



Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Planning Grant Program

Guidelines

PURPOSE

The Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Planning Grant Program (the Program) assists Virginia farmers in working towards the long-term vitality of their operations through individual grants of up to \$10,000, focusing on planning efforts that support the adoption or expansion of regenerative practices and systems. The Program will also focus on land access, tenure, and succession planning to ensure farms remain 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 more significant opportunities for farmers to plan for improved profitability and business viability alongside adopting regenerative systems.

ELIGIBILITY

These grants are intended to provide producers with funds to receive individualized, substantive technical assistance 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:

- For-profit Virginia farms that provide proof of income (or similar if the farm engages in barter, exchange, or community supply).
- The priority focuses on producing food or agricultural products for sale, barter, or exchange.
- Awards will be given to individual, for-profit farmers.
- Farmers with at least two seasons of production experience (for existing businesses) OR 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).

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.

A COMMITMENT TO UNDERSERVED FARMERS

AFT is committed to supporting more significant equity and opportunities for all in agriculture. For more information on AFT's commitment to increased opportunity, please see AFT's DEIJ statement [here](#).

The Program will prioritize support for 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
- Women farmers
- Veteran farmers
- BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or People of Color) farmers
- LGBTQIA+ farmers
- Low-income or limited-resource farmers (self-determination tool [here](#))

Additional information that will be considered:

- Percentage of time currently dedicated to farming or ranching, or percentage of time desired.
- Potential impact of planning projects 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.)

ALLOWABLE use of funds includes but is not limited to:

- Financial and technical assistance to support:
 - Holistic business planning
 - Financial record-keeping
 - Expansion, diversification, and revenue projection
 - Certification (organic or similar)
 - Market research and development
 - Marketing and communications
 - Accessing financing for operations or growth
 - Or similar work to enhance the long-term viability of a farm
- Legal support, representation, or consultation for:
 - Lease development or negotiation
 - Farm purchase or transfer

- Estate/succession planning
- Transferring farm ownership or management
- Navigating heirs' property concerns.
- Consultation or costs associated with accessing farmland, such as:
 - Land Search
 - Property assessment or surveys
 - Facilitation with landowner/landlord
 - Services related to developing an agricultural conservation easement, or similar.
- Support or coaching for labor management, compliance, or developing employee policies to improve equity and well-being for farm staff.
- If desired, assistance can be provided in identifying the appropriate consultant for your individual needs and drafting a budget. Please contact us if this would be beneficial to you.

HOW TO APPLY To apply, farmers should submit a completed Regenerate Virginia Farm Vitality Planning Grant Application to AFT by the due date of November 15, 2024.

Applications must be submitted electronically through the link on our webpage available October 15th.

TIMELINE & AWARD PROCESS

Applications will be accepted from October 15 through November 15, 2024, and grant recipients will be announced in early 2025.

- Grant recipients will receive written notification in the form of a Letter of Award via email. The Letter of Award will detail the approved timeline and process for payment based on the individual project.
- Funding is contingent on the awardee completing a Grant Award Form and submitting it, along with other requested information, within 14 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.
- Farm Vitality Planning grants will generally be awarded in the form of direct payments from American Farmland Trust according to the following schedule, which may be modified by special arrangement:
 - 80% within approximately 120 days of Grant Award Form and supporting documentation submission and approval
 - 10% after six-month check-in with AFT staff
 - 10% upon completion of reporting requirements
- 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 should match the name on the SSN/EIN/TIN number that you intend to provide.

AWARD FORM CHECKLIST

If chosen to receive an award, we 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 reason for discretion and will honor those instances. Participation in public-facing stories will not affect the applicant's receipt of funding.

REPORTING

Awardees must provide follow-up information about their award-funded projects to AFT about their award-funded project. Within one year award receipt, awardees must **submit**:

- **All receipts (documentation) showing how funds were spent**
- One written page describing the project and its impact on the farm operation
- Photos or other documentation demonstrating how award funds were used.

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 Planning 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

- If you have questions or need additional assistance completing your application, please contact Amanda Cather, Mid-Atlantic Senior Program Manager, at (202) 387-1244 or acather@farmland.org. If you are interested in attending an online Q&A session about this grant, please sign-up below:

[October 17, 2024, 7:00 PM](#)

[November 5, 2024, 7:00 PM](#)

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.