of two years but no more than three years. Grant contract agreements will not be extended beyond three years.

Project examples include but are not limited to:

- Increased environmental sustainability and improved soil health
- Conservation tillage and weed management
- Novel cover crops and crop rotations
- Nutrient and pesticide management, including runoff protection
- Farm-based energy efficiency or production such as wind, methane, or biomass
- Integrated pest management systems for insects, weeds, and diseases
- Seed breeding or conservation
- Livestock production systems or management strategies
- Developing or improving marketing opportunities, including season extension and post-harvest storage and handling
- Novel enterprise diversification, including organic production, using traditional and non-traditional crops and livestock
- Other creative ideas that address farm input reduction or management, conservation, energy, or profitability

See [past projects](#) for more examples.

Eligible expenses

If the MDA accepts your proposal, the MDA will reimburse eligible costs included in the MDA-approved project budget. Eligible expenses are costs directly related to the project.

Examples of eligible expenses for this grant program include but are not limited to:

- Wages for your time spent on grant project activities (beyond normal farming operations). If you include any fringe rates (employer-paid benefits), please explain how you determined these rates for you or any staff/contractors.
- Consultant fees. Provide justification for the hourly rate.
 - Note: The consultant's hourly rate must be included in their letter of commitment.
- Costs to lease or use farm equipment needed for the project.
- Special-purpose equipment or other items necessary to achieve the objectives of the project. In general, this equipment may not exceed \$1,500 per item. With the MDA's permission, you may be allowed to use grant funds towards more expensive special-purpose equipment and be reimbursed up to \$1,500 of the total purchase price.
- Project-related services such as soil testing or other analyses.
- Project-related travel.
- Postage and printing related to the project.
- Outreach expenses (advertising, handouts, refreshments, etc.) for one outreach event over the course of the project.
- See the [2027 SustAg Application Budget Spreadsheet](#) template included in the application for a breakdown of eligible expense categories.

You may not incur any obligations to pay for goods or services (and may not incur an obligation to pay for goods and services) before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reaches its start date. Examples of

"obligations to pay" for goods or services include purchase orders, retainer agreements, sales orders, and any transactions creating an invoice.

All requests for reimbursement must be documented and submitted to the MDA no later than 30 calendar days after the grant end date.

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Expenditures incurred before all parties sign the grant contract agreement or its start date, whichever occurs later, or those incurred after the contract agreement expires. Examples of obligations include purchase orders, retainer agreements, sales orders and any transaction creating an invoice.
- Expenses paid for with cash.
- Gift cards or vouchers; gas cards; and other forms of pre-paid cards, vouchers, or compensation.
- The purchase of long-lasting, general-purpose equipment that is intended to be used beyond the life of the grant. Examples include tractors, motorized vehicles, buildings (including greenhouses and high tunnels), windmills or wind turbines, solar panels (except for those needed to power grant-specific equipment), fencing, gates, virtual fence collars or towers, building construction, and computers.
 - The project may rent these items from your farm, or a different farm as needed to conduct the project. If standard rental rates for the item or service are not available, explain the rental rate in your budget summary. Standard rates for many services are available in the [2026 Iowa Custom Farm Rate Survey \(PDF\)](#).
- Livestock of any kind.
- Purchase or rental of land (land rent may be used as in-kind match).
- Feed for livestock unless the feed is specifically relevant to your demonstration/experiment (e.g., a feeding trial).
- Project-specific equipment items that cost more than \$1,500 each.
- Compensation for a grant writing consultant or grant manager.
- General operating costs, overhead, and indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the project).
- Business or organizational start-up costs (e.g., starting a farm) or expansion costs.
- Advertising (except for your outreach event), public relations, entertainment, and amusement costs.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes.
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, legal costs, or contingency funds. Out-of-state transportation and travel expenses unless there's a specific need that cannot be met with in-state resources. In this case, contact MDA program staff for prior approval.
- Expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any federal, state, or local government funding or other grants (e.g., no "double dipping").
- Purchases of items and services from staff, board members, farms owned/operated by staff or board members, or other individuals with whom they have an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. (See Conflicts of Interest section for exceptions).
- Purchases of items or services from MDA employees, their spouses/domestic partners, or any farms or businesses owned or principally operated by them or their spouses/domestic partners.

