Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC) Grant

Fiscal Year 2027 Grant Request for Proposal (RFP)

Applications are due by 4:00 p.m. Central Time (CT) on November 25, 2026

Minnesota Department of Agriculture
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mda.state.mn.us

October 12, 2026 (RFP release date)

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Grant Summary

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the **Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC)** grants.

The AFREC grant exists to advance soil fertility research, technology development, and education. AFREC's mission is 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. Additional information about AFREC, its membership, and funded projects is available at the following websites Minnesota Department of Agriculture | AFREC (mda.state.mn.us/afrec) and AFREC Agricultural Fertilizer Research & Education Council (mnsoilfertility.com).

Applications will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. CT on Wednesday, November 25, 2026.

Funding availability

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. For those considering submitting a new project proposal, the project must be **highly specific** to the priorities provided under Priorities. 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.

The Council will review, score, and consider guidance regarding technical aspects of the proposed research design, then vote on funding allocation for each project. The Council's goal is to have projects selected and grants executed prior to the 2027 cropping season. Interested parties need to be aware of the timelines for the development of proposals, the review process, and the grant documentation process.

If selected, a grantee may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract is signed and executed by all parties. Grant contracts may be extended if approved by the AFREC Council but will not extend beyond three years.

There is no established minimum or maximum award per project.

We anticipate awarding between 15 to 25 projects, but the final number depends on the size of awards and will be determined through the proposal review process.

We expect most grant contract agreements to start in April 2027. Applicants should anticipate that grant contracts will have an end date in March 2028. Grant contracts may be extended on a case-by-case basis.

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. The Department of Administration Office of Grants Management (OGM) establishes the expectation that grant programs identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities (OGM Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review (PDF)). Applicants conducting projects that are led by, impact or serve Tribal governments and Tribal organizations are encouraged to apply.

AFREC grant program priorities:

This grant will prioritize research and education on agricultural fertility that is environmentally and economically sound.

This commitment is demonstrated through a criterion in the proposal evaluation process (Selection Criteria and Weight) and examples of previously awarded projects are available online at AFREC Agricultural Fertilizer Research & Education Council (mnsoilfertility.com).

Eligible project activities include research, education, and technology transfer related to the production and application of fertilizer, soil amendments, and other plant amendments, regenerative agriculture, and the protection of clean water. Chosen projects must contain a component of outreach that achieves a timely dissemination of findings and their applicability to the production agricultural community or metropolitan fertilizer users (MINN. STAT. § 18C.71).

Grant outcomes will include deliverables identified in the workplan for eligible projects. Some examples include:

- Develop fertilizer research and management recommendations for crops and cropping systems from across Minnesota including multiple geographic regions.
- Evaluate the effect of different management strategies including timing and placement of fertilizer and cover crops.
- Better understand mechanisms of nutrient cycling and impacts on yield and loss.
- Develop tools that aid in fertilizer management or application of recommendations.
- Provide transferrable and beneficial outcomes for groups other than the grantee.

Priorities For Research and Education/Outreach Grants

All new grants must align with one or more of the following AFREC priority areas for research or education:

1. **Soil health** and productivity projects that focus on interactions of soil and crop nutrients, cover crops, environmental outcomes, and soil health measurements. Proposals should include the method used for measuring soil health.

2. Research to reevaluate or revise current **fertilizer recommendations** and technical guidance for Minnesota's secondary crops (defined as those with acreage of less than 2% of MN's cropland acres such as oats, winter barley, dryland edible beans, sunflowers, etc.) and newly developed crops through the Forever Green Initiative.

3. Research to update agronomic information for **oat production** including interactions between nitrogen rates, yield, protein and lodging. This may also include water quality assessments to evaluate nitrate-nitrogen losses at the edge-of-field or in-field locations.

4. Conduct a **literature review** on current fertilizer recommendations for **sugarbeet production**, then develop and implement an educational program and/or materials.

5. Compiling and **data mining** from **previous plot and on-farm soil fertility** and nutrient management research for developing AI- based (machine learning) nutrient management strategies and finding additional trends. The goal should be to broaden the scope of predictability with language models or AI.

