



# **AGRI Protecting Livestock from Avian Influenza Grant (Protect)**

## **2025 Request for Proposals**

**Applications due by 4 p.m. on October 31, 2024**

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# Grant Summary

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## Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for funding to help livestock producers buy and install equipment to prevent the transmission of avian influenza on their farms.

Applications for the AGRI Protecting Livestock from Avian Influenza Grant, also referred to as the Protect Grant, will be accepted until 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Thursday, October 31, 2024. We expect to notify applicants of their status no later than December 18, 2024.

Note that we issue payments on a reimbursement basis (after work has been completed and paid for). All purchases for the eligible items must be made after grant contract agreements are signed, which is expected to take place by February 2025.

## Funding availability

Approximately \$500,000 is available for this round of the program. Applicants may request between \$500 and \$10,000 per farming operation with a 20% cash match required. The match may be reduced by up to \$2,000 for related time and labor costs incurred by the applicant. We expect to award 50-60 grants, but the final number will depend on the size of the awards.

We expect most grant contract agreements to start in early 2025. Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the contract has been signed by all parties. Grant funds will be available until June 30, 2026. In limited circumstances, funding may be extended until early 2028.

## Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making.

[Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review \(PDF\)](#) sets up the expectation that grant programs intentionally show how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities.

This grant will specifically prioritize beginning farmers and farms owned or principally operated by beginning farmers. A beginning farmer is defined as someone who has farmed 10 years or less.

## How to apply

- Apply for the Protect Grant using our [online application system](#).
  - If you're a new user, you need to create an account first.
  - Once you're logged in, select "Protecting Livestock from Avian Influenza Grant."
  - We will only accept one application per farm.
- Applications are due by **4 p.m. CT on Thursday, October 31, 2024**.
  - We will not accept late applications.
  - Apply early so that there is enough time to get help with the online application system. It's best practice to submit your application at least 24 hours in advance.
  - We are not responsible for any technical or logistical problems that result in a late submission. It is your responsibility to ensure we receive your application before the deadline.
  - If you can't use the online application system, contact us to request other arrangements.

## How to submit questions

For questions about the grant program or application:

- Submit your question in writing before **4 p.m. CT on October 24, 2024**.
- Email [MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us) with "Protect Grant" in the subject line.

For help using the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6500 or
- Email [MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us](mailto:MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us) and include "Protect Grant" in the subject line.

## Timeline and deadlines

**October 24, 2024, at 4 p.m. CT**.....Deadline to ask grant program questions.

**October 31, 2024, at 4 p.m. CT**.....Application period closes.

**December 18, 2024**.....All applicants notified of grant status.

**February 1, 2025**.....Anticipated contract start date.

# Eligibility

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## Eligible applicants

Applicants must be the principal operator of a livestock operation in Minnesota that produces and sells at least \$1,000 of livestock products annually.

A principal operator is a person primarily responsible for the day-to-day operation of the farm. The principal operator could be an owner, hired manager, cash tenant, share tenant, or partner. Grant contract agreements may be written with the principal operator or the farm business entity.

MDA employees, their spouses, and farms owned or principally operated by them are not eligible.

## Eligible species and expenses

For the purposes of this grant, livestock includes beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, poultry, goats, mules, bison, sheep, horses, farmed cervids (deer, elk), ratites (flightless birds including emu), and llamas.

Grant funds must be used to install measures to prevent the transmission of avian influenza at farms in Minnesota. If we accept your proposal, we will reimburse eligible costs included in your project budget. You will have to submit documentation including invoices and proofs of payment.

## Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- Lasers (to scare wild species away from livestock operations)
- Sound machines (to scare wild species away from livestock operations)
- Inflatables (to scare wild species away from livestock operations)
- Isolation pens
- Truck washes
- Air filtration systems
- Danish entry systems
- Exclusion systems to help keep wild birds and vermin out of livestock facilities
- Electronic animal ID systems (including readers and software)

## Ineligible expenses

The following items are examples of expenses that are **not** eligible for reimbursement:

- Facility improvements not related to the prevention of avian influenza
- Expenditures reimbursed or paid for by existing deprecation programs to protect livestock
- Expenditures incurred before the grant contract agreement is fully executed or after the expiration of the contract
- General purpose equipment (e.g., skid steer loaders, combines, tractors)
- Owner and employee benefits
- Mileage and fuel
- Fundraising
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes
- Lobbyists, political contributions
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds
- Parking violations and traffic violations

## Matching funds

The Protect Grant reimburses up to 80% of the project cost up to a maximum payment of \$10,000. However, to receive your grant payment, you must provide documentation showing payment for the full cost of the project. You may reduce your match by up to \$2,000 using related time and labor costs.