The purchases listed above are not an exhaustive list. Other purchases not explicitly listed here may be deemed ineligible by the staff, external reviewers, or the commissioner.

Application Review Process

Review process

Funding will be awarded through a competitive process. There will be two phases of the review process.

Phase one: initial review

During the first phase of the review process, MDA staff and an external review panel consisting of a soil scientist, an agronomist, a representative from a postsecondary educational institution, an agricultural marketing specialist, two resident farmers of the state using sustainable agriculture methods, and two resident farmers of the state using organic agriculture method will evaluate all eligible applications based on the criteria and weight in the [Project Evaluation Profile](#).

Reviewers and staff will meet and discuss the proposals and then recommend projects for whole or partial funding to the commissioner of agriculture, who reviews the recommendations and makes the award decisions.

In addition to the Project Evaluation Profile, reviewers, staff, and the commissioner may consider:

- Geographic distribution of projects
- Delivery of services to prioritized areas or stakeholders
- An applicant's history as a state grantee, including performance on previous grants, compliance with state rules and regulations, and capacity to perform the work.

The MDA reserves the right to offer partial awards based on an assessment of the proposal, the pool of applicants, funding availability, or overall objectives of the grant program.

The timeline for the review process is listed in the [Timeline and Deadlines](#) section.

Phase two: SWIFT vendor verification and pre-award risk assessment

SWIFT vendor verification

All applicants that advance to phase two of the review process will need to register as an individual payee or supplier with [Minnesota's SWIFT system](#), if they do not already have an account. Those that already have SWIFT account will need to verify that the information in their account is accurate. Applicants will be asked to provide their SWIFT vendor ID number and SWIFT vendor name (the name you are doing business under) during this phase.

Pre-award risk assessment

During the second phase of the review process, applicants that have been advanced from the first phase of review will be contacted by MDA staff to submit any additional documentation required for the pre-award risk assessment.

The MDA is required to consider a grant applicant's past performance and financial and operational capacity before awarding grants ([MINN. STAT. 16B.981, Subd.2-5](#), [OGM Policy 08-02: Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#), and [OGM Policy 08-06: Pre-award Risk Assessment of Potential Grantees \(PDF\)](#)).

All applicants' capacity to perform work related to the grant will be evaluated as part of their response to this RFP. Applicants being considered for an award may also be required to submit additional documents, such as financial reports, descriptions of internal controls, disclosure of conflicts of interest, and information about the performance on previous state grants, prior to being approved by MDA for an award. The award amount the applicant is under consideration for and the applicant type will determine what additional documentation needs to be submitted.

Applicants being considered for an award of less than \$50,000

Applicants being considered for an award of less than \$50,000 or less will submit the following:

- Certification that neither you nor your entity have been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government. See the [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#) and [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#).
- Documentation that your entity is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State, registered with the Attorney General's office, and current on its annual reporting requirements, if required for your organization ([MINN. STAT. 309.515](#), [309.52](#), and [309.53](#)).

Applicants being considered for an award of \$50,000 or greater

Applicants being considered for an award of \$50,000 or greater will be required to submit additional documents for review and analysis.

Nonprofit organizations will submit the following:

- A description of your capacity to complete the project. This may include your current staffing, project partners, current budget, and previous experience performing similar work. You will also need to provide information on any grants received from the MDA or other state agency in the last five years.
- A copy of your organization's two most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ with the Internal Revenue Service. If your organization has not been in existence long enough or is not required to file Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, then you must submit the following information:
 - Proof of your organization's tax-exempt status.
 - Board-reviewed financial statements for the two most recent business years, or for new organizations, actual financial statements for the periods that are available and pro forma financial projections for at least a two-year period.
 - Documentation of your organization's internal controls.