6. Develop a **scoping document** outlining the required research and data analysis needed **to develop or update manure management or fertilizer best management practices** (BMPs) specifically for areas where surface water or groundwater are vulnerable to nitrate-nitrogen losses. The scoping document should include an overview of a workplan, timeline and budget, and outline future work needed to develop nitrogen management recommendations specific to vulnerable areas.

7. Research to evaluate **nutrient dynamics** and the level of response to in-season applications of **micronutrients in soybeans**.

8. Research on iron deficiency chlorosis (**IDC**) and nutrient management in soybeans and the development of Minnesota specific recommendations.

9. Evaluation of **biofertilizer claims of improved nitrogen use efficiency** for corn production using duplicated and randomized strip trials. The evaluation should consider multiple years and different regions of the state to cover different soils, weather conditions, management systems and nitrogen fertilizer rates.

These priorities and the desired impacts and 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.

Continuation studies will have funding priority for the 2026-2027 cycle based on the time and dollar amount stated in the original proposal approved for funding. “Continuations” are defined in this RFP as ongoing projects that have been previously funded by AFREC for longer durations. Adjustments to the original budget due to inflation or other increased costs are acceptable and should be explained.

If the continuation project has not completed goals, timetables and reporting, the project may not be considered for continuation status.

How to apply

Applications must be received no later than **4:00 p.m.** CT on **Wednesday, November 25, 2026.** Late applications will not be accepted.

Apply using our online application system (Foundant).

- 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. It is highly recommended to apply in the system at least 24 hours before the application deadline to avoid last-minute submission problems.
- Once logged in, select "AFREC 2027".
- After you have submitted your application, you will receive a confirmation email. Contact Aicam Laacouri at Aicam.Laacouri@state.mn.usif you do not receive this email.
- MDA is not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in late submission. It is your responsibility to ensure we receive your application before the deadline.
- You must submit all sections of the application for it to be considered complete, including attachments.
- You will receive an automated confirmation email after submitting your application using on-line system. Contact: Aicam Laacouri at Aicam.Laacouri@state.mn.us if you don't get a system confirmation after submission of your application.

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 651-201-6487 and/or
- Email Aicam Laacouri (Aicam.Laacouri@state.mn.us) with "AFREC 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.

We are 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.

Incomplete applications will be rejected and not 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.

All "new" project proposals will be required to make a 5-minute on-line Teams or Zoom presentation (or in person: Farm Bureau office building 3080 Eagandale PL, Eagan, MN 55121) to the AFREC Council on December 7, 2026. Scheduling for this presentation will be determined after the closing of this AFREC RFP.

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 questions in writing before **4:00 p.m.** CT **Wednesday November 4, 2026.**
- Email Aicam Laacouri (Aicam.Laacouri@state.mn.us) with "AFREC RFP Question" in the subject line.

The MDA will post responses to program questions on the Questions and Answers (Q&A) section of the AFREC webpage as we receive them.

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.

For help using the online application system:

- Call Aicam Laacouri 651-201-6487, or Email Aicam Laacouri at Aicam.Laacouri@state.mn.us with **AFREC on-line application question** in the subject line.

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 industry.
- 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

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.

Grants may last up to three years from the contract start date. We anticipate grant contract agreements to start in early April 2027. 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 following minimum requirements to be considered for this grant opportunity. Applicants must:

- 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 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.

Examples of eligible applicants include but are not limited to the following entities with the requisite research capabilities:

  - Individuals
  - Farmers/ farmer networks
  - Researchers in private and public institutions of higher education
  - Research organizations, programs or institutions
  - Agricultural cooperatives
  - Agricultural businesses
  - Nonprofit organizations
  - Municipalities and Local units of government
  - Tribal organizations
  - Tribal Sovereign Nations

MDA employees, their spouses, domestic partners, or organizations or businesses principally operated by them, their spouses or their domestic partners are not eligible applicants 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 or domestic partners who are part of their organization's leadership, board of directors, or governing body.

Collaboration and project support

Eligible applicants may, but are not required to, collaborate with other research institutions, universities, individuals, small businesses, or nonprofit organizations. If eligible applicants are submitting a joint application with collaborators, they must provide a written description of the proposed collaboration and determine which business, or organization will have the grant contract agreement with the MDA and will work directly with the MDA to meet grant reporting requirements. Note that this entity will receive a 1099 form from the State of Minnesota for income tax purposes.

