



Great Lakes Farm Navigator Network GRANT GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

The Great Lakes Farm Navigators project is an initiative led by American Farmland Trust, and supported by the Great Lakes Protection Fund, to support the ecological health of the Great Lakes while sustaining a viable agricultural economy and communities.

AFT recognizes the barrier of costs associated with land transfer, access and stewardship. Grants are intended to leverage other resources (either in-kind from the farmer, or other private and public funds) and make a difference for farmers to 1) access, transfer or permanently protect farmland, or 2) adopt regenerative farming practices and increase resilience of farmland in the Great Lakes watershed.

COMMITMENT TO UNDERSERVED

AFT seeks to support farmers and ranchers across the Great Lakes through the Brighter Future Fund's Great Lakes Farm Navigator Network Grant (the grant). Expanding on priorities established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the project focuses its support on beginning, socially disadvantaged, limited resource, women, and veteran farmers and ranchers to support greater equity and opportunities for all in agriculture. For more information on AFT's commitment to increased opportunity, please see [AFT's DEIJ statement](#).

AWARD AMOUNT

Grants will be awarded in amounts up to \$4,000 per project. A project may involve one or more individual farmers or farm families. Only one grant can be awarded per farmer/farm family. AFT is unable to award grants to American Farmland Trust staff and board members, substantial contributors to AFT, and the family members of, or businesses owned by, the foregoing persons. Applicants must currently be working with a Great Lakes Farm Navigator, as found [here](#).

Money for this program is limited. As money remains, awards will be made ongoingly to eligible applicants that fulfill all application requirements and meet selection criteria. Applications will be reviewed quarterly. Farmers will receive direct payment from American Farmland Trust.



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ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Land tenure (ownership, a lease, license, or other agreement) for a reasonable period will be required for projects that involve on-the-ground improvements to farmland. If tenure is less than 5 years, please be prepared to demonstrate that the tenure is sufficient in relationship to the improvements being made or services being provided.

Eligible farms must be for-profit and be able to provide proof of income (or similar if farm engages in barter, exchange, or community supply). It is not the intention of this project to support operations for personal consumption. Farms must be producing food or ag products for your community, to barter or exchange, or for sale. Non-profit organizations are encouraged to take advantage of alternate resources designed specifically for non-profits.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Grants will be given to projects that 1) access, transfer or permanently protect farmland, or 2) adopt regenerative farming practices and increase resilience of farmland in the Great Lakes watershed. Examples of projects are included below (include, but not limited to).

1. Access, transfer or permanently protect farmland
 - a. Hiring an attorney to develop a farm lease, provide legal representation for a farm transfer or purchase, develop an estate plan to support a farm transfer, or navigate heirs property issues.
 - b. Hiring a business, financial or estate planning consultant to assist with a farm transfer plan, business plan, or finance/loan plan.
 - c. Hiring a service provider to support business planning and other services necessary for farmland access or expansion such as land search planning, property assessment, facilitation, succession planning, or crafting agreements.
 - d. Paying transaction costs associated with securing land to farm. These may include costs associated with purchasing a farm, negotiating a lease agreement, or developing an agricultural conservation easement (e.g., survey, appraisal, etc.).
2. Adopt regenerative farming practices and increase resilience of farmland in the Great Lakes watershed



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- a. Paying capital costs associated with improving soil health and enhancing land for farm production. Examples include irrigation, fencing, or soil improvements.
- b. Purchasing farm equipment or implements that would allow farmers to improve soil health
- c. Replacing infrastructure or equipment lost or compromised from natural disasters.
- d. Purchasing cover crop seed
- e. Expanding or implementing practices identified from the Natural Resource Conservation Service Conservation Practice Standards
(<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/resources/guides-and-instructions/conservation-practice-standards>)

AWARD PROCESS & HOW TO APPLY

Applicant must be currently working with a Great Lakes Farm Navigator to begin the process of applying. To identify a Great Lakes Farm Navigator in your area, [click here](#). Applicant will then fill out the application form [Great Lakes Protection Fund - American Farmland Trust \(smapply.io\)](#) or by scanning the QR code below.



APPLICATION TERMS

If approved, AFT will send written notification in the form of a Letter of Award via email to the applicant within 90 days of applying. The Letter of Award will detail the approved timeline and process for payment based on the individual project.

Terms for all applications:

- AFT will pay the farmer/awardee directly. AFT anticipates paying approved expenses directly within 90 days of receiving requested documentation.
- Awardees will be required to provide follow-up information to AFT about their award-funded project. Within one year of the award date, awardees may be asked to submit: all receipts showing how the grant was spent, a written paragraph describing the project,



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and photos documenting how the award was used. AFT will use this information to verify permitted use of grant and evaluate the success of the grant program.

- 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 that exceed the grant maximum amount are the responsibility of the awardee.
- Expenses incurred prior to receiving written notification of approval 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 & CONCERNS

If you have questions about projects, please contact your local navigator.

If you have questions related to the application or grant processes, please email Kinzie Reiss, Program Grants Manager, at kreiss@farmland.org.