**Table 1. Examples of projects showing the reimbursement amount and the grantee's contribution**

	Material and contract labor cost	Personal time and labor cost	Total cost	Grant reimbursement	Grantee cost
Example 1	\$12,500	\$0	\$12,500	\$10,000	\$2,500
Example 2	\$18,000	\$2,000	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$8,000
Example 3	\$10,500	\$2,000	\$12,500	\$10,000	\$2,500 (\$2,000 personal labor; \$500 cash)
Example 4	\$10,000	\$500	\$10,500	\$8,500	\$2,000 (\$500 personal labor; \$1,500 cash)

Sources of matching funds may include cash, loans, other grants, and liquid capital assets dedicated to the project. State grant funds cannot be used for the grantee portion of the project, but non-forgivable loans from the State may be used as a match.

## **Collaboration**

Eligible applicants may collaborate with other livestock operations, but this is not required. If eligible organizations are submitting a joint application, they must determine which business or organization will have the grant contract agreement with the MDA and will work directly with the MDA to meet grant reporting requirements. Note that this organization will receive a 1099 from the State of Minnesota for income tax purposes.

# Application Review Policies

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## Review process

A review committee evaluates all eligible applications based on the [Application Scoring Sheet](#).

The commissioner of agriculture considers the committee's recommendations and makes award decisions. Both the review committee and commissioner may consider geographic distribution; species; applicant's history as a state grantee, including progress made on previous grants; compliance with state rules and regulations; and capacity to perform the work.

We will notify applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing. Applicants may request a summary of reviewer comments.

## Conflicts of interest

State grant policy requires that steps and procedures are in place to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers ([MINN. STAT.16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making, 2022 \(Word\)](#)).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to give impartial assistance or advice to the MDA due to competing duties or loyalties.
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicant or grantee will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.



# Requirements for Grant Recipients

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## Grant award agreement

Grant contract agreement templates are available for review on the [Office of Grants Management Forms and FAQs](#) webpage.

Upon approval of an application and before beginning work on the grant project(s) and receiving reimbursements, the applicant must:

- Complete an IRS W-9 form or register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system.
- Submit other required documentation within 30 days of award notification.
- Sign a grant contract agreement showing their intention to complete the proposed tasks. This agreement must be signed within 30 days of being sent to the grantee.

## Accountability and reporting

Grantees will be required to submit annual progress reports during the grant period, a final report at the completion of the project, and additional information about the long-term impact for up to three years after the grant period. Grant payments will not be made on grants with past due progress reports unless the MDA has given the grantee a written extension.

Information reported to the MDA may be classified as public data. Failure to regularly report, respond to surveys, and promptly respond to information requests may impact the grantee's ability to secure future funding from the MDA.

## Payments

Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the grant contract agreement has been signed by all parties.

Grant funds are dispersed on a reimbursement basis. All requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget.

The MDA will perform a financial reconciliation of at least one invoice on grants greater than or equal to \$50,000. Financial reconciliation may be performed on additional payment requests at the discretion of the MDA. For this purpose, the grantee must provide expense receipts, employee timesheets, invoices, and any other supporting documents requested by the State.

Grant payments may be used to fulfill federal and state tax liabilities or may be withheld until the grantee has paid any tax liabilities ([MINN. STAT. 270C.65, Subd. 3](#) and other applicable law).

## Bidding requirements

All grantees must abide by the state's bidding requirements for items costing over \$10,000. See a detailed list of the state's [bidding requirements](#) for details.

## **Project audits**

The grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, subd. 8](#)).