Letters of support

Applicants must obtain and submit letters of support for the proposed project if there are any proposed partners.

- You must submit a letter of commitment from all partners formally involved in the project.
- You may also provide letters of support from collaborators that are not part of the formal partnership as part of the application, but who support the application and can speak to the benefits of the project in your community.

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

For current active projects, they must have completed goals, timetables and reporting for the 2026 year to be considered for continuation status.

Eligible new projects seeking funding must show the ability to advance soil fertility research, technology development and related education that benefits Minnesota while addressing the research priorities listed in the priorities section.

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 earlier in this Request for Proposals.
- Provide a complete application in response to this RFP.
- Not start and not incur expenses until the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and has reached its start date listed in the grant contract agreement, whichever is later.

Project examples include but are not limited to a project that:

- Develop fertilizer research and management recommendations for crops and cropping systems across Minnesota including multiple geographic regions. “Fertilizer” includes all types of nutrients including nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, boron, calcium, and soil amendments, etc.
- Evaluate the effect of different agricultural cropping systems and management strategies including cover crops.
- Promote a better understanding of mechanisms of nutrient cycling and impacts on crop yield and nutrient loss.
- Develop tools to aid in fertilizer management or on farm adoption of recommendations.

Previously funded projects can be found on the AFREC Agricultural Fertilizer Research & Education Council website (www.mnsoilfertility.com).

Eligible expenses

If the AFREC council votes to fund your proposal, the MDA will reimburse eligible costs included in your project budget. Examples of eligible expenses for this grant program include but are not limited to:

- Eligible expenses and costs that are directly related to the proposed project.
- Personnel costs including salaries.
- Fringe benefit expenses, including FICA/ Medicare, retirement, and health insurance.
- Professional and technical services specified in the approved work plan.
- Equipment, tools, materials, and supplies specific to the project and incoming freight charges for them.
- Publication costs and expenses related to printing and copying.
- In-state transportation and travel expenses such as lodging, meals, and mileage of personnel directly involved in the project in the same manner and in no greater amount than provided for in the current Nonrepresented Employees Compensation Plan promulgated by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget (Prior approval is required for out of state travel and expenses).
- Supplies or equipment required to conduct the research or education project.
- Laboratory or analysis costs (specified when used for the AFREC funded project).
- Plot fees and services.

All costs must be reasonable, necessary, justifiable, and directly tied to the proposed project. Expenses should be allocated exclusively to the AFREC project.

Please note funds are awarded on a reimbursement basis, unless otherwise authorized, and all eligible expenses will need to be documented.

You must be invoiced and pay for all items and services between the contract start and end date listed in your grant contract agreement. All requests for reimbursement must be documented and submitted to the MDA no later than 30 (thirty) calendar days after the grant end date. Any expenses incurred outside of this timeframe are not eligible for reimbursement.

Ineligible expenses

Ineligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Expenditures incurred prior to the full execution of the grant contract agreement or its start date, or those incurred after the grant contract agreement expires. Any payments made by the grantee before a grant contract agreement is signed by all parties and reached its start date are at the applicant's risk and not eligible for reimbursement.
- Tuition in credit and fees for graduate and undergraduate students
- Publication costs for graduate student thesis.
- Expenditures incurred after the expiration of the grant contract agreement.
- General operating costs or indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified or directly allocated the project.
- Expenses paid for with cash.
- General operating costs or indirect costs (expenses of doing business that are not readily identified with the project.

- Donations and in-kind contributions, including property and services, made by the applicant (regardless of the recipient).
- Late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds.
- Advertising, public relations, entertainment, alcohol, and amusement costs.
- Fundraising.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes.
- Fines, penalties, and other settlement expenses resulting from failure of the applicant to follow federal, state, local, or Tribal nation laws and regulations.
- Lobbyists, political contributions.
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds.
- Parking violations and traffic violations.
- Out-of-state transportation and travel (unless pre-authorized by the State's Authorized Representative)
- Travel expenses that do not adhere to the Non-represented Employees Compensation Plan promulgated by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget.
- Travel expenses to conferences where the project is not presented.
- Entertainment and alcohol.
- 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.