- The two most recent certified financial audits if required to complete one ([MINN. STAT. 309.53, Subd. 3](#)) (if the organization has received total revenue in excess of \$750,000 for the 12 months of operations covered by the statement).
- Certification that neither you nor your entity has been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government.
- Certification that neither you, your entities nor any key personnel, board members, officers, executives, employees, or agents, and any individual with authority to access, manage or use grant funds has been convicted of a criminal offense relating to a state grant agreement ([MINN. STAT. 16B.991, Subd. 1](#)).
- Documentation that your organization is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State, registered with the Attorney General's office, and is current on its annual reporting requirements, if required for your organization ([MINN. STAT. 309.515](#), [309.52](#), and [309.53](#)).
- Certification that you, your board members, staff, or anyone else with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

For-profit businesses will submit the following:

- A description of your capacity to complete the project. This may include your current staffing, project partners, current budget, and previous experience performing similar work. You will also need to provide information on any grants received from the MDA or other state agency in the last five years.
- A copy of the business' two most recent years of federal and state tax returns. If the business has not been in business long enough to have a tax return, then you must submit alternative documents, including documentation of internal controls.
- Financial statements including annual balance sheets, income statements, and statements of cashflows, for the two most recent years. If the business has not been in existence long enough, financial statements for the periods that are available and/or pro forma financial projections for at least a two-year period can be accepted.
- Certification that neither you nor your entity has been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government.
- Documentation that the business is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.
- Certification that the business is not under bankruptcy proceedings.
- Disclosure of any liens on assets.
- Certification that you, your board members, staff, or anyone else with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

Municipalities, political subdivisions, and individuals will submit the following:

- A description of your capacity to complete the project; this may include your current staffing, project partners, current budget, and previous experience performing similar work. You will also need to provide information on any grants received from the MDA or other state agency in the last five years.
- Certification that neither you nor your entity have been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government.
- Certification that you, your board members, staff, or anyone else with authority to access grant funds have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

If the MDA determines that the applicant 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.

Award notice

The MDA will notify applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing.

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 [OGM Policy 08-01: Grants Conflict of Interest \(PDF\)](#)).

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.

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, revising the grant work plan, amending the grantee duties in the grant contract agreement to mitigate the conflict of interest, requesting the grant applicant to submit a conflict of interest mitigation plan for MDA's review, disqualification from eligibility for the grant award, or termination of the grant contract agreement.

Grantees may generally not purchase items and services from staff, board members, farms owned/operated by staff or board members, or other individuals with whom they have an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. If grantees want to consider any of these individuals/organizations when making purchases, they must submit a conflict-of-interest disclosure and mitigation plan to the MDA for pre-approval. The plan must address how any conflicts of interest will be mitigated, including a plan for selecting vendors that includes meaningful involvement from non-board/staff members.

Grantees may not purchase items or services from MDA employees, their spouses/domestic partners, or any farms or businesses owned or principally operated by them or their spouses/domestic partners.

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 Government 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 not public 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 proposal responses (except for data otherwise classified by law, including trade secret information as described below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is completed.
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information) 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 of Minnesota, 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.

Requirements for Grant Recipients

Grant contract agreement

Each grantee must formally enter into a grant contract agreement with the MDA. The grant contract agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation for the project. Grant contract agreement templates are available for review on the [OGM Resources webpage](#). The MDA reserves the right to adjust these templates.

Upon approval of an application and before beginning work on the grant project and incurring any grant expenses, the applicant selected for a grant award must:

- If required, submit other documentation and certifications within 15 calendar days of award notification.
- Read and sign a grant contract agreement within 30 calendar days of being sent to the grantee. Failure to sign the contract within 30 calendar days may result in the award being rescinded.

You cannot begin work on grant activities or incur any grant expenses until a fully executed grant contract agreement is in place and you have been notified by the State's Authorized Representative that work may start.

You cannot begin work on grant activities or incur any grant expenses until a fully executed grant contract agreement is in place and you have been notified by the State's Authorized Representative that work may start. A fully executed grant contract agreement is one that has been signed by all parties and reached its start date, whichever is later. You must comply with the conditions and the grant contract agreement, and you will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the grantee duties and compliance with all applicable state requirements including worker's compensation insurance, nondiscrimination, data privacy, budget compliance, and reporting.

Project changes

Some changes may become necessary during your project. Grantees must request and obtain written approval from the MDA to make changes to the approved budget or work plan incorporated into the grant contract agreement. Changes that alter the scope, objectives, outcomes, key personnel or staff time devoted to the project, work plan, or budget require an amendment to the grant contract agreement.

Accountability and reporting

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to monitor progress on state grants by requiring grantees to submit written progress reports at least annually until all grant funds have been expended and all the terms in the grant contract agreement have been met.

