

**AGRICULTURAL MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT****AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM 2018 Request for Proposals****INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS**

Completed proposals must be received by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) by 4:00 PM on November 22, 2017. Proposals received after this deadline will not be considered. If unable to fill-out electronically, please use blank ink.

Proposals may be delivered through online submission, by mail, in person, or by email. Faxed proposals will not be accepted.

- Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete the online application available at [www.mda.state.mn.us/en/grants/grants/cropresearch.aspx](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/en/grants/grants/cropresearch.aspx).
- If a proposal is **emailed**, the time and date it is received will be considered the received-by date.
- If a proposal is **mailed**, the received date (not the postmark date) will be considered the received-by date.

**Submit to:**

Minnesota Department of Agriculture  
Attn: David Weinand  
625 Robert St. North  
St. Paul, MN 55155-2538  
Email: [David.Weinand@state.mn.us](mailto:David.Weinand@state.mn.us)

**All applicants will receive a confirmation of proposal receipt via email.**

**Questions about the grant program or application process must be received in writing (email is permitted) and directed to [David.Weinand@state.mn.us](mailto:David.Weinand@state.mn.us) or mail to him at the address above.**

Other MDA personnel are not authorized to discuss this request for proposals with applicants before the proposal submission deadline nor should MDA personnel be listed as collaborators or partners on proposals. All questions and answers will be posted at [www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/cropresearch/cropresearchfaq.aspx](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/cropresearch/cropresearchfaq.aspx)

## AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM 2018 Request for Proposals

### BACKGROUND

The Crop Research Grant is a component of the Agricultural Growth, Research and Innovation Program (AGRI) that was established at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to advance Minnesota's agricultural and renewable energy industries (MS41A.12). The AGRI Program focuses on areas of greatest opportunity and potential economic impact to create agricultural jobs and profitable businesses in the areas of livestock investment, value added business and market development, crop production and processing research, and renewable energy.

### PROGRAM GOALS/AVAILABILITY

The AGRI Crop Research Grant Program is intended to generate applied crop research that will improve agricultural product quality, quantity, and/or value. The MDA anticipates awarding up to \$1.5 million in competitive grants for applied research that creates public, transferable information that has near term (3 to 7 years) benefits for Minnesota farmers and the State's economy.

The maximum grant award is \$250,000 for projects that can last up to 3 years. Proposals must include an outreach plan describing how results will be shared with appropriate audiences.

Applications will be reviewed by a committee representing content and community specialists with topic knowledge. We expect to announce selected grantees in 8-10 weeks. If selected, you may only incur eligible expenditures when the grant contract is fully executed and the grant has reached its effective date.

### ELIGIBLE and INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

#### Eligible Applicants

Any Minnesota organization, research entity, individual, or business with agricultural research capability is eligible to apply and receive funding. This includes: farmers/farmer networks, institutions of higher education, research institutions, nonprofit organizations, agricultural cooperatives, and agricultural businesses with research capabilities. Applicants and any subcontractors must be in compliance with Minnesota tax and environmental regulatory requirements to be eligible for funding.

#### Ineligible Applicants

Applicants who are not located in Minnesota are not eligible. MDA employees are not eligible.

### ELIGIBLE and INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Applied crop research projects that have near term (3 to 7 years) benefits for Minnesota agriculture, its producers and associated industries are eligible for funding under this notice. **Basic research projects are not eligible for funding.** Projects that would benefit only a specific business entity or individual and would not result in public information and benefit are not eligible for funding. Research projects must be conducted in Minnesota.

- Preference will be given to research on crops with limited access to other research funds.
- While a grant match is not required, proposals that show in-kind support from the applicant or project partners, or an investment in the research from other sources are preferred.
- Multi-year projects are preferred.

### DEFINITIONS

**Research** is a studious inquiry, examination, investigation, or experimentation aimed at the discovery and interpretation of facts, revision of accepted theories or laws in the light of new facts, or practical application of such new or revised theories or laws. Research uses scientifically sound methodologies and experimental design appropriate to the matter under study. Research is rigorous and statistically valid.

## AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM 2018 Request for Proposals

**Applied research** is research that is conducted to answer specific, practical questions. Its principal purpose is not to gain knowledge for its own sake.