- Equipment purchases (purchasing items greater than $10,000). Contact the grant administrator for research-specific exceptions.
- Purchase of drones. Contact the grant administrator for research-specific exceptions.
- Subscriptions.
- Land purchase.
- Rent-to-own lease agreements where property purchase is optional.
- Construction or improvements outside of the state of Minnesota.

Purchases listed above are not an exhaustive list. Other purchases not explicitly listed here may be deemed ineligible by MDA staff, council or Commissioner.

Application Review Process

Review process

Funding will be allocated through a competitive process with scoring by members of the AFREC Council (reviewers). MDA staff will screen applications to ensure their completeness and eligibility.

Reviewers will meet and discuss the proposals and then put forth their recommendations. The commissioner of agriculture will make the final funding decisions and award notification will be sent by email to all applicants. MDA anticipates it will notify applicants of their funding status in January 2027. The reviewers will evaluate all eligible applications based on the criteria and weight provided in the Project Evaluation Profile. Reviewers will meet and discuss the proposals and then put forth their recommendations. The commissioner of agriculture will make the final funding decisions and award notification will be sent by email to all applicants. MDA anticipates it will notify applicants of their funding status in January 2027.

There will be two phases of the review process.

Phase one: Initial review

MDA staff evaluate all eligible applications in the first phase of the review process to determine eligibility. Only applications that are complete and received by the deadline (November 25, 2026) and meet eligibility requirements will be reviewed.

Reviewers may recommend whole or partial funding of a project. The commissioner receives recommendations of the reviewers and makes the award decisions on behalf of the AFREC Council. Reviewers, staff, and the commissioner may consider the applicant's history as a state grantee—including previous grants, and applicant's capacity to perform the work related to the grant request.

In addition to the Project Evaluation Profile, peer committee members, council members, 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 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.

During this 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.

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)).

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 you or your entity has not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with 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 you or your entity has not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with the federal government.
- Documentation that your organization is in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State and 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.

Municipalities and political subdivisions 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 you or your entity has not been suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or with 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. Special cases for pre-award risk assessments

Special cases for pre-award risk assessments

The University of Minnesota, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and Tribal entities will have to submit the same documents as recipients who receive an award of less than $50,000.

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 additional 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, subd. 2-3 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 applicant(s) or grantee(s) 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 an 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 does 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 organizations, 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 Office of Grants Management (OGM) Resource webpage. The MDA reserves the right to adjust these templates.

The funded applicant will be legally responsible for assuring implementation of the work plan and compliance with all applicable state and federal requirements including worker's compensation insurance, nondiscrimination, data privacy, budget compliance, and reporting.

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 or incur an obligation to pay on goods or services for the grant project -- 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.

- Examples of incurring "obligations to pay" include pre-ordering goods and services, creating a purchase order, sales order, retainer agreement or any other transaction that creates an invoice.

- Obtaining bids and quotes is allowed before the grant contract agreement is executed; however, accepting these bids/quotes before execution of the grant contract agreement is not allowed. In other words, you cannot contract with vendors or purchase any equipment before the requirements listed above are met.
- 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 work plan, 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. Before making any changes to your project, grantees should consult with the State's Authorized Representative listed in their contract about those changes. Changes that alter the scope, objectives, outcomes, key personnel or staff time devoted to the project, work plan, or budget may require approval from the MDA and may 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 until all grant funds have been expended and all of the terms in the grant agreement have been met.

Grantees will be required to submit annual progress reports during the grant period, a final report on the completion of the project, and additional information about the long-term impact for up to three years after the grant period. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

Applicants should be aware of the following:

- 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 of this RFP. Financial reconciliation may be performed on additional payment requests at the discretion of the MDA.

Before approving final payment, the MDA performs at least one monitoring visit for all grantees with awards greater than $25,000. 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.

Conditions of Payment

The State will issue payment for services actually performed and that meet all terms, conditions, and specifications of the grant contract agreement. If the State disputes in good faith or raises questions regarding any portion of the amount owed to the Grantee or if the State otherwise requires any adjustment to an invoiced amount, the State will notify Grantee in writing of the nature and basis of the dispute or adjustment. The Grantee will not receive payment for work that does not meet all terms, conditions, and specifications of the grant contract agreement or that was performed in violation of federal, state, or local law. This includes the State temporarily withholding payments in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, § 15.013 Subd. 7, when there is a credible allegation of fraud under investigation.