- Progress reports will be due with each request for reimbursement, annual reports are due each January, and the final report will be due at project completion.
- Additional information about the long-term impact may also be collected for up to three years after the grant period.
- The MDA reserves the right to modify reporting requirements throughout the grant.

- Failure to regularly report, respond to surveys, and promptly respond to information requests may impact the grantee's ability to secure future funding from the MDA or other state agencies.
- Information submitted in any report or survey will be classified as public data. If the grantee considers any information in the report to be trade secret, the grantee may request that the trade secret information be kept confidential and must specifically label that information. The MDA will notify the grantee if a public records request is made for the information claimed as protected by the grantee.

Monitoring

The MDA monitors grantees to ensure that work is progressing within the required time frame, to collect data on outcomes, determine if financial procedures are followed accurately and appropriately, and/or verify purchases made with grant funds. The MDA will perform a financial reconciliation of at least one payment on grants greater than \$25,000 and will require the submission and review of cost documentation showing proof of purchase and payment described in the [Payments](#) section. Financial reconciliation may be performed on additional payment requests at the discretion of the MDA.

The MDA performs at least one monitoring visit for all grantees with awards greater than \$25,000 before approving final payment. Other grantees may receive monitoring visits at the discretion of the MDA. Monitoring visits are typically done in-person at the project site but may also be done via phone or video conferencing (sometimes called "desk audits") and may include review and discussion of financial and program information.

Payments

Grant funds are disbursed on a reimbursement basis. All requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget and be tied to documented progress on the approved project. The MDA will review each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date, and the latest grant progress report before approving payment.

Typically, reimbursement requests will need to include two types of cost documentation for each expense: proof of purchase (e.g., invoices, itemized receipts, payroll reports or time sheets), and proof of payment (e.g., cleared checks, bank and credit card statements, paystubs). Ineligible items and their cost must be clearly delineated in the proof of purchase. The MDA doesn't reimburse expenses paid for in cash.

The MDA will review the submitted documents, and any additional documentation requested by the grant administrator must be submitted by the grantee before the MDA provides the reimbursement. Additional details can be found in the [MDA Reimbursement Guide \(PDF\)](#).

- Matching contributions will require the same cost documentation as other expenses being reimbursed by grant funds.
- Grant payments will not be made on grants with past-due progress reports or if required documentation related to the invoice or financial reconciliation is missing, unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.
- Invoices should be submitted at least on the same schedule as the annual progress report.
 - If a grantee wants to submit invoices more frequently (such as quarterly), then interim progress reports will be required to be submitted with each of the non-annual invoices.
- All requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the MDA no later than 30 calendar days after the grant end date.

- The MDA retains the option to hold back the final 10% of each grant award until a final report is submitted, and the grantee demonstrates completion of their objectives described in their proposal, including completion of progress reports and the final site visit (if necessary) to verify the project's completion has occurred.
- The MDA may request that grantees return grant funds if they have not adequately addressed the proposed objectives or completed the reporting requirements at the completion of their project.
- Grant payments may be used to fulfill federal and state tax liabilities or may be withheld until the grantee has paid any tax liabilities ([MINN. STAT. 270C.65, Subd. 3](#) and other applicable laws).

Contract and bidding requirements

All grantees must follow the State's bidding requirements when buying supplies or services based on their entity type and the cost of the purchase.

Nongovernmental entities

Grantees that are nongovernmental entities, including businesses, nonprofits, and individuals, must use these guidelines:

- Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost \$100,000 or more must use a formal notice and bidding process.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three verbal quotes or bids or be awarded to a targeted vendor.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two verbal quotes or bids or be awarded to a targeted vendor.
- The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to ensure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:
 - [Office of State Procurement – Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged, and Veteran-Owned Vendor \(TG/ED/VO\) List](#)
 - [Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business \(MCUB\) Program Directory](#)
 - [Central Certification \(CERT\) Directory](#)
- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing their actions and the actions of its employees (if applicable) for the selection, award, and administration of contracts.
- The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- Notwithstanding the above, the MDA may waive bidding process requirements when:
 - Vendors included in the response to a competitive grant request for proposal process were approved and incorporated as an approved work plan for the grant; or
 - It is determined there is only one reasonably able and available source for such materials or services and that the grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.

- The grantee and any subrecipients/subcontractors must comply with prevailing wage rules, as applicable ([MINN. STAT. 177.41](#) through [MINN. STAT. 177.50](#)).
- The grantee and any subrecipients/subcontractors must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government. See [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#) and [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#).

