

ULSTER COUNTY FARM VIABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY GRANT

FAQ

Q. How are you defining farm size?

A. For the purposes of this grant, a Small Farm is defined as a farm business whose net annual income is less than \$350,000, and a Mid-Size Farm is defined as a farm business whose net annual income is less than \$1,000,000.

Q. Are applications required to address each Ulster County Priority?

A. Projects **MUST** demonstrate Increased Farm Viability and either Energy Efficiency or Climate Resiliency. Projects may address all three county priorities.

Q. What are the maximum and minimum grants?

A. Grants range from \$25,000 to \$75,000. Maximum award is \$75,000 per grant. Applicants may not request more than this amount per project. Minimum award is \$25,000 per grant. Applicants must request at least this much per project.

Q. Is there a Match requirement?

A. There will be NO Match Requirement. Business entities may only submit one application.

Q. Do I have to have all of the insurance requirements in place when I submit my application?

A. All insurance requirements and certificates of good standing are due at the time of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), not for submission of the grant.

Q. How are you defining the County's priorities?

A. Farm Viability (e.g. increased sales, access to new market opportunities); Energy Efficiency (e.g. energy efficient equipment, energy upgrades in farm buildings, farmworker housing); Climate Resiliency (e.g. improvements to soil health, erosion prevention; water saving/reuse)

Q. Is there a requirement in the grant to purchase new vs. used equipment? Or a preference used in scoring for new vs. used equipment?

A. There is no requirement for new vs. used equipment in this grant - that is up to each applicant to decide. However, this is a grant based on modernization, with points awarded for efficiency. Because of this, there may be benefits to selecting newer equipment that is more energy efficient / modern.

Q. Is there someone who can help me with the online platform?

A. For troubleshooting please reach out to us at ucfarmviability@hvadc.org.

Q. How specific should my budget request be? Do I need to include actual quotes in the application?

A. Your budget should be very precise and you should submit as much supporting documentation as possible. A current quote for each piece of specialized equipment (and associated installation costs) is required. In addition, Scoring Indicator 5 is based on your budget and budget narrative / justification being realistic and sufficient to accomplish the work proposed, clear and concise, in alignment with each other, and demonstrating a well thought out project.

Questions Fielded During the 4/2/25 Virtual Open Office Hours Session

Q. How is the grant funding structured, i.e. is it reimbursement?

A. Grant Funds will be distributed as reimbursements on a quarterly basis and shall only be distributed once the equipment is received, paid for in full, and operational, or after an approved service is finalized. (Appropriate documentation must describe the use of funding through an invoice and proof of payment (such as a canceled check, credit card statement, wire confirmation, etc. that reconcile).

Q. Can you share a bit about the application process?

A. Visit <https://ffgf.smapply.us/res/p/Home-Page> to apply. **NO paper applications will be accepted.**

- To create an account; view this video for guidance <https://www.loom.com/share/099cf06b91a148e48cddd2312181429d?sid=8e8099d4-1095-45e1-91e9-f7e1610bffce>

- For a step by step on how to apply view this video for guidance [Step-by-Step Video: How to Complete the Application](#)
- Read pages 12 and 13 of the **RFP**

Q. How many letters of support are required (I know 3 is maximum), and who should they come from? (e.g., Town Supervisor, County / Congress, Bank/Funders?)

A. Letters of Support should demonstrate project feasibility and capacity and validate the benefits of the project being funded.

Q. Are there other recommended supporting documents that would strengthen the application?

A. We recommend applicants to include anything that strengthens their proposal to demonstrate shovel/project readiness, and clear and well thought out budgets.

Q. What Technical Assistance (TA) are you prioritizing for readiness here?

A. Each project will be different but TA that is related to the delivery of the project's priorities as it relates to farm viability or to energy efficiency or climate related activities.

Q. Is it possible to apply for multiple projects?

A. A farm business may submit only one grant application. Within the proposal there may be several distinct projects seeking funding, particularly as each applicant must address **BOTH** Farm Viability and either Energy Efficiency or Climate Resiliency.

Q. Can a few farmers apply together for a joint purchase?

A. Yes, however there must be a single farm applicant and a single point of contact for grant administration.

Q. Does this grant involve any federal money? As we all know, federal funds these days can be a little less reliable than in the past!