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.

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 timesheets) 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 will review the submitted documents and determine if any additional documentation needs to be submitted by the grantee. Any additional documentation must be submitted by the grantee and reviewed and approved by the grant administrator before the MDA provides the reimbursement. Acceptable forms of documentation can be found in the MDA Reimbursement Guide (PDF). Journal entries, journal vouchers, statements, sales orders, purchase orders or quotes are not acceptable documentation and will not be reimbursed.

Applicants should be aware of the following:

- 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.
- Grantee will submit requests for reimbursement quarterly. Reimbursement requests are due at the same time as quarterly progress report forms.

- All requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the MDA no later than 30 calendar days after the grant end date.
- 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).
- The MDA retains the option to hold back the final 10% (ten percent) of each grant award until the final report is submitted unless otherwise approved by the MDA.
- The MDA may request that grantees who have not completed the project described in their proposal at the completion of the performance period return any grant funds.

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 in 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 AFREC funding in all public communications, presentations, printed materials, and 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) Policy 08-04: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review (PDF) and MINN. STAT. §16B.98, subd. 5 (d)). The grantee is required to keep the contact information current and provide a prompt response to public inquiries about the grant contract agreement.

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, its Authorized Representative, key personnel, board members, officers, executives, employees, agents, or any individual with authority to access, manage, or use grant funds—is suspended or debarred from doing business with the State of Minnesota or the federal government; or is convicted of a criminal offense related to a State grant agreement.
- Obtain prior written approval from the State's Authorized Representative before making any changes to the approved budget or work plan incorporated into the Grant Contract Agreement.

Grantee evaluation

All grantees are subject to a performance evaluation (MINN.STAT. §16B.98, Subd. 12). Prior to the closeout of the grant, the MDA will evaluate the grantees' performance including the purpose of the grant; the amount

provided to the grantee; information about the grantee's timeliness, quality, and the overall performance in meeting the terms and objectives of the grant. The evaluation requires the agency to highlight if the grant was terminated and any concerns with grantee's use of State funds. For awards greater than $25,000, a grantee performance evaluation will be posted publicly at https://osp.admin.mn.gov/granteval/grant-eval-uploader as required by statute. Grantees may respond to the agency's evaluation, and the response will be retained in the grant file. 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 and negotiation

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 is not obligated to award a grant contract agreement solely on the basis of a submitted application.

Background and Program Goals

The AFREC program was established in 2008 to advance soil fertility research, technology development and education with over 133 funded projects since 2008. The mission of AFREC is to fund research and education on agricultural fertility that is environmentally and economically sound.

The Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (AFREC) consists of 12-15 members who are either farmers or provide agricultural professional services such as crop retailers, consultants, or members of statewide agricultural organizations.

The Minnesota Legislature established the funding mechanism for the program by raising the MDA's fertilizer tonnage fee. The current fee is 40 cents per ton of fertilizer sold. Each year, the MDA announces a Request for Proposals (RFP) for projects using funds generated from fertilizer sales.

Though dependent upon the previous year's fertilizer sales, AFREC typically awards over $1,000,000 annually.

The enabling legislation establishing the governing Agricultural Fertilizer Research and Education Council (referred to as "AFREC" or "Council") are Minnesota Statutes 18C.70, 18C.71, and 18C.80.

Project Evaluation Profile

A "Peer Review Team" will make technical recommendations to the AFREC council prior to completion of their initial scoring of projects. The 100-point scale used to create the final evaluation recommendation is as follows: Table 1. Scoring Criteria for Rating New Research Proposals, Table 2. Scoring Criteria for Rating New Educational and Outreach Proposals, Table 3. Scoring Criteria for Continuation Projects. A total of 106 points is available for projects that meet the bonus criteria.

