



# MN FARM + FOOD SYSTEM GRANT, COST-SHARE, AND TAX CREDIT PROGRAMS

## LAND ACCESS & EMERGING FARMERS

### Farmland Down Payment Assistance Program

**Application Period:** July 1, 2023 - July 31, 2023

**Agency Contact:** Jenny Heck, 651-201-6316, [jenny.heck@state.mn.us](mailto:jenny.heck@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/down-payment-assistance-grant>

This grant program offers up to \$15,000 to qualified farmers purchasing their first farm. Funds may be used for the purchase of farmland or other agricultural real estate within the state of Minnesota. To qualify, you must close on the purchase after your application is approved and within six months or by June 30, 2024, whichever is sooner. The RFA will award these grants using a random lottery process, with preference given to emerging farmers. If you are not an emerging farmer, you may still apply.

### Beginning Farmer Tax Credit

**Application Period:** January 1 to July 17 of each year for cash and share crop rentals. January 1 to November 1 of each year for land and other sales. January 1 to November 1 of each year for Beginning Farmer Farm Business Management Tuition Reimbursement.

**Agency Contact:** Jenny Heck, 651-201-6316, [jenny.heck@state.mn.us](mailto:jenny.heck@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/bftc>

The Minnesota Beginning Farmer Tax Credit provides annual state tax credits to landlords and sellers (asset owners) who rent or sell farmland, equipment, livestock, and other agricultural assets to beginning farmers. Applicants are highly encouraged to apply early in the year and may apply before sales close if needed. To qualify, the beginning farmer must be enrolled in or have completed an approved farm business management program within ten years of their first year of farming. LSP's Farm Beginnings class is an approved farm business management program. Beginning farmers are also eligible for a nonrefundable Minnesota tax credit equal to their farm business management program tuition, up to \$1,500. This tax credit is available for up to three years.

### Emerging Farmer Technical Assistance Grant

**Application Period:** To be determined.

**Agency Contact:** Jenny Heck, 651-201-6316, [jenny.heck@state.mn.us](mailto:jenny.heck@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/emerging-farmer-technical-assistance-grant>

Organizations can apply to the Emerging Farmer Technical Assistance Grant to provide technical and culturally appropriate services to Minnesota emerging farmers. The most recent application period closed on June 26, 2023, but more funds were appropriated in the 2023 Minnesota legislative session.



# LOCAL MEAT PROCESSING

## **AGRI Meat, Poultry, Egg, & Dairy Processing Grant**

**Application Period:** To be determined.

**Agency Contact:** Courtney VanderMey, 651-201-6335, courtney.vandermay@state.mn.us

**Webpage:** <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/agri-mpem-processing>.

This program offers designated grants to facilitate the start-up, modernization, or expansion of meat, poultry, egg, and milk processing businesses. The intent of the program is to increase sales of Minnesota-raised livestock products by investing in equipment and physical improvements that support processing, capacity, market diversification, and market access. Individuals, farmers, businesses, agricultural cooperatives, non-profits, educational institutions, local governments, and Tribal Governments are eligible to apply. The MDA will prioritize projects that create additional meat/poultry slaughter capacity in addition to projects that increase access to Kosher/Halal markets.

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## **Meat Processing Training & Retention Incentive Grants**

**Application Period:** To be determined.

**Agency Contact:** Courtney VanderMey, 651-201-6335, courtney.vandermay@state.mn.us

**Webpage:** To be developed.

This program, established in the 2023 Minnesota legislative session, will offer grants to "partner organizations" to assist small- to medium-sized meat and poultry processors (150 FTE or fewer) with hiring and training new employees. New employees at eligible meat and poultry processing plants may receive up to \$10,000 in the form of tuition reimbursement for programs at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, sign-on bonuses, relocation assistance, retention incentives, child care stipends, and other related expenses. Up to 20% of a grant to a partner organization may be used for direct services to employees, including but not limited to translation services. Priority will be given to applicants who are working in partnership with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

*In addition, as part of the Safe Workplaces for Meat & Poultry Processing Workers Act, small- and mid-sized meat and poultry processors may be eligible for funding to become compliant with new worker protections through the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. Stay tuned for more information.*

# LOCAL FOODS

## **Farm to School Grant Program**

**Application Period:** Applications for fiscal year 2024 are expected to open in August 2023.

**Agency Contact:** Kate Seybold, 651-201-6165, kate.seybold@state.mn.us

**Webpage:** <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/farm-school-grants>

This program reimburses schools and early childcare education centers for purchases for Minnesota-grown and raised food used in meal programs. There are two grant options for applicants: 1. "First Bite Mini-Grants" for those with little or no experience with local procurement, and 2. "Full Tray Grants" for applicants with some experience with local procurement. Applicants may also apply for equipment grants to make it more possible to serve locally sourced products. There is \$1 million per year available for this grant program, Schools and early childcare education centers apply for these grants, but farmers and community members are encouraged to reach out to their school district or and childcare education centers to encourage them to apply.