The grantee is responsible for the retention of documents and records relevant to the grant. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date; receipt and approval of all final reports; or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

## **Affirmative action and non-discrimination policy**

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified ([MINN. STAT. 363A.02](#)). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship ([Minnesota Rules, part 5000.3500](#)).

The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the [Minnesota Human Rights Act](#).

## **Voter registration requirement**

The grantee will provide voter registration services for its employees ([MINN. STAT. 201.162](#)).

# Privacy Notice and Data Classification

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The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant under this program. The decision to apply for this grant is voluntary, and applicants are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. Applicants may decline to complete this application without any legal consequence. However, only completed applications will be considered for a grant; incomplete applications will not be considered.

Data provided in this application is initially classified by the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act as private or nonpublic, although some or all of the data will generally become public at various points of the application process unless the data are otherwise classified by state or federal law. Access to private or nonpublic data is limited to those authorized by law, including but not necessarily limited to MDA staff and contractors with a valid work assignment to access the data, parties authorized by the applicant, parties identified in a valid court order or federal subpoena, Minnesota Management and Budget, Minnesota Department of Administration, the state auditor, and the legislative auditor. If necessary, the MDA may also share the data with law enforcement or the Office of the Attorney General.

Per Minnesota's statute on grants ([MINN. STAT. 13.599](#)):

- Names and addresses of grant applicants, and the grant amount requested, will be public data once application responses are opened.
- All remaining data in application responses (except for data otherwise classified by law, including trade secret information, see below) becomes public data after the evaluation process is completed (for the purposes of this grant, when all grant agreements have been fully executed).
- All data created or maintained by the MDA as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret information, see below) will generally be public data after the evaluation process is completed.

Procedure for claiming protection of trade secrets:

- Trade secret information is classified as not public data. In order to qualify as trade secret information, the data in question must be provided to the MDA by the affected person (i.e. the data must be about the applicant) and otherwise meet the legal definition found in statute ([MINN. STAT. 13.37, subd. 1\(b\)](#)). In order for an applicant to assert trade secret protection for data submitted as part of this application: the applicant must: 1) clearly identify the specific formula, pattern, compilation, program, device, method, technique or process that the applicant believes to be trade secret information; 2) describe what efforts the applicant takes to maintain the secrecy of the data; and 3) adequately explain how the data derive(s) independent economic value from not being generally known to, and not readily ascertainable by proper means by, other persons. Merely asserting trade secret protection does not, in and of itself, classify the data in question as not public; determining what data meet the definition of trade secret information is ultimately the legal responsibility of the MDA, and the MDA cannot guarantee that data identified as trade secret information by an applicant will be classified as such. If the MDA determines that data do not meet the definition of trade secret information, the data in question will be available to the public unless the applicant secures a court order saying otherwise.

All persons, businesses, and individuals applying for grants in the State of Minnesota must comply with applicable laws. Under the law titled Right of Setoff (MINN. STAT. 270C.65, subd. 3), a grantee consents to disclosure of its social security number, federal employer tax identification number, and/or Minnesota tax identification number, already provided to the State, to federal and state tax agencies, and to state personnel involved in the payment of state obligations. These identification numbers may be used in the enforcement of federal and state tax laws which could result in action requiring a grantee to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities, if any.

## **AGRI Background and Program Goals**

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The Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation Program (AGRI) was established to advance Minnesota's agricultural and renewable energy industries ([MINN. STAT. 41A.12](#)). AGRI has made significant economic impacts by increasing productivity, improving efficiency, and assisting the development of agricultural products. The AGRI Protect Grant encourages farmers and ranchers to proactively buy and install supplies or equipment that will protect livestock from avian influenza.