Table 1. Scoring Criteria for Rating New Research Proposals

Criteria for New Research Projects Only	Points
Relation to Council priorities	20
Technical soundness and scientific merit	15
Capabilities of investigator and collaborators	10
Economic impact on expected return	10
Outreach component and networking abilities	15
Overall rating relative to other new projects	10
Relevance and transferability to Minnesota agriculture	10
Presentation and responses **Finalists will need to make a 5-minute presentation to the Council on December 7, 2026**	10
Total Points	**100**
Preference for targeting businesses, economically disadvantaged businesses, or veteran-owned small businesses	Possible 6 bonus points
Total Possible Points	**106**

Table 2. Scoring Criteria for Rating New Educational Proposals

Criteria for New Education and Outreach Projects Only	Points
Innovation and approach	15
Likelihood of influencing a behavioral change	20
Relevance and transferability to Minnesota agriculture	15
Audience consideration and size	10
Capabilities of proposer and collaborators	10
Integration into existing outreach networks	10
Overall rating relative to other new projects	10
Presentation and responses **Finalists would need to make a 5-minute presentation to the Council on Dec 7, 2026.**	10
Total Points	**100**
Preference for targeting businesses, economically disadvantaged businesses, or veteran-owned small businesses	Possible 6 bonus points
Total Possible Points	**106**

Table 3. Scoring Criteria for Rating Continuation Projects for the Current Year (on-going)

Criteria for Continuation Grants	Points
Demonstrated economic, environmental and agronomic impact of the project in Minnesota	20
Technical soundness and scientific merit/Innovation and approach	20
Capabilities of investigator and collaborators	20
Project deliverables achieved in a timely manner	20
Outreach component delivered as planned	20
Total Points	**100**
Preference for targeting businesses, economically disadvantaged businesses, or veteran-owned small businesses	Possible 6 bonus points
Total Possible Points	**106**

MINN.STAT.§18C.71, subd. 2 requires that "each project meeting the basic qualifications is subject to a "yes" or "no" vote by each Council member". Projects chosen to receive funding must achieve an affirmative vote from at least 10of the 15 Council members or two-thirds of the voting members present.

Review process and timeline

The AFREC Council will review all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. **The award decisions of the AFREC Council are final and not subject to appeal. This Request for Proposals (RFP) does not obligate the State to award a Grantee or complete the project.**

Table 4. Timetable for the Application Process

Order	Steps	Associated Date(s)
Step 1	RFP posted on the MDA website	October 12, 2026
Step 2	Questions due no later than 4:00 p.m. Central Time deadline.	November 4, 2026
Step 3	Grant proposals submitted to the MDA no later than 4:00 p.m. Central Time deadline.	November 25, 2026
Step 4	MDA staff eliminates any "ineligible projects" using MN Statues 18C.70 and 18C.71 as guidance and forwards all *eligible* projects to the Council.	December 1-4, 2026
Step 5	Technical Review committee completes reviews of applications	December 1-4, 2026
Step 6	"New" projects make a 5 minute presentation to the Council on the merits of the project on December 7. Each Council member completes the reviews for all projects making the first cut and does the initial ranking for projects using a standardized method.	December 7- 31, 2026
Step 7	Council forwards initial rankings to the MDA. MDA staff combines the rankings from the entire Council.	December 31, 2026
Step 8	The Council finalizes their individual and group rankings. Council deliberates and conducts official vote on each project. Council selects projects until the available funding spent.	January 15, 2027
Step 9	Successful proposers contacted. Successful responders should go to Table 5.	January 20, 2027

Table 5. Timetable for Successful Applicants

(Specific dates for Quarterly Progress Reports and Annual Reports will be included in the actual grant and work plan)

Order	Proposed Steps	Associated Date(s)
Step 1	The MDA assists successful applicants in the development of the work plan and budget needed for the grant.	January 12-25, 2027
Step 2	All proposal and budget adjustments finalized. Grant paperwork begins.	February 16, 2027
Step 3	Work plans, associated budgets, and grants finalized with the MDA.	March 2, 2027 or sooner
Step 4	Projects from successful grant applications begin	April 1, 2027 or upon negotiated grant execution (project start dates are negotiable)
Step 5	Quarterly Progress Reports and Billings	July, Oct, Jan, and April during the life of the project
Step 6	Annual oral or written presentation to the Council	August or Early December
Step 7	Submission of annual written report	March 1st of each year or one month after negotiated end date of the grant agreement
Step 8	Final Report and budget report to MDA	Submission 30 days after the end of the grant period

Appendix A: AFREC Research Proposal Questions

Included in this appendix are the questions included in the online application for an AFREC Research Proposal. Use this document as a reference.