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## **SNAP & EBT Infrastructure at Farmers' Markets**

**Application Period:** To be determined.

**Agency Contact:** Ashley Bress, 651-201-6648, ashley.bress@state.mn.us

**Webpage:** To be developed.

A new appropriation from the 2023 Minnesota legislative session, \$100,000 per year will become available for grants to farmers' markets for infrastructure to support EBT, SNAP, Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP), and related programs.

## Good Food Access Grant Program

**Application Period:** Applications are expected to open fall of 2023.

**Agency Contact:** Ashley Bress, 651-201-6648, [ashley.bress@state.mn.us](mailto:ashley.bress@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/gfapequipmentgrant>

The Good Food Access Program (GFAP) Equipment and Physical Improvement Grant increases the availability of and access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate foods (including fruits and vegetables) for underserved communities in low- and moderate-income areas. Grants help grocery stores and small food retailers make physical improvements and purchase equipment to stimulate sales of such foods. For-profit and non-profit grocery stores are encouraged to apply as well as, small food retailers such as corner stores, farmers' markets, mobile food markets, or retail food outlets operated by an emergency food program.

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## Urban Agriculture Grant Program

**Application Period:** Applications are expected to open fall of 2023.

**Agency Contact:** Emily Mehr, 651-201-6465, [emily.mehr@state.mn.us](mailto:emily.mehr@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/urbanaggrant>

The AGRI Urban Agriculture Grant Program encourages urban youth agricultural education and urban agriculture community development within the city limits of urban or peri-urban areas. "Urban" means cities with populations of 5,000+ or communities located within the boundaries of federally recognized tribal land serving tribal community members, regardless of population size. For-profit businesses, non-profit organizations, schools, local government entities, and tribal communities are encouraged to apply. Grants help organizations and communities obtain the materials and services necessary to successfully promote urban youth agricultural education and urban agriculture community development.

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## The Good Acre's Local Emergency Assistance Farmer Fund (LEAFF) Program

**Application Period:** The next application period is expected to be in Spring 2024.

**Good Acre Contact:** Nikki Warner, 612-787-5969, [nikki@thegoodacre.org](mailto:nikki@thegoodacre.org)

**Webpage:** <https://thegoodacre.org/leaff/>

The LEAFF Program purchases fresh and culturally relevant produce from small-scale emerging farmers within 200 miles of the Twin Cities looking to expand into wholesale markets. LEAFF is not a grant, but a guarantee to buy a specific dollar amount of produce from each accepted farm during the farm season, dependent on funding. The Good Acre then redistributes purchased produce by donating to food shelves and other hunger relief organizations striving to offer fresh and culturally relevant produce to their communities. Efforts focus on areas where healthy foods have been inaccessible and neighborhoods with a higher density of Black and Indigenous residents and residents of color. This growing season, The Good Acre was able to approve 78 farms with a guarantee of purchasing \$5,000 of produce per farm.

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## Agricultural Cooperative Grants

**Application Period:** To be determined.

**Agency Contact:** Ashley Bress, 651-201-6648, [ashley.bress@state.mn.us](mailto:ashley.bress@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** In development.

This program, established in the 2023 Minnesota legislative session, will offer grants to help farmers finance new cooperatives that operate an agricultural product processing facility, market an agricultural product, or provide an agricultural service. This program is still in development and received \$200,000 per year in the 2023 session to award grants to farmers.





# SOIL HEALTH & CLIMATE

## **Soil Health Financial Assistance Program**

**Application Period:** July 31- September 15th 2023

**Agency Contact:** Jessica Jurcek, 651-802-3059, [jessica.jurcek@state.mn.us](mailto:jessica.jurcek@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/soil-health-grant>

The Soil Health Financial Assistance Grant started as pilot grant program and won permanent funding in the 2023 Minnesota legislative session. Funding may be used for projects that increase soil carbon, integrate perennial vegetation, reduce nitrous oxide and methane emissions, or enable the purchase of or retrofitting of soil health equipment (i.e. a no-till drill). Owners and lessees of farmland in Minnesota can apply. Local government units, including cities; towns; counties; soil and water conservation districts; Minnesota Tribal governments; and joint powers boards, are also eligible for a grant. A local government unit that receives a grant for equipment or technology must make those purchases available for use by the public.