Political subdivisions or municipalities

Grantees that are political subdivisions or municipalities must use these guidelines:

- Municipalities are required to comply with the Uniform Municipal Contracting Law ([MINN. STAT. 471.345](#)).
- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees for the selection, award, and administration of contracts.
- The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- The grantee and any subrecipients/subcontractors must comply with prevailing wage rules, as applicable ([MINN. STAT. 177.41](#) through [MINN. STAT. 177.50](#)).
- Municipalities and any subrecipients/subcontractors must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government (See [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#)) and [System for Award Management \(SAM.gov\)](#).

Grantee website and publicity

All grant projects must publicly credit the MDA funding in all public communications, presentations, and printed materials and include that information on the grantee's website. Additionally, grantees with a website must clearly post on their website the names and contact information for the grantee's leadership and the employee(s) or other person(s) who directly manages and oversees the grant contract agreement on behalf of the grantee (the authorized representative) ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 5 \(d\)](#)).

Grantee obligation to inform

Throughout the term of the grant agreement, the grantee has an ongoing responsibility to:

Immediately notify the state if the grantee, or its Authorized Representative, key personnel, board members, officers or public officials, executives, employees or staff (paid or volunteer), agents, or any individuals with authority to access, manage, or use grant funds or in a position of fiduciary responsibility related to the grant, is suspended or debarred from doing business with the State of Minnesota or the federal government (MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 1) or is convicted of felony financial crime or a criminal offense related to a state grant agreement.

Grantee evaluation

Prior to the closeout of the grant, the MDA will evaluate the performance of all grantees. The evaluation will include the purpose of the grant; the amount provided to the grantee; information about the grantee's

timeliness, quality, and overall performance in meeting the terms and objectives of the grant; if the grant was terminated; and any concerns with grantee's use of State funds. Evaluations of grantee performance for grant contract agreements greater than \$25,000 must be provided by the MDA to the Minnesota Department of Administration ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 12](#)). Evaluations are considered public data ([MINN. STAT. 13.599](#)).

Audits and record retention

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 commissioner of administration, the MDA, the state auditor, the attorney general, and the legislative auditor as appropriate ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 8](#)). This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant contract agreement end date, approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Grantees are responsible for the retention of documents and records relevant to their grants. Grantees should maintain a project file containing copies of all invoices, payroll records, receipts, proofs of payment, reimbursement requests, important correspondence with the MDA, progress reports, and any other documents associated with the project. Upon request by the State the grantee shall produce a legible copy of the records saved in their project file.

Affirmative action and nondiscrimination

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, familial status, 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](#).

Voter registration

The grantee will provide voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee ([MINN. STAT. 201.162](#)).

Right of Cancellation

This RFP does not obligate the MDA to award any grant(s). The State reserves the right to cancel this RFP if it is considered to be in the best interest of the program, agency, or the State of Minnesota. The State also reserves the right to negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this RFP. The State does not intend to award a grant contract agreement solely on the basis of any response made to this RFP or pay for information solicited or obtained.

Background and Program Goals

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 goal of the AGRI Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant is to demonstrate and publicize the energy efficiency, environmental benefit, or profitability of sustainable agriculture techniques or systems from production through marketing.

Project Evaluation Profile

Evaluation criteria	Maximum score
The project is led by a farmer or group of farmers.	5
Technical or farmer cooperator(s) • Technical cooperators provide the expertise this project needs. • Farmer cooperators are meaningfully involved. • Commitment letter(s) describe the cooperator's expertise, role in project, and hourly rate charged (if any). • The technical and farmer cooperators have the necessary qualifications to do this project.	15
Project rationale • The project will show positive effects on the environment, farm profitability, energy savings, or production. • There is a compelling reason to do this project. • The project informs or demonstrates best management practices. • The demonstrated technologies and techniques can be adopted and used by other farmers.	20
Project design and methods • The design and methods follow from the rationale and objectives in the application. • Objectives of the project are measurable and clearly stated. • The work plan details the design of the project and how it will accomplish the proposed objectives.	15
Evaluation • The project includes a plan for measuring and evaluating outcomes for each objective. • The project includes a basis of comparison (for example, a control plot or treatment).	15
Outreach plan • The plan to share information about the project with farmers and the broader agricultural community is well thought out.	15
Budget details • The budget clearly details all project costs. • Itemized costs are realistic. • Estimates are clearly based on vendor quotes and market research. • The budget clearly explains source and amount of applicant's funds (cash match). • The budget is cost-effective, and planned purchases are backed by quotes or other sources. • Charges for consulting and purchased services are less than 50% of the total cost.	15
Are commitment letter(s) from farmer(s) or technical cooperator(s) included?	Yes/No
Is an outreach event planned for the final year?	Yes/No
Total	100