Applications must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. CT on Wednesday, November 25, 2026. Late applications will not be accepted.

Apply using our online application system (Foundant).

AFREC_FY2027

MN Dept of Agriculture

Applicant Information

Legal name of business entity*
Character Limit: 250

Assumed name(s), ifany, of business entity*
Character Limit: 250

Physical address of applicant*
Character Limit: 300

Name (Principal Investigator or Project Manager)*
The principle investigator is the person who will be responsible for leading the research project.

Character Limit: 250

Mailing Address (Principal Investigator or Project Manager)*
Character Limit: 300

Email (Principal Investigator or Project Manager)*
Character Limit: 100

Telephone (Principal Investigator or Project Manager)*
Character Limit: 20

Minnesota State House District
Use the District Finder if you don't know your district. Use the project location.

Character Limit: 50

Name (Project Financial Contact)*
Character Limit: 250

Mailing Address (Project Financial Contact)*
Character Limit: 300

Authorized Representative

Is the person authorized to sign contracts for the applicant the same as PI/Project Manager above?*

If awarded a grant, is the person authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the organization or institution the same as Principal Investigator/Project Manager listed above?

Choices

Yes
No

If no, please provide the following information.

Provide the following Authorize Representative information for signing any resulting grant contract agreement:

- Name
- Mailing address
- Telephone
- Email

Enter "NA" if answered "Yes" above.

Character Limit: 1500

Eligibility

Eligibility - Back taxes or default*

Confirm your business 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.

Choices

True
False

Eligibility - Regulation compliance*

Confirm your business is compliant with current state regulations, or this project will support the organization becoming compliant.

Choices

True
False

Eligibility - Suspended or Debarred*

Is this business suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government? If your project is recommended for phase two of the review process, you will need to sign a certification.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - Good Standing with OSS*
Is this business in good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State? If your project is recommended for phase two of the review process, you will need to sign a certification.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - Financial Crime*
Have any of your business' current board members or staff with authority to access grant funds been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years? If your project is recommended for phase two of the review process, you will need to sign a certification.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - MDA Affiliation*
Is this business owned or principally operated by a Minnesota Department of Agriculture employee or their spouse? These farms or businesses are not eligible to apply.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - Proposed Project Started*
The MDA is unable to reimburse for any work that is performed prior to the start date of the contract. Has work started on your proposed project or will will work start before the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties?

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - True Information*
I attest that all information supplied in this application is true, correct, and reliable to the best of my knowledge.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - Inaccurate information*
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 by law to the state.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - Supporting documentation available*

I attest and understand that the supporting documentation for the claims and assertions made within this application is available to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for its review.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - Additional documents for phase two of the review*

I attest and understand that the submission of additional documents, as described in the request for proposals (RFP), may be required as part of the pre-award risk assessment if my project is recommended for phase two of the review process.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - Work not to start before grant agreement is signed*

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 Minnesota Department of Agriculture is unable to reimburse for any work that is performed prior to the effective start date of the grant contract agreement.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - No MDA employees in applicant's leadership body*

Does the applicant’s leadership, board of directors, or governing body include any Minnesota Department of Agriculture employees or their spouses/domestic partners?

Choices
True
False

Eligibility - Payments made on reimbursement basis*

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.

Choices
Yes
No

Eligibility - Costs not reimbursed under other grants*

Expenses that have been (or will be) reimbursed under any federal, state, or local government funding or other grants are not allowable costs. Project costs that already received funding from another federal grant or subaward programs may not receive funding for the same activities and expenses from this grant.

Choices

Yes
No

Previous MDA Grants

Has your business or organization or unit of local government received previous MDA grant?

Choices

Yes
No

If yes, provide the following information.

Briefly describe your previous grant project(s), including date(s) and amount(s) awarded, and outcome of the grant.
Enter "NA" if answered "No" above.

Character Limit: 2000

Previous grant application*

Have you previously submitted a grant proposal application to other programs for this specific project in the past (and were not awarded funding)?

Choices

Yes
No

If yes, how many times and when did you previously apply?

Enter "NA" if answered "No" above.

Character Limit: 2000

Qualifications of Applicant and Key Participants

Provide the qualifications of key individuals who will participate in the project, including principal investigator and any collaborators.

