AFREC Grant Request for Proposal Cover Sheet

Purpose

This cover sheet is required for all executive branch granting agencies issuing competitive grant RFPs. It provides a high-level overview of the grant program and funding opportunity

Applicants should review the full RFP before submitting an application.

Name of Granting Agency: Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Title of Grant Program: Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC) Grant

Topic	Description	RFP Page Number
Overview, Grant Description, and Purpose	AFREC is a farmer-led program to advance soil fertility research, technology development, and education. **The grant mission:** To fund research and education on agricultural fertility that is environmentally and economically sound. Enabling legislation establishing the governing Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (referred to as "AFREC" or "Council") and associated program are in Minnesota Statutes 18C.70, 18C.71, and 18C.80.	Page #1
Eligible Applicants	Applicants must meet the following minimum requirements to be considered for this grant opportunity: • Be an organization, research entity, individual, business, Tribal entity or unit of local government with agricultural research capabilities and authorized to do business in Minnesota. • Propose a project with activities that include research, education, and technology transfer related to the production and application of fertilizer, soil amendments, and other plant amendments, regenerative agriculture, and/or the protection of clean water. Chosen projects must	Page #6

	contain a component of outreach that achieves a timely dissemination of findings and their applicability to the production agricultural community or urban fertilizer users. • Meet the requirements of the Pre-award Risk Assessment.	
Eligible/Ineligible Projects	Projects must also: Be of direct benefit to the State of Minnesota Be completed in 3 years or less. Provide a complete application in response to this RFP. Propose activities that further increase fertilizer (or soil amendments) research or education in Minnesota and address research priorities listed in the AFREC-Request for Proposals. Be current on goals, time tables and reporting to be considered for a continuation grant award. 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	Page #7, Page #8
Amount available, award amounts, and key funding items	The Minnesota Legislature established the funding mechanism for the AFREC program. This year, approximately $1,400,000 will be available from fertilizer sales sold from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026. The vast majority of the available 2026-2027 funding will be used for "Continuations". Continuations are currently active multi-year research projects that were funded for one year. There is no established minimum or maximum award per project.	Page #1
Application Timelines	**October 12**, 2026 ..... RFP posted on the MDA website. **November 4**, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. CT ..... Deadline to ask grant program questions. **November 25**, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. CT ..... Applications due. **December 7**, 2026 ..... Phase one review. **December 2026** ..... Phase two review (pre-award risk. assessments). **January 2027** ..... Applicants notified of award decisions. **April 2027** ..... Earliest expected project start date.	Page #5

Application Format	**AFREC grant information is available on the** Minnesota Department of Agriculture AFREC webpage. **The RFP announcement and a PDF of the RFP are accessible on the AFREC-RFP page.** **Apply using our** online application system (Foundant) Details on how to fill out an application in Foundant can be found in the "Online Grant Application Guide" (PDF). The document is located under "Forms+Resouces" on the **AFREC-RFP page.** **View posted AFREC RFP Questions and Answers** **More information is available at MN Soil Fertility**	Page #3, Page #4, Page #5
Questions, Technical Assistance, Contact Information	For questions about the grant program or application: Submit your questions in writing before **4:00 p.m.** CT **Wednesday November 4, 2026.** Email Aicam Laacouri at Aicam.Laacouri@state.mn.us with "AFREC RFP Question" in the subject line. View information about the AFREC Council Membership	Page# 4
Grant Implementation Requirements	This grant will be implemented in a manner consistent with the State of Minnesota's Grant Management policies. **Prior to Award** The MDA will review all applications to verify applicant status and ensure applications meet eligibility standards. The MDA is required to consider a grant applicant's past performance and financial and operational capacity before awarding grants. Risk assessments are required as part of the review for applicants being considered for an award of $50,000 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). State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, in reference to the review process MINN. STAT. §16B.98, subd. 2-3 and • OGM Policy 08-01: Grants Conflict of Interest (PDF). **Active Award/Implementation**:	Page# 15, Page# 16, Page# 17, Page# 18, Page# 19

	Purchasing & Payments: No work nor purchasing or contracting of goods and services may occur prior to the full execution of the grant contract agreement or effective date, whichever is later. Grant payments are reimbursements based on eligible expenses submitted on invoices prescribed by the State. MDA reviews each request for reimbursement against the approved grant budget, grant expenditures to-date and the latest grant progress report before approving payment. Payments will not be made if reports or other deliverables are outstanding. MINN. STAT. §16B.98, subd. 5 and • OGM Policy 08-08: Grant Payments (PDF). Reporting: Reporting requirements detailed in the RFP. • OGM Policy 08-09: Grant Progress Reports (PDF). Monitoring: Grants of $25,000 - $249,999 require monitoring at least once during the grant period. Grants of $250,000and greater require annual monitoring as detailed in the RFP. • OGM Policy 08-10: Grant Monitoring (PDF). **Post-award:** MDA will complete a performance evaluation for all grantees prior to closing the grant. Evaluations cover completion of activities, achievement of outcomes, compliance, and timeliness. Evaluations for some grants (e.g. awards >$25,000) are posted publicly; grantees may. Respond in writing. MINN. STATE §16B.98, Subd. 12 and • OGM Policy 08-13: Evaluating Grantee Performance (PDF).	

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.