Application Questions

Contact information

Applicant information

- Applicant legal name
- Applicant assumed name(s), if any (e.g., a “doing business as” name or DBA)
- Applicant physical address (e.g., PO Box 1, St. Paul, MN 55101)
- Applicant mailing address (e.g., 123 Smith Street, St. Paul, MN 55101)
- Applicant telephone number
- Applicant email
- Applicant website
- Applicant county
- Applicant Minnesota State House District (Use the [District Finder](#) if you don’t know your district.)

Primary contact

If awarded a grant, the person who will be responsible for leading the project. This may be the same as the contact information listed above:

- Primary contact name (first and last name)
- Primary contact title
- Primary contact telephone number
- Primary contact email
- Primary contact mailing address

Authorized representative

If awarded a grant, the person that is legally authorized to and will sign the grant contract agreement for this organization; this should not be a grant writer or a 1099 contractor as these individuals typically would not have authority to enter the grant contract agreement with the MDA. This may be the same as the contact information listed above:

- Authorized representative name (first and last name)
- Authorized representative title
- Authorized representative telephone number
- Authorized representative email
- Authorized representative mailing address

Eligibility

Confirm that the following statements. You must respond “True” to all the statements to be eligible to apply for this grant. If your project is recommended for phase two of the review process, you will need to sign a certification for some of these statements.

- The applicant is in compliance with the [Corporate Farm Law](#). (True or False)
- The applicant is not suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government. (True or False)
- The applicant is registered and in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State (SOS) or is not required to maintain a registration with the SOS. You can verify that you are registered and in good standing by searching for your entity’s name on the [SOS website](#). (True or False)
- The applicant’s current principals have not been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. A principal is defined as a public official, board member, or staff (paid or volunteer) with authority to access grant funds or determine how funds are used. (True or False)
- The applicant’s key personnel, board members, officers, executives, employees, agents, or any individual with authority to access, manage, or use grant funds or in a position of fiduciary responsibility related to the grant have not been convicted of a criminal offense related to a state grant agreement. (True or False)
- The applicant does not owe the State of Minnesota any back taxes and has not defaulted on any State of Minnesota backed financing in the last seven years. (True or False)
- The applicant is compliant with current state and federal regulations. (True or False)
- The applicant, or principal investigator, is not an MDA employee, spouse or domestic partner of an employee, or a farm or business principally owned by one of them. (True or False)

Organization eligibility

- Does the applicant’s leadership, board of directors, or governing body include any MDA employees or their spouses/domestic partners, or is the applicant a State of Minnesota employee, spouse or domestic part of a State of Minnesota employee, or a farm or business principally owned by one of them? (Yes or No)
 - If yes, list their name(s) and role(s) in the applicant’s organization.
- Is your organization a for-profit business, nonprofit organization, or some other type of entity?
 - For-profit business
 - Nonprofit organization
 - Another type of entity, such as an individual, local unit of government, or Tribal government
- If you selected for-profit business: The applicant is not under bankruptcy proceedings. (True or False)
- If you selected for-profit business: The applicant will disclose liens on assets, if required as part of the pre-award risk assessment. (True or False)
- If you selected nonprofit organization: The applicant is registered with the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office and is current on its annual reporting requirements or is exempt from the registration requirement. See [MINN. STAT. 309.515](#) for more information on registration exemptions. You can verify that you are registered and have an active status by searching for your entity’s name on the [Attorney General’s Office website](#). (True or False)

Attestations

Attest to the following statements. You must respond “Yes” to all the statements to apply for this grant. If your project is recommended for phase two of the review process, you will need to sign a certification for some of these statements.