A. Ulster County is in full control of the funding.

Q. Would it cover fencing to cover deer pressure on our rice crop?

A. Deer cover is an eligible expense. Applicants must describe why the purchase/implementation of an eligible expense furthers the County's priorities.

Q. How will this program's funds stack with existing federal and state grant programs, for example Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and the NY climate resilient farming program? Will farmers have the opportunity to apply to all these types of grants simultaneously?

A. So long as an applicant is not applying to multiple grants for the same expenses these are all complimentary programs. Additionally, the timing of other projects' funds and deliverables shall have no bearing on the completion of the Farm Viability and Sustainability Program project.

Q. I understand the terms 'efficiency' and 'resiliency' but how do you define "viability" - is that profitability?

A. Please refer to the [RFP](#) or a question answered above. Farm Viability could be increased market access, more efficient production systems, etc...

Q. Do we have to wait until we were awarded the grant to begin the project? or if the work was in progress and we were awarded the grant, would it still qualify?

A. YES! No expense incurred prior to the signing of a MOU with HVADC will be reimbursed.

Q. Given that HVADC is administering the grant, may an applicant use HVADC to provide grant writing assistance?

A. HVADC staff and representatives will be available to answer general questions throughout the open RFP period but cannot provide specific grant writing assistance.

Q. The RFP asks for "current" quotes for equipment. How current should it be?

A. The quote should be as recent as possible, particularly considering the current pricing climate. In addition, more recent quotes MAY communicate project readiness to some reviewers.

Q. If a project won't necessarily lead to immediate financial returns but will protect a farm business from potential future losses from climate change (severe weather) would it be eligible?

A. This is in essence an eligible project but the applicant will have to demonstrate why and how this project addresses both Farm Viability and either Energy Efficiency or Climate Resiliency.

Q. Is there a character or page limit for the application or specific response sections (some have clear limits i.e. 150 words or less but others do not say)?

A. The sections that have word limits will have instructions. In other areas you are encouraged to provide a clear and thorough response providing as much detail as possible, with backup documentation where appropriate.

Q. Given that there's no match requirement, if we would like to purchase 3 pieces of interrelated equipment which together cost more than the maximum award. Would it be better to apply for just 2 pieces to remain under the maximum or include all three to show our farm's commitment to the overall result.

A. The key to this answer is that the application should demonstrate the capacity and likeliness of the project being completed as well as addressing the County's priorities.

Q. Is there any latitude for increasing prices? If you've submitted a request premised on a certain price level that increases, would the grant be able to help out?

A. Applicants will not be able to access more funding than is requested, which is why it is important for quotes to be based on the most recent prices.

Q. I don't preliminarily see packhouse operations listed, are packhouse process improvements covered under this?

A. Packhouses are an eligible expense. Applicants must describe why the purchase/implementation of an eligible expense furthers the County's priorities.

Q. Is the grant open to non-profits or schools

A. Yes, however the school or nonprofit must meet the "farm" requirements of the RFP.

Q. If under \$5k, we don't need a quote but how do you recommend we best estimate line items?

A. You will need to describe reasonable justifications for all expenses. We recommend that you use real quotes where available.

Q. What level of detail is expected for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and impact assessment? Some are hard to measure. Can we include employee-focused metrics like job satisfaction, transportation efficiency, and workplace conditions?

A. The **KEY** is to demonstrate clearly and sufficiently, and to quantify, how your project achieves Farm Viability and either Energy Efficiency or Climate resiliency. This grant program will be over-subscribed and applicants must be able to differentiate their project and hits upon Ulster County's priorities.

Q. Are there opportunities to submit a draft for review or receive feedback before submitting the final application?

A. There are not.

Q. Any common mistakes or pitfalls in applications that we should avoid?

A. Our recommendation is for applicants to familiarize themselves with the **RFP** and to make sure they are addressing the county priorities and answering the questions with sufficient detail and clarity.

Q. Do you advise against telling a contractor ahead of time that this is for a grant? Is it a common trend that contractors inflate fees if they know it's grant-funded?

A. That will be determined by the relationship with the contractor and your project timing, but generally, we do not make that recommendation.