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## **Agriculture Water Quality Certification Program**

**Application Period:** On going basis.

**Agency Contact:** Brad Jorddahl Redlin, 6651-201-6489, [brad.jordahlredlin@state.mn.us](mailto:brad.jordahlredlin@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** [www.mda.state.mn.us/environment-sustainability/minnesota-agricultural-water-quality-certification-program](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/environment-sustainability/minnesota-agricultural-water-quality-certification-program)

The Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) certifies farmers for managing the land within their operation in a way that protects water quality. Area Certification Specialists assist farmers through the certification process. You can get started by contacting your local Soil and Water Conservation District, your Area Certification Specialist, or the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. The MAWQCP has five endorsements available to water quality certified producers: Climate Smart Farm, Soil Health, Integrated Pest Management, Wildlife, and Irrigation Water Management. Certified producers receive (a) regulatory certainty: certified producers are deemed to be in compliance with any new water quality rules or laws during the period of certification; (b) recognition: certified producers may use their status to promote their business as protective of water quality; and (c) priority for technical assistance: producers seeking certification can obtain specially designated technical and financial assistance to implement practices that promote water quality.

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## **BWSR Soil Health Cost-Sharing**

**Application Period:** Dependent on program, some are still in development.

**Agency Contact:** Tom Gile, 507-696-1974, [tom.gile@state.mn.us](mailto:tom.gile@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/agricultural-lands>

There are a myriad of opportunities through the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) to build soil health and climate resiliency, as well as advance water quality. Farmers can access these programs through their local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), though some programs are still in development as they were newly established during the 2023 Minnesota legislative session.



# SOIL HEALTH & CLIMATE

## Continuous Living Cover Supply Chain Development Grant Program

**Application Period:** To be determined.

**Agency Contact:** Margaret Wagner, 651-201-6488, [margaret.wagner@state.mn.us](mailto:margaret.wagner@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/developing-markets-clc-crops>

This program provides grants to organizations in Minnesota to develop enterprises, supply chains, and markets for continuous living cover (CLC) crops and cropping systems in the early stage of commercial development. This includes but is not limited to regenerative poultry silvopasture systems, Kernza® perennial grain, winter camelina, and elderberry. The goal is to provide grants to CLC crops and cropping systems value chain enterprises for equipment infrastructure and business and market development. For example, this could include customized equipment to harvest the crop, clean and store seeds, and process crops for food products. The intended outcome is supply chain and market development that can increase CLC crops and cropping systems on agricultural lands in Minnesota.

# FAIR FARM ECONOMY

## Dairy Assistance, Investment, and Relief Initiative (DAIRI)

**Application Period:** To be determined.

**Agency Contact:** Courtney VanderMey, 651-201-6335, [courtney.vandermay@state.mn.us](mailto:courtney.vandermay@state.mn.us)

**Webpage:** To be developed.

\$4 million will become available for Dairy Assistance, Investment, Relief Initiative (DAIRI) grants and other forms of financial assistance to Minnesota dairy farms that enroll in coverage under a federal dairy risk protection program and produced no more than 16,000,000 pounds of milk in 2022. The commissioner will make DAIRI payments based on the amount of milk produced in 2022, up to 5,000,000 pounds per participating farm, at a rate determined by the commissioner within the limits of available funding.



## ABOUT LAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

*Keeping the land and people together since 1982.*

**MISSION:** To build a just and sustainable farm and food systems and healthy communities.

**MEMBERSHIP:** 4,500 households in the Upper Midwest, primarily in Minnesota. Approximately 1/3 of households are small- and mid-sized farms, 1/3 are residents of rural communities, and 1/3 are residents of population centers in both Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities.

### **PRIMARY LSP STAFF CONTACTS:**


Amanda Koehler, Policy Manager, [akoehler@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:akoehler@landstewardshipproject.org), 612-400-6355

Laura Schreiber, Policy Organizer, [lschreiber@landstewardshipproject.org](mailto:lschreiber@landstewardshipproject.org), 612-207-4693


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 LSP's Ear to the Ground