



## 2026 Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Grants Program

# Guidelines

### PURPOSE

The Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Grant Program (the Program) provides Virginia farmers with individual grants, focusing on efforts that support the adoption or expansion of regenerative practices and systems while also contributing to long-term vitality of their operations. The Program will also focus on land access, tenure, and succession planning to ensure farms remain in regenerative operations for generations to come.

American Farmland Trust (AFT) understands that Virginia farmers desire to be both strong stewards of their land and significant contributors to their regional economies. Our farm vitality work aims to create opportunities for farmers to improve profitability and business viability alongside adopting regenerative systems.

### APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

These grants are intended to provide producers with funds leading to powerful changes in operations. Only one grant can be awarded per farmer/farm family. Non-profit organizations are not eligible and are encouraged to take advantage of alternate funding opportunities and resources designed specifically for non-profits.

Eligibility criteria include:

- Individual, for-profit Virginia terrestrial based farms or ranches that provide proof of income (or similar if the farm engages in barter, exchange, or community supply).
- Farmers with at least two seasons of production experience (for existing businesses).
- Startup farms (under two seasons of production) are eligible if they can provide documentation of at least two years of production experience (internships, farm management experience, education, and training, or similar).
- While agriculture across the US is broad, this funding is intended to support terrestrial, soils-based agricultural production, and we are unable to consider applications from aquaculture, equine, or forestry\* operations. (\*Agroforestry and silvopasture operations do qualify.)

We cannot award grants to American Farmland Trust staff, board members, or substantial contributors to AFT, or their family members.

- Family member: defined as any sibling, spouse, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, or great-grandchild
- Substantial contributor: defined as contributing to American Farmland Trust \$5,000 or more.

## ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

To ensure clarity, fairness, and strategic alignment with the goals of the Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Grants Program, funding requests are organized into **three distinct tracks**. Each track is designed to support a specific type of investment that contributes to both **farm viability** and the **adoption or expansion of regenerative agricultural practices\***.

The use of tracks allows applicants to tailor their proposals to the most relevant funding category and helps reviewers evaluate applications consistently based on the nature of the proposed project. Applicants are only permitted to apply for 1 track. All funding requests must align with the parameters of the selected track.


**\*REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE DEFINITION:** For the purposes of this Program, AFT defines regenerative agriculture as *a way of terrestrial based farming or ranching that improves the health of soil, water, and ecosystems while also supporting strong farms and communities.*

Track	Focus Area	Max Award	Examples of Eligible Expenses
Track 1: Equipment	Equipment for regenerative practices	\$15,000	No-till seed drill, compost spreader, cold storage
Track 2: Business Development	Planning, financial literacy, succession	\$15,000	Business planning, QuickBooks setup, legal fees
Track 3: Product & Market Expansion	New products, market access	\$25,000	Branding, certification, e-commerce tools

## TRACK 1: EQUIPMENT

Supports the purchase of **special-purpose equipment** that improves farm viability or profitability **and** supports regenerative practices.

**Maximum Award: \$15,000**

 **Allowable Expenses:** Including but not limited to

Examples	Purpose
No-till seed drill, roller-crimper, precision planter	For cover crops and reduced tillage
Mobile fencing or water systems	For managed rotational grazing
Compost spreader, mulch layer, compost tea brewer	To improve soil fertility
Wash/pack station upgrades	Triple sink, root washer for food safety
Cold storage unit, walk-in cooler, refrigerated trailer	To reduce post-harvest losses
Solar-powered irrigation pumps, drip irrigation	For water efficiency
Silvopasture equipment	Tree augers, protectors, watering systems
High tunnel or caterpillar tunnel	For season extension in vegetable systems

## Ineligible Requests

Not Eligible	Reason
Standard tractors, combines	Not directly tied to regenerative practices
Home garden tools, office electronics	Not used in farm production
Seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, fuel, feed	Consumables or short-lived supplies
General-use vehicles	Unless used for regenerative practice implementation

## TRACK 2: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Supports **financial acumen, planning, and succession** for regenerative farm businesses.

**Maximum Award: \$15,000**

### **Allowable Expenses**

Examples	Purpose
Farm business planning consultant	Enterprise budgeting, strategic planning
Financial literacy training	For farmers and farm families
Bookkeeping setup and training	QuickBooks tailored to farm enterprises
Marketing and brand strategy	Including pricing strategy
Feasibility study	For new regenerative enterprises
Succession planning support	Legal fees, appraisals, consulting
Peer-to-peer coaching	Farmer-led technical assistance
Market readiness assessments	For institutional or wholesale sales

### **Ineligible Requests**

Expense	Reason
College tuition or unrelated coursework	Not tied to farm business development
Hiring permanent staff or covering salaries	General operating expense
Travel for personal reasons	Not business-related
Memberships/subscriptions	Without clear business planning purpose
Generic marketing costs	Must be tied to a growth strategy

### TRACK 3: PRODUCT AND MARKET EXPANSION

Supports expansion through **new products, broader markets, and wider distribution** of regenerative goods.