- I attest that I have the authority to apply for this grant. (Yes or No)
- I attest that all information supplied in this application is true, correct, and reliable to the best of my knowledge. (Yes or No)
- I attest and understand that the submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the grant contract agreement award and may subject me and my organization to suspension or debarment proceedings, as well as other remedies available to the State, by law. (Yes or No)
- I attest that the supporting documentation for the claims and assertions made within this application is available to the MDA for its review. (Yes or No)
- I attest and understand that the submission of additional documents, as described in the RFP, may be required as part of the pre-award risk assessment if my project is recommended for phase two of the review process. (Yes or No)
- I attest that work has not started on the proposed project, and we will not begin work before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reaches its start date, whichever is later. The MDA is unable to reimburse for any work that is performed prior to the effective start date of the grant contract agreement. (Yes or No)
- I attest and understand that receiving public funds as a consequence of false representations constitutes an act of fraud. (Yes or No)

Previous State of Minnesota grants

Have you been awarded a grant from the State of Minnesota in the past five years? (Yes or No)

- If yes, provide the details of the award amount(s), the duties, and the outcomes of the grant(s). (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Have you ever been awarded a Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant? (Yes or No)

- If yes, provide the details of the award amount(s), the project, and the outcomes of the grant(s). (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Type of applicant

Farmer applicants

Do you meet the definition of a farmer as defined in the RFP? (A farmer is someone who cultivates, operates, or manages a farm for profit, and who grows or raises at least \$1,000 of agricultural products for sale annually.) (Yes or No)

- If yes:
 - Briefly describe your background as a farmer and business goals. How many years have you been farming? What percent of labor do you contribute to your farm? How do you market your farm products? Do you belong to any farm or agricultural organizations? If so, which ones? (2,500 characters, including spaces)
 - List the technical cooperator(s) involved in your project (include name(s), type of expertise, and how each cooperator will be involved in the project). (2,500 characters including spaces)
 - Note: You must include a cooperator commitment letter from each technical cooperator with your application. This letter should describe the cooperator's expertise and their role in the project. If the cooperator will be paid, the letter must include their hourly rate of pay for the type of work.
- If no:
 - You do not qualify to apply as a farmer for this program. You need to apply as a non-farmer applicant.

Non-farmer applicants

Indicate the type of applicant that is applying:

- Agricultural cooperative
- Educational institution
- Individual at a Minnesota educational institution
- Nonprofit organization
- Tribal nation or government entity
- Local unit of government
- Other: Please describe.

List the farmer cooperator(s) involved in your project (include name(s), type of expertise, and how each cooperator will be involved in the project). (2,500 characters, including spaces)

- Note: You must include a cooperator commitment letter from each farmer cooperator with your application. This letter should describe the cooperator's expertise and their role in the project. If the cooperator will be paid, the letter must include their hourly rate of pay for the type of work.

Project summary

Grant request

- Project name (100 characters, including spaces)
- County(ies) where project will take place
- Total project cost (grant + match)
- Total grant request (maximum of \$50,000)
- Project duration (two or three years)

Project description or Abstract

Describe your project and the question or problem you plan to address. If relevant, list your hypothesis statement. This project description may be shared with the public through press releases, the MDA website, legislative reports, and other publications. (1,200 characters, including spaces)

Project Topic: (Choose the topic that best describes this project)

- Soil fertility
- Livestock
- Fruits and vegetables
- Energy
- Cropping systems
- Alternative markets and specialty crops

Project objectives

List two to three primary objectives you plan to accomplish with your project. Objectives must be suitable for dissemination to the public. (1,200 characters, including spaces)

Project details

Project rationale

Explain the rationale for your project. (3,500 characters, including spaces)

- What is the purpose of this project?
- Why is it important?
- How will this project help other farm businesses?
- How does this project show positive effects on the environment, farm profitability, or energy savings or production?

Project design and methods

What are you going to do? Describe in detail how you will do your project from beginning to end. Be as specific as you can. Use a timeline and drawings or diagrams (for example: field map, crop rotation plan, building or paddock design, layout of test or demonstration plots, etc.) (5,000 characters, including spaces)

- Supply the name(s) and occupation(s) of the person(s) responsible for carrying out and reporting on this project.
- Name who is going to do each step of the project. List each participant's role in the design, implementation, analysis of the results, and outreach steps.

Note: Additional documents can be uploaded. Clearly label and identify each additional document.