# Application Scoring Sheet

Evaluation criterion	Maximum score
<b>Project purpose</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant clearly and compellingly describes the purpose of the project, including specifically how the project will prevent the transmission of avian influenza.</li> </ul>	30
<b>Project impact</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likelihood that the project will reduce the impact of avian influenza.</li> </ul>	30
<b>Budget</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget clearly details all project costs.</li> <li>Budget is cost effective.</li> <li>Time and labor estimates are realistic for the project.</li> <li>Planned purchases are backed by quotes or other sources.</li> </ul>	25
<b>Workplan and timeline</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workplan is thorough and realistic.</li> <li>Project begins after February 1, 2025.</li> <li>Project can realistically be completed during the grant period.</li> </ul>	10
<b>Beginning farmer</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicant has farmed 10 years or less.</li> </ul>	5
<b>Recommend for funding</b>	Yes/No
<b>Total</b>	100

# Application Questions

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Answer all questions to the best of your ability. For questions that include a narrative response, be sure to give enough details for reviewers to be able to evaluate your response.

## Contact information

### Applicant information

- Applicant name
- Mailing address
- Applicant telephone
- Applicant email
- County
- Minnesota State House District (use the [District Finder](#) if you don't know your district.)

### Authorized representative

- If awarded a grant, the person who will sign the Protect Grant contract agreement for this organization. This is often you or other leadership on your farm.
  - Name
  - Telephone
  - Email

### Farm operation

- Name of farm (if applicable)
- Farm address

### Type(s) of livestock

- Select all livestock types this project will affect.
  - Beef cattle
  - Bison
  - Dairy cattle
  - Farmed cervids (deer, elk)
  - Horses
  - Llamas
  - Mules
  - Poultry
  - Ratites (emu, ostrich)
  - Sheep/goats
  - Swine

## Eligibility

- Confirm that the following statements apply to you or your organization.
  - I am a current Minnesota resident or my business is authorized to farm in Minnesota. (True)
  - I am a principal operator and/or have the authority to apply on behalf of the farm. (True)
  - Is any other application to this program being submitted on behalf of this farm? (No)
  - Is the applicant or farm owner an MDA employee or spouse of an MDA employee? (No)
  - I understand that if my application is successful, the MDA cannot reimburse for any project expenses incurred for work performed before the contract is fully executed (anticipated to be around February 1, 2025). (Yes)

## Project summary

### Project title

- Farm name, item requested. For example:
  - Petersen Farm, exclusionary fencing
  - Easy 8 Ranch, electronic ID for cattle

### Farm description

- Briefly describe your farming or ranching operation. (500 characters, including spaces)

### Project description

- Describe your project – what are you going to do? (2,000 characters, including spaces)

### Project need and impact

- Describe the need for the item(s), how the project will reduce the risk to your livestock, and how the project will benefit your livestock operation. (2,000 characters, including spaces)

## Project budget

### Total project cost

- (Number only)

### Budget table

- Create a budget using the example format below.
  - Do not attach bid sheets or quotes from vendors instead of a budget table.
  - We will calculate your grant award using this information. Note that you are responsible for 20% of the costs, either as a cash match or through your personal labor.
  - The match may be reduced by up to \$2,000 for personal time and labor.

Item	Quantity	Cost per unit	Total estimate	Source of estimate
Danish entry	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	ABC Construction
Hired labor	10	\$25	\$250	ABC Construction

## Personal time and labor

- Are you requesting to use your personal time and labor towards your match requirement? (Yes/No)
  - If yes, complete the labor table using the example format below. You must indicate the number of hours you are requesting and assign a value per hour. The maximum is \$2,000.

Hours	Rate	Total
80	\$25	\$2,000

## Budget narrative

### Budget narrative

- Describe the need for each item listed in your budget.
- Explain how you plan to pay for your project (financing, other grants, private investment, personal investment, organization funds, etc.).
  - You cannot use other state grant funds to pay for this project but you may use non-forgivable loans from the State.
- How important is this grant to your ability to undertake this project? If your application is not funded, what are your alternatives for financing the project?

## Quotes and other sources

- Submit quotes or estimates for equipment or services.

## Workplan and timeline

- When do you plan to start your project? (mm/dd/yyyy)
- Create a workplan using the example format shown below. You should include the steps that you will take to successfully complete your project. For example, you might include target dates for requesting quotes, installing and testing equipment, and fully launching the equipment. Example:

Timeframe	Description of task or action item	Responsible party
March 2025	Request bids for concrete	Self
April 2025	Sign contract with contractor	Self

## Beginning farmer

- Has the principal operator been farming for 10 years or less? (Yes/No)