### **PROJECT EXAMPLES INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO RESEARCH PROJECTS THAT:**

- increase crop yield or production efficiency;
- improve traits for market or climate;
- develop new crops, cover crops, and specialty crops;
- advance new uses for existing or new crops; or
- involve crop breeding.

### **INELIGIBLE EXPENSES**

- General operations, overhead and indirect costs.
- Capital improvements such as construction of buildings, land purchases, or building/laboratory improvements.
- Equipment costing over \$5,000 unless included in the proposal and essential to the proposed research.
- Advertising and marketing expenses.
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges or contingency funds.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services.
- Entertainment, amusement, diversion, social activities, gifts, and any costs directly associated with such costs (such as tickets to shows or sports events, meals, lodging, rentals, transportation, alcohol, and gratuities).
- International travel unless explicitly approved.
- Airfare costs in excess: airfare costs that exceed the customary standard commercial airfare (coach or equivalent).
- Fundraising including financial campaigns, solicitation of gifts and bequests, and similar expenses incurred to raise capital or obtain contributions regardless of the purpose for which the funds will be used.
- Lobbying – including costs of membership in organizations substantially engaged in lobbying.
- Political activities.

### **PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS AND NOTIFICATION**

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of MDA staff and external reviewers. Reviewers may recommend whole or partial funding of a project.

Applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, will be notified in writing within eight weeks after the proposal deadline. Unsuccessful applicants may receive reviewer comments upon request.

Direct questions about the application or review process to David Weinand at [David.Weinand@state.mn.us](mailto:David.Weinand@state.mn.us)

### **GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES AND RECORD KEEPING**

MDA staff will work with successful applicants to schedule payments and progress reports. Grantees must provide an IRS W-9 form and sign a grant award agreement with the MDA before beginning work on the project or receiving any grant payments. Grantees must sign and return grant award agreements to the MDA within 30 days of receipt. Failure to do so may jeopardize the award.

## AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM 2018 Request for Proposals

To receive payments, grantees must provide assurance that the work has been completed (e.g., written progress reports) and clearly detail expenditures on any invoice(s) submitted to the MDA. The final 10% of the award will be withheld until a final report or documentation is received and approved by the MDA. MDA reserves the right to require additional reporting during the course of the project.

All information submitted becomes a public record. However, if the grant recipient considers any information to be trade-secret protected, the grant recipient may request that trade-secret information be kept confidential and must specifically label the information for which the claim is made. If a grant recipient's trade-secret designation is challenged by a data requestor, the grant recipient will be responsible for defending the trade-secret designation.

Grantees are required to respond to requests for follow-up information beyond the term of the grant agreement for evaluation and/or audit purposes.

### QUESTIONS

Questions may be submitted by phone or email to David Weinand at 651-201-6646 or [David.Weinand@state.mn.us](mailto:David.Weinand@state.mn.us). All answers will be posted within two business days at [www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/cropresearch/cropresearchfaq.aspx](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/cropresearch/cropresearchfaq.aspx).

### APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Write for reviewers who are generally knowledgeable who may not have a thorough or deep understanding of your proposed research area. Use plain, easily understood language.
- Answer all questions completely within the character or page limits specified in the grant application. Use 12 point font, single spacing and 1" page margins.
- Pay special attention to the evaluation criteria included in this packet.

### REVIEW PROCESS AND TIMELINE

The review committee will evaluate all eligible and complete applications received by the deadline. MDA will review all committee recommendations and is responsible for award decisions. *The award decisions of MDA are final and not subject to appeal.*

RFP posted on the MDA web site . . . . .	October 2, 2017
Applications due no later than 4:00 pm central time . . . . .	November 22, 2017
Committee begins review of applications . . . . .	December 1, 2017
Committee recommendations submitted to commissioner for review . . . . .	January 22, 2018
Selected grantees announced; grant agreement negotiations begin . . . . .	February 1, 2018
Work plans approved and grant begins . . . . .	February 14, 2018

**AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM 2018 Request for Proposals**

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Score</b>
<p><b>Proposed project goals and objectives meet the goals of the Crop Research Grant Program</b></p> <p>Research is timely and important.</p> <p>Beneficiaries are clearly defined.</p> <p>Research improves Minnesota’s agricultural product quality, quantity, and/or value.</p>	20
<p><b>Measurable objectives and evaluation</b></p> <p>Objectives are measurable, specific, and clearly stated.</p> <p>Project evaluation criteria are appropriate to measure progress and success.</p>	10
<p><b>Technical and scientific merit</b></p> <p>Experimental design is sound.</p> <p>Methodology is appropriate for the research project.</p>	15
<p><b>Qualifications of research team</b></p> <p>Members of research team are identified and their roles are defined and realistic.</p> <p>Key individuals are involved and are capable, committed, and skilled in the area of the proposed research.</p> <p>Research team is sufficient to accomplish the proposed research.</p>	15
<p><b>Potential economic impact on Minnesota agriculture</b></p> <p>Substantial benefits will be realized by farmers and associated industries or groups beyond the grantee.</p> <p>Results of the project are transferable and have potential to affect a significant audience and geographical area.</p>	20
<p><b>Outreach component</b></p> <p>Research results will be widely disseminated.</p> <p>Outreach plan is clear and comprehensive.</p> <p>Information will be accessible to all appropriate audiences.</p>	10
<p><b>Budget detail and justification</b></p> <p>Budget narrative clearly details and justifies all project costs.</p> <p>Budget clearly aligns with the work to be accomplished.</p>	10
<p><b>Total</b></p>	100
<p><b>Additional points (5 POINTS EACH)</b></p> <p>Project is multi-year.</p> <p>Project is research on a crop with limited access to other research funds.</p> <p>Project includes matching funds.</p>	5-15

**AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL (p. 1 of 13)**

Project Title: *The project title should be clear, concise, and describe the project's intent.*

Name of Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State MN Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Is applicant authorized to sign a contract?            Yes        No

**If no**, please provide the authorized signatory's name, organization, phone number, email and mailing address.

Name of Authorized Signatory \_\_\_\_\_ Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State MN Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Eligibility**

I (and my organization or institution) am in good standing with the State of Minnesota    Yes        No  
*(no back taxes or current noncompliance actions).*

I am a current Minnesota resident or an entity authorized to conduct business in Minnesota.    Yes        No

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Project Start Date \_\_\_\_\_ Project End Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Amount of Grant Request</b>	<b>Applicant's Match (Not required)</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>Total Project Cost</b>
_____	_____	=	_____

**AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL** (p. 2 of 13)

**Abstract** (2,500 characters, including spaces)

Summarize your proposal. Include a succinct account of the project's goals and objectives, a description of the approach and methodology, and the anticipated outcomes, or products.

**Rationale and Beneficiaries** *(2,500 characters, including spaces)*

Provide the background and need for the proposed work. Explain why the research you are proposing is important and timely. Include references to relevant supporting literature. Explain who stands to benefit, directly or indirectly, from your project.



AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL (p. 4 of 13)

**Approach, Methodology, and Timeline** (10,000 characters, including spaces)

Describe your approach; scientific methodology (proposed treatments and reason for selection); plot/sample size; lab procedures or protocols; and data to be collected); experimental design; and measurements that will be used to evaluate the project. Explain how these methods are appropriate for the research project. Include a timeline for the research. Include any charts, graphs, or pictures on a separate page.

*You may continue your Approach, Methodology and Timeline in the space on p. 5.*

**Approach, Methodology, and Timeline CONTINUED** *(10,000 characters, including spaces)*

**AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL** (p. 6 of 13)

**Results or Products** (2,500 characters, including spaces)

Describe the near-term (3 to 7 years) results or products you expect from the proposed research. If project results will not be realized during the grant period, describe anticipated outcomes and timelines. Results should be specific, clear, and measurable.

AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL (p. 7 of 13)

**Outreach Plan** (2,500 characters, including spaces)

Research results must be widely and publicly disseminated. Explain how you will inform others, especially farmers, about your results and findings. Be specific about the audience you will target and the methods you will use.

**AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL (p. 8 of 13)**
**Budget Proposal**

	Year One \$	Year Two \$	Year Three \$	Total \$
<b>Personnel</b>				
Salaries	personnel salaries year 1	personnel salaries year 2	personnel salaries year 3	personnel salaries total
Fringe Benefits	personnel fringe benefits year 1	personnel fringe benefits year 2	personnel fringe benefits year 3	personnel fringe benefits total
<b>Non-personnel</b>				
Equipment (over \$5000)	non-personnel equipment year 1	non-personnel equipment year 2	non-personnel equipment year 3	non-personnel equipment total
Supplies	non-personnel supplies year 1	non-personnel supplies year 2	non-personnel supplies year 3	non-personnel supplies total
Analysis	non-personnel analysis year 1	non-personnel analysis year 2	non-personnel analysis year 3	non-personnel analysis total
Contracted Services	non-per. contracted services year 1	non-per. contracted services year 2	non-per. contracted services year 3	non-per. contracted services total
Travel	non-personnel travel year 1	non-personnel travel year 2	non-personnel travel year 3	non-personnel travel total
Communications	non-per. communications year 1	non-per. communications year 2	non-per. communications year 3	non-per. communications total
Other	non-personnel other year 1	non-personnel other year 2	non-personnel other year 3	non-personnel other total
<b>Total Request</b>	total request year 1	total request year 2	total request year 3	total request total
<b>Match and/or In-kind Support (Not Required)</b>	match or inkind year 1	match or inkind year 2	match or inkind year 3	match or inkind total
<b>Project Total (Request + Match)</b>				

**AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL** (p. 9 of 13)**Budget Narrative** (10,000 character limit, including spaces)

The budget narrative should:

- Provide detail and justify expenditures in each budget category\*.
- Explain how the budget items connect to the project's results. See Ineligible Expenses on page 3 of this RFP and the explanation of budget categories with the Budget Form.
- Explain how you arrived at the budget estimates.
- **When applicable**, identify the dollar value and source of current or pending cash match and/or in-kind contribution. Note: a match is not required; however proposals that have in-kind support from the applicant or project partners, or an investment in the research from other sources are preferred.

**Definitions:**

**Current matching funds:** If the proposed project has confirmed funding through another source, please specify the grantor, the funding amount and the purpose of that grant funding.

**Pending matching funds:** List other proposals that have been submitted for this project and where applications were submitted. Does this project depend on additional, unsecured funding?

**\*Budget Categories:**

- Personnel – List names and titles of participants who will receive a salary from this project.
- Equipment – List equipment (useful life over one year and a cost over \$5,000) with justification for each item. All equipment must be listed to be considered an eligible expense and must be essential to the proposed research.
- Supplies – Provide a general list of types of supplies. Justify the purchase of electronic supplies such as phone, computers, and tablets.
- Analysis – List any laboratory or statistical analyses and their purpose.
- Contractual Services – List any entities outside your organization that will be retained on a temporary basis to work the project or provide a specific service. Include contractor's name and a short description of services to be provided. Provide the flat rate fee or total hourly rate for each contract.
- Travel – List anticipated destination, number of trips, purpose of trips, mode of travel and anticipated cost per trip. Base cost on the current federal rate. Provide justification for out-of-state travel.
- Communication – List type of expenses and estimated costs.
- Other – List expenses that don't fit any of the budget categories. Identify each item and justify the expense.

Enter your Budget Narrative on the following two pages (pp. 10-11).

**Budget Narrative** *(10,000 characters, including spaces)*

*You may continue your Budget Narrative in the space on p. 11.*

**Budget Narrative CONTINUED** *(10,000 characters, including spaces)*



**AGRI MINNESOTA CROP RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM PROPOSAL (p. 12 of 13)**
**Qualifications of Applicant and Other Key Participants**

List all individuals who will participate in the project, including principal investigator and any collaborators. Attach additional pages if necessary. Do not include extensive resumes or bios.

Name • individual 1	Organizational affiliation
Occupation	Phone
Brief summary: Relevant abilities and qualifications	

Name Individual B	Organizational affiliation
Occupation	Phone
Brief summary: Relevant abilities and qualifications	

Name Individual C	Organizational affiliation
Occupation	Phone
Brief summary: Relevant abilities and qualifications	

Name Individual D	Organizational affiliation
Occupation	Phone
Brief summary: Relevant abilities and qualifications	

Name Individual E	Organizational affiliation
Occupation	Phone
Brief summary: Relevant abilities and qualifications	

Name Individual F	Organizational affiliation
Occupation	Phone
Brief summary: Relevant abilities and qualifications	

### **Letters of Commitment and Support (No page limit)**

Letters of commitment from each key participant (except the applicant) are required. Letters should indicate that each person listed understands her or his role and is willing to participate and commit adequate time to the project. Letters of support from organizations or individuals that are not directly involved in the project are not required, but may be helpful in justifying the need for your project.

Letters may be scanned and emailed with the application or mailed separately. If mailed, include project title and principal investigator's name on each letter.