

NOTICES

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Grant Applications

The Department of Agriculture (Department) is soliciting applications to conduct agricultural research on one or more of the following research topic areas, with the research to be conducted from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2026, with the possibility, but not the assurance, of extending that research into subsequent years. All funding is contingent upon 2024-2025 budget appropriations. This notice establishes the procedures by which grant applications will be solicited and reviewed, and by which grants will be awarded.

1. *Grant Solicitation.* The Department will accept grant applications for the purposes, in the form and according to the schedule set forth as follows. Following publication, additional publication and dissemination of this notice shall be made to applicants who have previously submitted grant applications to or received grants from the Department, as well as any individuals or entities who have requested notification from the Department of grant availability.

2. *Research Topic Areas.* Though not exclusive of original research topics, the Department is particularly interested in funding projects in the following areas:

a. *Ongoing multiyear research projects.* The Department has, in previous years, provided funding for various multiyear research projects that might be continued or extended to complete research the Department identifies as addressing continued priorities of the agricultural industry, such as:

- Examining the economic impact of pest infestations like Phorid Flies and Spotted Lanternflies and identifying mitigating measures.
- Measuring the impacts on the Chesapeake Bay on farm management practices that have not received Federal or State Government cost-sharing assistance.
- Implementing Chapter 5 of the Pennsylvania Pollinator Protection Plan (see <https://ento.psu.edu/pollinators/pollin-spotlight-items/the-pennsylvania-pollinator-protection-plan-p4>).

b. *Agriculture.* The Department requests applications for projects that:

- Gather and analyze food action plans.
- Study the impact of the Double Up Food Bucks program.
- Analyze of the Senior Food Nutrition Program and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program.
- Study of the surplus food recovery.
- Validate consumer affairs reporting on PA food prices.
- Analyze of the TEFAP program.
- Analyze/survey PA workforce.
- Study economic impact.
- Survey carbon community planners.
- Analyze Urban Agriculture capacity index.

- Incentivizing urban agriculture land stewardship.
- Identify current and potential funders for urban agriculture.
- Identify soil testing and remediation strategies for urban agriculture, particularly how these strategies can be operationalized, their benefits measured and the cost of implementation.
- Assess the quantity and quality of available on-farm and off-farm housing for agricultural workers, including farm owners.
- Study barriers to land access, particularly for BIPOC farmers and in rural communities.

c. *Energy in agriculture.* The Department is interested in further scientific study in areas such that:

- Analyze and map energy generation from agricultural products, plastic products and waste products.
- Analyze options to reduce greenhouse gases emitted by normal agricultural operations.
- Identify challenges and opportunities with Agrivoltaics such as gaps, barriers, implementation of panels modified to support Pennsylvania agriculture.

d. *Life Science.* The Department seeks applications that address animal health concerns, such as:

- Wildlife crop damage.
- Impacts to states on changing Medicare rules to allow more fresh foods to consumer health.
- One Health—Proposals that promote humans, the environment, animals, living together harmoniously.
- Animal Health—Proposals that improve or seek to understand aspects of animal health important to agriculture in this Commonwealth.
- Diagnosis of Animal Diseases—Proposals that promote the diagnosis of animal diseases that are important to Commonwealth animal agriculture.
- Animal Productivity—Proposals that seek to improve the productivity of agricultural animals in this Commonwealth.
- Animal Welfare—Proposals that seek to improve the welfare of agricultural animals in this Commonwealth.
- Review and recommend Federal Milk Marketing Order recommendations that would be most beneficial to PA dairy industry.
- Review and recommend alternatives to the current PA Milk Board Over-Order Premium that would be most advantageous to the PA dairy industry.
- Chronic Wasting Disease strategy development to reduce incidents and (or) live animal test development.

e. *Manufacturing.* The Department requests applications for projects that address:

- Food production residual waste.
- Assess incentives needed to increase organic processing.
- Biodegradable packaging and other environmental factors in selecting food and beverage products.
- Pharmaceutical or industrial uses for milk proteins or other milk components.
- Assess conversion of spent mushroom substrate to bio-char on energy and biomass uses and soil amendment uses.

f. *Robotic Technology.*

- Research what technology farmers use now and what technology they may use in five years.
- Assess the application and deployment of Augmented Reality on Pennsylvania animal and plant industries.

3. *Application Delivery and Deadline.* Interested applicants must submit a complete electronic research project proposal and grant application using the Department of Community and Economic Development's Electronic Single Application web site at <https://www.esa.dced.state.pa.us/Login.aspx> by Friday, June 7, 2024 at 5:00 p.m. Questions regarding this online application process may be directed to Morgan Sheffield, Grants Coordinator for the Department of Agriculture, at (717) 787-3568.

4. *Scoring of Applications.* The Department will evaluate each complete and timely-filed project proposal and grant application it receives, using a 100-point scale assessing:

- Up to 15 points for the research project needs statement.
- Up to 15 points for the impact of research outcomes, including enhancement of diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Up to 30 points for the research methodology.
- Up to 10 points for project evaluation and replicability.
- Up to 20 points for support and participation from the industry.
- Up to 10 points for diversity of the research team.

5. *Scores.* Upon completion of evaluations, the Department will prepare a record identifying each complete and timely-filed project proposal and grant application received and the numerical score assigned to each. The Department will award grants based upon its evaluation and scoring.

6. *Multiyear Projects or Extensions.* The Department may award grant funding for multiyear projects or provide an extension of time to complete an ongoing project, if the Department identifies that a multiyear term or an extension advances the Department's objectives and the grant's likelihood of achieving its stated goals. Requests for extensions of ongoing projects shall be made, evaluated and processed in accordance with all the requirements of this notice.

7. *Notice of Award.* Applicants shall be notified by mail of the decision on their grant applications by the Department. Best efforts will be made to do so within 60 days of the application deadline.

8. *Grant Agreement.* After the Secretary approves a grant application, and as a precondition to the Department's release of grant moneys to a successful applicant, the Department and the applicant will execute a written or electronic grant agreement which describes the terms and conditions subject to which the grant is made. The grant agreement will contain and conform to the requirements of this notice and will also contain special terms and conditions as required by the Secretary. Among the terms of the grant agreement will be a requirement that the grant recipient provide the Department full and complete access to all records relating to the performance of the project and submit the information as the Department may require. Applicants who wish to view the full terms and conditions of the grant agreement in advance of

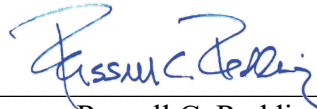
submitting an application may contact the Department at the address set forth in Section 3. Applicants who are unable to agree to the terms and conditions should not apply.

9. *Nonmatching Cost-Reimbursable Grant.* Grants made hereunder do not require the applicant secure or devote a matching sum to the project, but outside funding may be considered as an evaluation criterion under section 4 of this solicitation. Payment of grant funds will occur on a reimbursement basis, with the possibility upon the written submission of justification and subsequent approval of the Department of an advance payment option.

10. *Allowable Indirect Cost Reimbursement.* Grants made hereunder are subject to an indirect cost cap of 15% of total direct project costs. For the purpose of this research grant funding solicitation, indirect costs shall include administrative salaries and benefits, office supplies and equipment, facility related cost including maintenance and repairs, telephones, memberships/dues, freight/postage cost and any consultant related costs associated with the administration of this research grant.

11. *Reporting Requirements.* Upon completion of research projects funded through this program, grant recipients will submit to the Department within 60 days a final report detailing the nature of the questions under study, an explanation of the research design and methods, findings of the research and recommendations for future study.

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Russell C. Redding, Secretary