



2026 Regenerate Virginia Healthy Soils Grant

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who is eligible to apply?

A: Applicants must be farming or ranching in Virginia. To be eligible, applicants must be able to provide proof of farming/ranching income (or similar if the farm engages in barter, exchange or community supply). It is not the intention of the Regenerate Virginia Healthy Soils Program to support operations producing food only for personal/household consumption. Farms or ranches must be producing food or agricultural products for your community, to barter or exchange, or for sale.

Q: How do we define ‘farmer/rancher’?

A: For this program, we define “farmer/rancher” as an individual, group, or organization who are intentionally cultivating annual or perennial crops or livestock for harvest. While we recognize many producers earn off-farm income, this grant intends to prioritize applications from individuals who dedicate a majority of their work time to farming or ranching, or who would like to do so.

Q: How do we define ‘a group of farmers’?

A: For this program, we define “a group of farmers” as two or more farm entities working collaboratively towards a shared goal of improving soils on all farms involved. The application must demonstrate that the proposed project is mutually beneficial, in addition to being innovative and impactful. The group must be comprised of individual entities, not from the same household or family unit.

Q: How much money will be awarded?

A: Applicants may request up to \$30,000 each for individuals or up to \$50,000 for a group of farmers. The total amount of funding awarded will depend on the number and quality of applications we receive.

Q: What sorts of projects will be funded?

A: Regenerate Virginia Healthy Soils projects should outline how producers will pilot innovative and impactful ideas— at the field level, the classroom level, or the market level. The Program is designed to support the ongoing efforts of producers and partners while fostering innovation and enhanced education and outreach. Applicants should make sure their proposed projects:

- Include a system of practices that work in combination to achieve synergistic outcomes
- Go beyond practices that are eligible for traditional cost-share opportunities, either because they are more experimental or innovative or because they take a holistic approach that combines several practices
- Engage local conservation practitioners including Soil and Water Conservation District staff, extension agents, NRCS practitioners, nonprofit partners, etc. as technical assistance providers either in implementation or outreach and education

Q: I work for a non-profit organization that has a farm supplying food to our local community. Can we apply?

A: Agricultural based non-profits such as incubator farms are eligible to apply.

Q: Is there a match requirement?

A: There is no match requirement. Grants are intended to leverage other resources (either in-kind from the farmer or other private and public funds). Strong applications will demonstrate how the producer intends to do so.

Q: Do I need to own the land I'm farming to be eligible for this grant?

A: No. Farmers or ranchers leasing land are eligible to apply; however, land tenure for a reasonable time period will be required.

Q: What is the application timeline?

A: Applications will be accepted from 8am ET December 1 through 11:59pm ET December 19, 2025. Applications will be reviewed and applicants will be notified of their status in early 2026. The application questions will be made available as a PDF document for viewing/download and posted on our website. We encourage applicants to view the questions ahead of time.

Q: How are applications accepted?

A: Applications must be submitted through our online application portal (Survey Monkey Apply). The link to apply will be available on our website, www.farmland.org/brighterfuture while the application period is live. In order to submit an application online, applicants must have an email address. All grant and application-related communications will be sent to the applicant via email. If an applicant does not have an email address, a designated contact person, such as a friend, family member, neighbor or service provider, may create and submit an application on behalf of the applicant.

Q: Will applications be accepted in languages other than English?

A: The online application will be available in Spanish.

Q: What does the application consist of?

A: The application questions can be viewed [here](#). The application is designed to be simple and straightforward. The main sections are:

- Eligibility Questionnaire (to determine if the applicant is eligible)
- Applicant Contact Information
- Applicant's Farming Situation (farming status, land tenure, products)
- Project Proposal, including Estimated Costs, Project Budget and Project Timeline
- Applicant Demographic Information

Q: Is experienced labor an eligible expense under this grant?