**Maximum Award: \$25,000**

#### Allowable Expenses

Examples	Description
Branding and packaging design	For new regenerative products
Value-added product development	E.g., regenerative flour, grass-fed yogurt
Certification costs	Organic, grass-fed, regenerative
E-commerce and website development	Online sales systems
Processing/packing equipment	Flash freezer, bottling line, CSA packing
Market access tools	Delivery vans, multi-farm hubs
Institutional market expansion	GAP certification, food safety audits
Consumer outreach	Events, materials about regenerative practices

#### Ineligible Requests

Expense	Reason
Launching unrelated businesses	E.g., coffee shop, B&B
Selling non-regenerative goods	Must align with regenerative production
Events without clear regenerative tie	Must educate or promote regenerative agriculture
General-use vehicles	Must be tied to product distribution
Luxury branding/marketing	E.g., unrelated merchandise or campaigns

## **General Expenses Ineligible Across All Tracks**

<b>Not Eligible</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Debt repayment or refinancing	Not a program goal
General operating expenses	Payroll, rent, utilities, fuel
Routine equipment replacement	E.g., standard tractor or truck
Building construction	Long-term capital investments
Retroactive costs	Expenses before grant award date
Aesthetic upgrades	Landscaping, non-functional improvements

### **A COMMITMENT TO FARMERS**

AFT is committed to supporting opportunities for all in agriculture.

This grant program will prioritize support to farmers who have experienced barriers to capital and other resources. We encourage Virginia farmers from all backgrounds to apply, including those from the following groups:

- Beginning farmers
- Limited-resource farmers
- Farmers of color
- Women farmers
- Veterans
- LGBTQ+ farmers
- Farmers with disabilities

Additional information that will be considered:

- Percentage of time currently dedicated to farming or ranching, or percentage of time desired.
- Potential impact of grant awards on overall farm growth and operations.
- Type of farm, acres in farming, and farm products grown, raised, or produced. (AFT will prioritize awarding a diverse pool of farms operating at varying scales.)

## HOW TO APPLY

To apply, farmers should submit a completed Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Grant Application to AFT by the due date of December 19, 2025.

Applications must be submitted electronically through the link [on our webpage](#) available December 1.

## TIMELINE & AWARD PROCESS

Applications will be accepted from December 1 through December 19, 2025, and grant recipients will be announced in early 2026.

- Grant recipients will receive written notification via email. The award notification email will detail the approved timeline and process for payment based on the individual project.
- Funding is contingent on the awardee completing a Grant Award Agreement form and submitting it, along with other requested information, within 7 days of being notified of the award. Announcement of the award and other communication will be conducted via email and online. Failure to respond by the stated deadline could result in loss of award funds.
- Grant Disbursement Schedule:
  - The first 75% of the total awarded amount will be disbursed to the award recipient approximately 90 days after receipt of a signed award agreement via the online grant portal.
  - Final reports are due to AFT 365 days after the receipt of the initial funds. The final 25% of the award amount will be disbursed to the award recipient approximately 90 days after submission of a final report via the online grant portal.
  - Note: This schedule is fixed and cannot be modified.
- AFT will require the awardee to provide its SSN/EIN/TIN to fulfill AFT's obligation to report grant activities on its annual report to the IRS. The name on your application must match the name on the SSN/EIN/TIN number that you intend to provide.

## **AWARD FORM CHECKLIST**

### **If chosen to receive an award, AFT will require:**

- Current photo representing yourself and your farm
- A brief summary regarding the planned use of the funds and results you expect to achieve with the assistance of the funds.
- A statement agreeing to complete a brief final report and interview by AFT upon completion of the project. We will share selected projects via social media and promotional materials for farmers who opt-in. While sharing stories is a priority for AFT, we understand there may be reasons for discretion and will honor those instances. Participation in public-facing stories will not affect the applicant's receipt of funding.

## **REPORTING**

Awardees must submit the following within one year of receiving funds:

- All receipts showing how funds were spent
- One written page describing the project and its impact
- Photos or documentation of project outcomes
- Optional: Participate in an interview with AFT staff (not a substitute for written reporting)

AFT will use this information to verify the permitted use of funds and evaluate the Program's success.

Note: Interviews conducted by AFT Communications or Program staff are not considered sufficient to fulfill grant reporting needs. Awardees may be asked to participate in interviews, and should they opt-in, will be expected to do so in addition to the reporting guidelines set out above.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- AFT has established the Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Grant Program to support awardees who need financial assistance to undertake proposed activities that further AFT's charitable purposes. These grants are motivated by charitable intent. AFT, however, does not represent the tax consequences of an award, if any.
- AFT shall have no obligation to disburse amounts in excess of the approved grant, for services not completed, or goods or services not approved by AFT. Any expenses exceeding the grant maximum amount are the awardee's responsibility.
- Expenses incurred before receiving a fully executed grant award agreement will not be reimbursable by the grant.



- Any unspent grant funds may be dedicated towards further services for the applicant, pending written AFT approval.

## QUESTIONS

- Visit our website for more details: [Farmland.org/grants](http://Farmland.org/grants)
- If you have questions or need additional assistance completing your application, please contact Amanda Cather, Mid-Atlantic Deputy Director, at (202) 378-1244 or [acather@farmland.org](mailto:acather@farmland.org).
- If you are interested in attending an online Q&A session about this grant, please sign-up by clicking on the link(s) below:

REGISTER TO ATTEND A LIVE Q&A SESSION:

[Wed. November 19<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm](#)

[Mon. December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1-2pm](#)

[Mon. December 15<sup>th</sup>, 7-8pm](#)

### *A Note on Language*

We encourage you to be thoughtful and diligent in completing your application, but we will not evaluate applications by grammar or writing style. Complete the questions to the best of your ability and take advantage of the narrative questions to describe your farm, your personal and professional goals, and the challenges you face in reaching them. Feel free to write in the style or language that feels truest and most comfortable.