



AGRI Preparing for Extreme Weather Grant 2025 Request for Proposals

Applications due by 4 p.m. on February 12, 2025

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this information is available in alternative forms of communication upon request by calling 651-201-6000. TTY users can call the Minnesota Relay Service at 711. The MDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

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Grant Summary

Overview

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is now accepting applications for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation (AGRI) Preparing for Extreme Weather Grant (Prepare) Program. Grant funds are available to help Minnesota livestock and specialty crop producers buy and install supplies or equipment that will help make their production more resilient to extreme weather, including drought, flooding, hail, and severe weather events like storms, tornadoes, and straight-line winds.

Applications will be accepted until 4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Wednesday, February 12, 2025. We expect to notify all applicants about funding decisions no later than March 26, 2025.

Please note that we issue payments on a reimbursement basis and not in advance. All purchases for eligible items must be made after grant contract agreements are signed, which is expected to take place April 2025.

Funding availability

We expect to award approximately \$500,000 in this round using a competitive review process.

Applicants may apply for up to 50% of their project's total cost with a minimum expense of \$1,000 and a maximum expense of \$20,000; grant awards can range in size from \$500 to \$10,000.

An individual or farm may only receive one grant in FY 2025.

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 ten years or less.

How to apply

- Apply for the Prepare 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 "Preparing for Extreme Weather Grant."
 - We will only accept one application per farm.
- Applications are due by **4 p.m. Central Time (CT) on Wednesday, February 12, 2025**.
 - 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 February 10, 2025**.
- Email MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us with "Prepare Grant" in the subject line.

For help using the online application system:

- Call 651-201-6500 or
- Email MDA.agrigrants@state.mn.us and include "Prepare Grant" in the subject line.

Timeline and deadlines

February 10, 2025, at 4 p.m. CT Deadline to ask grant program questions.

February 12, 2025, at 4 p.m. CT Application period closes.

March 26, 2025 All applicants notified of grant status.

April 15, 2025 Anticipated contract start date.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants

Applicants must be a resident of the state of Minnesota or be a business entity authorized to farm in Minnesota. Also, applicants must be the principal operator of a livestock or specialty crop operation in Minnesota that produces and sells at least \$1,000 of agricultural products annually or normally would sell at least \$1,000 of livestock products in a typical year.

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.

Who is a principal operator?

A principal operator is the 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.

What business entities need authorization to farm in Minnesota?

The statute on farming by business organizations ([MINN. STAT. 500.24](#)) requires that all pension or investment funds, corporations, limited partnerships, limited liability companies, and irrevocable trusts must be certified by the MDA before engaging in farming or having an interest in agricultural land.

How do business entities get authorization to farm in Minnesota?

Go to the [Minnesota's Corporate Farm Report](#) webpage for applications and more information.

Collaboration

Eligible applicants may collaborate with other 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.

Eligible operations

These types of operations are eligible for Prepare Grant funds:

- Livestock: aquaculture, bees, beef cattle, dairy cattle, swine, poultry, goats, mules, farmed cervids, ratites (including ostriches and emus), bison, sheep, horses, and llamas.
- Specialty crops: fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, and floriculture. See [USDA's list of Specialty Crops](#).

Eligible projects and expenses

Projects

If we accept your proposal, we will reimburse eligible costs included in your project budget. You will have to submit documentation including invoices and proof of payment.

Projects must:

- Include matching funds from personal or other non-State sources; see the [Matching Funds](#) section.
- Be completed after the grant contract agreement is signed by all parties.
- Be conducted in Minnesota.

Expenses

Eligible items include, but are not limited to purchase and installation of the following:

Livestock operations

- Water tanks and pads
- Pipelines
- Water wagons/trailers
- Wells (new improvements, fixes, replacement pumps)
- Irrigation equipment
- Livestock pond digging or dredging
- Portable pasture fencing supplies
- Fans
- Misters
- Livestock shade systems
- Windbreaks
- Lane improvements

Specialty crop operations

- Water tanks
- Pipelines
- Water wagons/trailers
- Wells (new improvements, fixes, replacement pumps)
- Irrigation equipment (including drip irrigation)
- Hoses
- Soil moisture sensors
- Nozzles
- Rain barrels
- Mulch plastic
- Cover crops
- Worker safety equipment (sun shades, water stations, etc.)
- Hail netting

Ineligible expenses

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

- Expenditures incurred before the grant contract agreement is fully executed or after June 30, 2026
- General purpose equipment (e.g., skid steer loaders, combines, tractors)
- Owner and employee wages and 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 or traffic violations
- Out of state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.