A: Yes, and we encourage producers to consider their time and labor specifically spent implementing the project as a cost in their project budgets. Particularly in those areas where they will be completing project work themselves as opposed to hiring skilled laborers. Payroll and Salaries are ineligible.

Q: Is equipment an eligible expense under this grant?

A: Farm equipment is an eligible expense.

Q: Can I be awarded for a project our farm has already started working on?

A: This grant will only fund approved expenses that are incurred after award notification. If expenses for an approved project have been paid prior to award notification, we are unable to include those expenses in the award. The grant-funded project timeline begins when the awardee signs their award letter.

Q: When will applicants be notified of final decisions?

A: AFT will send notification to those selected for award via email within 60 days of the application period closing.

Q: How and when are the awards paid?

A: AFT aims to disburse Regenerate Virginia Healthy Soils Grant award payments approximately 90 days from signing of the award letter via direct deposit to the awardee's bank account.

Q: What is the timeline of grant-funded project implementation?

A: The grant-funded project timeline begins when the awardee signs their award agreement. All services supported by the grant must be completed no later than the timeline selected on the application, 1 or 2 years, from receipt of award funds, which may be up to 90 days after the signing of the award letter.

Q: If our farm/ranch is awarded a grant this year, do we need to submit copies of receipts for expenses covered by the grant? What documentation do awardees need to provide?

A: Awardees will be required to provide follow-up information to AFT about their award-funded project. AFT will use this information to verify the permitted use of funds and evaluate the success of the grant program. At the conclusion of the project period, awardees will be asked to submit a brief report verifying completion of the project via the portal system, including a written paragraph describing the completed project and photos or videos documenting the use of funds. If awarded, recipients should keep receipts pertaining to the proposed use of funds for their own reporting purposes. Awardees may be contacted by AFT or VSHC staff for a check-in approximately 6 months into the project period.

Q: I received a "Brighter Future Fund" award from AFT in a prior year. Am I eligible to apply for a Farm Vitality Grant?

A: Yes, Brighter Future Fund awardees are able to apply for Healthy Soils Grants.

Q: I received a Healthy Soils from AFT and VSHC in 2024-2025. Am I eligible to apply for a Healthy Soils Grant?

A: Previous Healthy Soils grant recipients are not able to apply for additional Healthy Soils Grants until their grant project has been completed, including all necessary reporting.

Q: I received a Farm Vitality Planning Grant from AFT in 2024-2025. Am I eligible to apply for a Healthy Soils Grant?

A: Farm Vitality Planning Grant recipients who are in good standing with AFT and whose reporting is up to date are eligible to apply for a 2026 Healthy Soils Grant.

Q: Can I apply for both Farm Vitality and Healthy Soils Grants?

A: You can apply for both Farm Vitality and Healthy Soils Grants, but you will only be awarded one grant during the 2025-26 funding cycle.

Q: We just started our operation and won't have an income or dollar value of any farm products sold in the last year. Are we eligible to apply?

A: We encourage applicants to contact us at acather@farmland.org to discuss your unique situation and potential eligibility. Farm operations with a proven track record of production will be stronger applicants for Healthy Soils Grants.

Q: Are individuals who will soon graduate from a farm apprenticeship or training program (who have not yet started their own operations) eligible to apply?

A: Possibly, yes. Again, we encourage potential applicants to reach out to us to discuss questions pertaining to your unique situation to assess eligibility.

Q: Who can I reach out to for support with completing the application?

A: Please direct all inquiries to Amanda Cather, Mid-Atlantic Deputy Director: Phone: 202-378-1244 Email: acather@farmland.org. Any questions relating to the Survey Monkey Apply application portal should be directed to Brighter Future Fund Coordinator, Kristen Irvin, kirvin@farmland.org

Q: Are there other grants at AFT that I can apply to?

A: We encourage you to visit AFT's grantmaking webpage to learn more about our funding opportunities and sign up for notifications: <https://farmland.org/brighterfuture/>