Include the following:

- Participant Name
- Organization Affiliation
- Occupation
- Email Address
- Brief Summary: Relevant abilities and qualifications

You may not need to answer all of the questions if you have fewer researchers involved.

Participant 1 (Principal Investigator)*
Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 2 MB

Participant 2
Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 2 MB

Participant 3
Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 2 MB

Participant 4
Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 2 MB

Participant 5
Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 2 MB

Participant 6
Character Limit: 1000 | File Size Limit: 2 MB

Previous Experience

Do you have prior experience conducting activities related to this grant?*
Choices
Yes
No

If yes, provide the following information.*
Briefly describe your prior experience with activities related to this grant and the specific activities you have proposed in the application.
Enter "NA" if answered "No" above.

Character Limit: 3500

Grant Request Summary and Abstract

Project Name*
Character Limit: 100

Project Summary*
Character Limit: 1000

Expected Project Start Date*
- Must be after the contract is signed by all parties.
- Award notification is in January, and contracts are expected to be signed and executed by April 1, 2027 or upon negotiated grant execution. Project start dates are negotiable.

Character Limit: 10

Expected Project End Date*
The maximum length of a project is five years. Note, AFREC has funded projects for one year. Please provide up to 3 years funding in your budget request.

Character Limit: 10

Amount of Grant Request*
Complete the budget form included in the application for the duration of the proposed project. Continuations are reviewed based on the original budget.

Character Limit: 20

Applicant's Matching Funds (Optional)
Matching funds are not required, however please list all funding sources for your proposed project.

Character Limit: 20

Total Project Costs*
Character Limit: 20

Other Funding
If the proposed project has been submitted to or funded by another grant program, specify the grantor and the funding amount.

Character Limit: 1500

Research or Outreach/Education Project*
Choices
Research
Outreach/Education

What AFREC research and education priority does your project target?*

Check the RFP document for more details.
Minnesota Department of Agriculture | AFREC

Choices

#1: Soil health.
#2: Research to reevaluate fertilizer recommendations for Minnesota's secondary crops
#3: Update agronomic information for oat.
#4: Literature review on current fertilizer recommendations for sugarbeet production.
#5: Compiling and mining data on-farm soil fertility and nutrient management research.
#6: Develop a scoping document outlining the required research and data to update manure management.
#7: Research to evaluate nutrient dynamics of micronutrients in soybeans.
#8: Research on iron deficiency chlorosis (IDC) and nutrient management in soybeans.
#9: Evaluation of biofertilizer claims of improved nitrogen use efficiency for corn production.

Research Based Projects

Include the following after considering the scoring criteria provided in Table 1 of the RFP.

Research Goals and Objectives*

Character Limit: 3500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

Research Methods/Timetables*

Character Limit: 3500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

Research Products*

Character Limit: 3500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

Outreach/Education Based Projects

Include the following after considering the criteria provided in Table 2 of the RFP.

Integration into existing educational networks*

Character Limit: 3500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

Justification, Target Audience, and Size*

Character Limit: 3500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

Outreach/Education Goals and Objectives*

Character Limit: 3500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

Outreach/Education Methods/Timetables*

Character Limit: 3500 / File Size Limit: 2 MB

Likelihood of influencing behavioral change*

Character Limit: 3500 | File Size Limit: 2 MB

Budget Proposal

AFREC FY27 Budget Worksheet*

Please upload a copy of your budget. Be sure to use the budget categories listed below.

File Size Limit: 10 MB

Budget Categories:

Laboratory Analysis – List any laboratory or statistical analyses and purposes of the analysis.

Contractual Services – List any entities outside your organization that will be retained on a temporary basis to work the project or provide a specific service. Include contractor's name and a short description of the services provided. Provide the flat rate fee or total hourly rate for each contract.

Personnel Salaries – List names and titles of participants who will receive salary from this project.

Supplies and materials – Provide a general list of types of supplies.

Travel – List anticipated destination, number of trips, purpose of trips, mode of travel and anticipated cost per trip. Mileage reimbursement is based on the current federal rate. Prior authorization is required for out-of-state travel.

Communication – List type of expenses and estimated costs.

Other – List expenses that do not fit any of the budget categories. Identify each item and justify the expense.