

2024-25 Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Planning 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 Farm Vitality 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 is “historically underserved” defined under this grant?

A: AFT recognizes that marginalized agricultural producers have long faced barriers to accessing financial support and other resources. See below for some definitions.

- A “beginning farmer or rancher” is someone who has farmed for 10 years or less. Visit [this page](#) for more information. (Please note that to be eligible for this grant, applicants must have been farming or ranching for one year.)

- A “socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher” is one who has been subjected to racial or ethnic prejudices because of their identity as a member of a socially disadvantaged group without regard to their individual qualities. [Visit this page](#) for more information.

- A farmer or rancher may use the following online determination tool to determine whether one is eligible as “[limited resource](#)”. Limited Resource status is defined as having direct or indirect gross farm sales not more than the current indexed value in each of the previous two years and a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of four or less than 50 percent of county median household income in each of the previous two years. [Click here](#) to use the tool.

- A “veteran farmer or rancher” is one who has served in the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard, including reserves, and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable.

- Regenerate Virginia’s Farm Vitality Grants Program also considers women as historically underserved applicants.

Q: How much money will be awarded?

A: Applicants may request up to \$10,000 each.

Q: What sorts of projects will be funded?

A: Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Planning projects should outline how producers will make use of professional services to improve long-term viability and regenerative management. These could include business planning for adoption of regenerative farming practices, including product diversification or marketing; analysis of return on investment for purchase of equipment; financial management training, coaching, or consulting; professional services related to accessing, transferring, or permanently protecting farmland or resolving heirs property issues; etc.

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

A: We encourage farms associated with non-profit organizations to take advantage of alternate resources designed specifically for non-profits.

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).

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 October 15 through midnight ET November 15, 2024. Applications will be reviewed and awarded in the order they were received and based on eligibility. Funding for this program is limited. As funding remains, awards will be made on an ongoing basis to eligible applicants that fulfill all application requirements and meet selection criteria. 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 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 labor/farm staff time an eligible expense under this grant?

A: No, we cannot approve labor costs/farm staff time in a project budget.

Q: Is equipment an eligible expense under this grant?

A: Equipment is not an eligible expense under Farm Vitality Planning Grants. We encourage applicants to propose projects that help them access professional services for business or succession planning, financial management and coaching, land acquisition or protection, marketing, etc., in support of regenerative management.

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 at the time of award notification.

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 Planning Grant award payments by 120 days from award notification via direct deposit to the awardee's bank account. (While AFT is able to mail award payments via check, awardees who cannot receive payment via direct deposit may experience delays in award payment.)

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

A: The grant-funded project timeline begins when the awardee signs their award letter. All services supported by the grant must be completed no later than one year from receipt of award funds. For grants funding long-range succession and transfer planning services, written statements showing progress/milestones may be requested.

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. Within one year of the award date, 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.

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

A: Yes, Brighter Future Fund awardees are able to apply for Farm Vitality Planning Grants.

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.

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 particular 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 either of the following: Phone: 202-378-1244 Email: acather@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: <https://farmland.org/brighterfuture/>