Describe your approach, including scientific methodology. Include details such as proposed treatments and reason for selection, plot or sample size, lab procedures or protocols, experimental design, and measurements that will be used to evaluate the project. Explain how these methods are appropriate for the research project. Include a timeline for the research. Charts, graphs, and pictures are allowed. (10,000 characters, including spaces, plus an upload box for supporting documents)

Evaluation

Note: Projects don't have to work out the way you think or want them to turn out. Often, it's equally important to know what doesn't work or what not to do. Don't be afraid to try something others might consider risky.

How will you document what happens throughout your project? For each of the objectives you listed in the project summary, what information will you collect to determine whether your grant project worked and if you'd recommend it to other farmers? Be specific. (3,000 characters, including spaces)

Outreach plan

All projects must have an outreach event in the project's final year. We encourage you to hold a field day, either in-person or virtually. In your budget, you can request funds for outreach events. How will you share what you learn with Minnesota farmers, and the broader agricultural community? (2,500 characters, including spaces)

- Examples of outreach events may include — but are not limited to — in-person or virtual field days, video diaries, how-to guides, blog posts, podcast interviews, presentations at ag-based conferences or meetings, etc.

Budget details

Budget table

Complete your budget using the [2027 SustAg Application Budget Spreadsheet](#). Download the file as an Excel spreadsheet, save it to your computer, add your budget information, and upload the completed document to your online application. Use realistic costs and justify each expenditure, including the purpose and the quantity. The budget table must include the total project cost and matching funds. Budget categories include:

- Consultants and other purchased services (contractors, paid consultants, technical assistance, analysis, etc.) A letter of cooperation that includes rates charged must be included for all contracted labor or service.
- Personnel (labor – family or hired). Only include labor directly related to grant activities over and above time spent on normal farm operations.
- Supplies and equipment (e.g., seed, fuel, purchased inputs, plot markers, office supplies, project specific equipment purchased or rented)
- Travel (based on 0.76 cents per mile, although this may change depending on IRS mileage rates)

Budget narrative

Justify each cost in your budget table. Include as much detail as possible to help reviewers understand why the cost is necessary. (2,500 characters, including spaces)

Matching funds

If you are applying for more than \$25,000 in grant award funds, list the source and amount of each type of match: in-kind land use or services provided by the grantee, or cash in the form of purchased goods or services. These should also be listed in your budget table. Provide any additional information about each match item listed in the budget table.

- Use the [2026 Iowa Custom Farm Rate Survey \(PDF\)](#) as a guideline for deciding the value of in-kind services. If your rates are different, justify.
- For land rent counting toward your match, you must use [average cropland rental rates](#) or [farmland rental rates](#) from University of Minnesota Extension to calculate the value, if available. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

Other sources of funding

Have you received or applied for, or do you plan to apply for, other sources of funding to support this project? If yes, explain. (500 characters, including spaces)

Reimbursement acknowledgement

I understand that all payments on this grant project will be made on a reimbursement basis based on the terms outlined in the Payments section of the RFP. (Yes or No)

Additional documents (optional)

If applicable, attach documents that give a visual representation of your proposed project. Examples include maps, charts, graphs, photos, etc. Clearly label and identify each additional document. You can use any common file format (i.e., JPG, PNG, and PDF). Please avoid Apple-specific file types such as Numbers since our reviewers may have trouble opening them.

Work plan and timeline

Complete the following table with your work plan. You should include the steps that you will take to complete your project. The timeline will be used to monitor high level progress of projects and should include discrete, measurable goals. Tasks and key activities should relate to the project objectives. The party/individual responsible column must include the roles and responsibilities of any formal partners as applicable.

Example:

Timeframe	Description of task or key activity	Responsible party/individuals
July 2026	Request quotes for cooler	General manager
August 2026	Order cooler	Store owner
September 2026	Update electrical system	Electrician

If there is not enough space in the table provided in the application, you may upload a work plan as an Excel or Word file as long as you use the same format as the example above.

Performance capacity, project readiness, and financial sustainability

Performance capacity

Describe your capacity to perform the kind of work that would be funded by the grant or similar work, including your history of performing this kind of work. Describe how your project team will contribute to your capacity to carry out the proposed activities and effectively complete your project. (2,000 characters, including spaces).