



Grant Funding Basics

For general information—visit links and speak with program staff as guidelines change.

This list is representative of ag grant options, but not exhaustive.

A grant **does not have to be repaid**, as long as the terms of the award are fulfilled. Some grants require a **match**—a percentage of the total project cost you must contribute. For example, a 10% match on a \$50,000 project means you put up \$5K while the funder provides \$45K.

NRCS payment incentive (formerly “cost share”) programs are similar to grants in that they don’t require repayment but require you to invest in an on-farm project. NRCS funding for [High Tunnels](#) and USDA funding for up to 75% cost share for farms [going certified organic](#) are examples. NRCS projects can take +/- 3 years to get on the ground in PA due to staffing and the steps required to assess, draw up a conservation plan, rank your project, and design. You will have to put money up front into the project.

See our [website](#) for more info on financial resources.

	For Individuals	For organizations
<i>Federal BFRDG</i>		USDA Beginning Farmer/Rancher Grants for non-profit organizations/higher ed to provide education to beginning farmers. They are NOT available to individuals.
<i>USDA Ag Marketing Service</i>	Farmers Market Promotion Program grants are very competitive . Eligible applicants include Agricultural businesses, Agricultural cooperatives, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) networks, and CSA associations. Grants fund developing new markets and increasing access to locally-grown food. 25% match in 2020. https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/fmpp	Closed May 26, 2020
<i>USDA Rural Development</i>	Value Added Producer Grants Competitive grant to generate new products, create and expand marketing opportunities, for example. Typically require a 50% match. <i>For example, if you are a dairy farmer interested in making cheese, or keep bees and want to process your honey or beeswax into another form, the VAPG could be a fit.</i>	Applications usually open late fall/early winter.



USDA Rural Development	<p><u>Rural Energy for America Program Renewable Energy Systems</u> To update their energy systems on-farm. Grants up to 25% of total eligible project costs—factsheet. Eligibility: Ag producers with at least 50% of gross income coming from ag ops, small businesses in eligible rural areas. You must have no outstanding delinquent federal taxes, debt, judgment or debarment. Penn State Extension has funding to work with farmers to develop plans for REAP and develop a report that will provide some of the background info needed for the REAP application. Contact Amanda Hope, PA's REAP coordinator, for more info on applying (717) 237-2289 amanda.hope@pa.usda.gov See also: Rural Energy Savings Program loans</p>	Open
SARE	<p>Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education grants are available to farmers to try out innovative projects in sustainable ag. Applications typically are accepted in early winter for spring awards. Learn more about Farmer research grants for innovation. Grants can be used for your time, project-related materials, consulting fees or soil tests, and outreach expenses associated with telling others about project results. <i>Next application period: Fall 2020</i></p> <p>Funds cannot be used to start a farm, purchase equipment like tractors or computers, or other costs that would be there in the absence of the project; or for capital costs associated with building a barn, greenhouse, or other major farm fixture.</p>	<p>https://eligibility.sc.egov.usda.gov/eligibility/welcomeAction.do) See search feature to see the types of projects they've funded.</p>
Small Grants	<p>Amber Grant awards \$4000 per month to women entrepreneurs, who then compete for additional \$25,000 grant at the end of the year. Application fee \$15.</p> <p>Farmer Veteran Coalition Fellowship Fund \$1-5K grants; application typically opens between Jan and March.</p> <p>Work Vessels for Veterans \$1000 - \$8000 for needed equipment</p>	<p>https://ambergrantsforwomen.com/get-an-amber-grant/</p> <p>https://farmvetco.org/fvfellowship/</p> <p>https://www.workvesselsforveterans.org/for-veterans.html</p>
Loans		



USDA FSA	FSA does NOT provide farmer grants . Farm Services Agency (FSA) makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution, or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. Loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements.	https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/
Unconventional Lenders (not grantors)	CDFIs (Community Development Financial Institutions) are private, non-profit lenders who specialize in helping startups and growing small businesses--that conventional funders consider too risky, often with an emphasis on access to fresh food. Working with a CDFI brings a suite of business supports to borrowers. KIVA or GoFundMe or similar platforms for small projects if you have a strong network to share your funding request. Be sure to read all the fine print about service fees and transaction percentages the company collects from donors or from the contributions you receive.	At https://ofn.org/cdfi-locator select PA in the dropdown to find the closest CDFI

VA Voc Rehab Self Employed program is not a grant program.

These do not make direct grants:

Private Foundation: A nonprofit organization with funds usually from a single source, managed by trustees or directors. Foundations aid social, educational, religious or other charitable activities. Private foundations are generally founded by an individual, a family or a group of individuals, and are organized either as a nonprofit corporation or as a charitable trust. (Think "Farmer Veteran Coalition [Fellowship Fund](#)".)

Family Foundation: Funds from members of a single family; usually run by family members who serve as trustees. (Think "Mellon")

Corporate Foundation: Foundation that awards funds from a profit-making business. Tied to the business or corporation but run as a separate entity. (Think "Home Depot" funding home improvements for disabled veterans.)

Community Foundation: Made up of funds from donors in a defined geographic area (often a county or metro area). They often fund programs or services that government doesn't have the resources to support.