Matching funds

The AGRI Prepare Grant is a reimbursement grant for up to 50% of the project cost. You must supply documentation showing payment for the full cost of the project to receive the awarded reimbursement amount.

Sources of funding for the project 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.

Application Review Policies

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; livestock or specialty crop type; 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.

An example of a conflict of interest would be an equipment vendor writing an application beyond providing budget details, bids, or quotes for a farm when the equipment vendor stands to profit from the grant award.

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

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 laws).

Bidding requirements

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

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.

Publicity

All projects funded must publicly credit the MDA, including on the grantee's website when practical. Examples include, "Funds provided in part by the AGRI Program" or "Funds provided in part by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture."

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

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

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 Prepare Grant encourages specialty crop and livestock producers to proactively buy and install supplies or equipment in order to reduce the production risks posed by extreme weather.

Application Scoring Sheet

Evaluation criterion	Maximum score
Project description <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant clearly describes the project. 	15
Project need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant clearly and compellingly describes the need for the project, including the type(s) of extreme weather the operation has or expects to experience. 	10
Project impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant clearly and compellingly describes how the project will reduce the impact of extreme weather. 	20
Budget narrative and match <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant lists and explains all necessary costs and has a plan for paying for the project. (20 pts) Applicant clearly explains the importance of this grant to completing the project. (5 pts) 	25
Long-term sustainability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project is specific to improving weather resiliency and not considered a general cost of production. (5 pts) Project materials are useable from year to year or the applicant details how they will continue the practice. (5 pts) 	10
Work plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant includes a realistic work plan for their project. 	10
Priority points: Beginning Farmer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer has been the principal operator for 10 years or less. 	10
Total	100
Recommend for funding	Yes/No

Application Questions

We're providing this preview of the application questions for your convenience. You will answer these questions in our online application system. Please log in and review the online application before you begin preparing your answers. Additional instructions for the questions may be provided within the full application. For questions that include a narrative response, be sure to give enough details for reviewers to be able to evaluate your response.

Applicant information

Contact 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 Prepare 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

If you raise livestock, select all livestock types that this project will affect:

- Aquaculture
- Bees
- Beef cattle
- Bison
- Cervids (elk, farmed deer)
- Dairy cattle
- Horses
- Llamas
- Mules
- Poultry
- Ratites (emu, ostrich)
- Sheep/goats
- Swine

Type(s) of specialty crops

If you grow specialty crops, select all specialty crops that this project will affect:

- Fruits and tree nuts
- Vegetables
- Culinary herbs and spices
- Medicinal plants
- Nursery plants
- Floriculture

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)
 - The farm or ranch is in Minnesota and produces and sells at least \$1,000 of livestock products or specialty crops annually or normally would sell at least \$1,000 in a typical year. (True)
 - Is the applicant or farm owner or principal operator 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 April 2025). (Yes)

Previous grants

- Have you or anyone associated with your farm received a previous MDA Grant? (Yes or No)
 - If yes, briefly describe your previous grant project(s), including date(s) and amount(s) awarded. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Project information

Project title

- Farm name, item requested. For example:
 - Petersen Farm, water line
 - Easy 8 Ranch, windbreak

Farm description

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

Project description

- Describe your project– what are you going to do? (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Project need

- Describe the need for the project. Include the type(s) of extreme weather your operation has or expects to experience. (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Project impact

- Describe how the project will reduce the impact of extreme weather and make the farm more resilient? (1,000 characters, including spaces)

Project budget

Total project cost

- (Number only)

Budget table

- Create a budget using the example format below. We will calculate your grant award using this information. The minimum expense is \$1,000; grant awards can range in size from \$500 to \$10,000. This grant will reimburse 50% of the project's total cost up to the maximum.

Item	Quantity	Cost per unit	Total estimate	Source of estimate
Well improvements	1	\$15,000	\$15,000	ABC Well Company
Fence panels	100	\$15	\$1,500	ABC Fleet

Budget narrative

- Justify your budget. (2,000 characters, including spaces)
 - 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.

Long-term sustainability

- Is the project useable from year to year? (Yes or No)
 - If no, describe how you will continue the practice.

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
July 2025	Request bids for well	Self
August 2025	Sign contract with contractor	Self

Beginning farmer

- Has the principal operator been farming for 10 years or less? (Yes/No)
 - Select the year you started farming.