

Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development Value-Added/Regional Food Systems Grant Program

(Updated 4/12/16)

Program Guidelines

The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) is offering a grant opportunity to promote the expansion of value-added agriculture production, processing, and access within the state in order to enhance Michigan's food and agriculture industry.

MDARD will accept proposals intended to establish, retain, expand, attract and/or develop value-added agricultural processing in Michigan, and/or that expand or develop regional food systems or access to healthy food.

- Funding will be focused on the following types of projects:
 - Value-added food processing
 - Innovation and equipment
 - Technical assistance/feasibility studies that lead to jobs and investment
 - Outreach and training
 - Food hub development
 - Food access, including access to fresh/nutritional foods
- Grants will be awarded a maximum amount of \$249,000. Please submit applications in whole dollar amounts and round to the nearest \$100.
- Applicants must provide a minimum **25% match**, with \$1 of match for every \$4 of grant funding as a match for the project. The match is 25% of the grant amount you are requesting. For example, if you are requesting a \$100,000 grant, you must provide a match amount of at least \$25,000. If you are requesting a \$50,000 grant, you must provide a match amount of at least \$12,500. Cash match is required, and in-kind contributions will not be counted as part of the required match. Salaries may be included as cash match if the applicant can demonstrate that the time and salaries included were directly spent to support the project seeking grant funding. Travel costs must be covered through the match funds.
- Only one proposal per applicant will be considered. Your organization may be a partner on more than one application.
- Applicants must use the provided application form, and all sections must be complete in order to be considered for review and funding.
- Applications must be submitted via email to mda-grants@michigan.gov by **3:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 26, 2016.**

Grant funds **cannot** be used to pay for:

- Land acquisition
- Purchase of a building or facility
- Structural repair of building or facility

Indirect costs are **not** allowed under this grant program. Indirect costs are defined as the expenses of doing business that are not readily identified within the project, but are necessary for the general operation of the organization and the implementation proposal related activities.

Eligible Entities

- **Agricultural Cooperative:** A group-owned or member-owned entity or business that provides, offers, or sells agricultural products or services for the mutual benefit of the members thereof.
- **Nonprofit Corporation:** Any organization or institution as defined by Michigan Public Act 162 of 1982.
- **Business Entities:** An organization as defined by Michigan Public Act 23 of 1993, who is in good standing with the state of Michigan and whose primary function involves the production, processing, or marketing of Michigan-grown agricultural products.
- **Economic Development Organizations:** An organization whose mission is the improvement, maintenance, development, and/or marketing or promotion of a specific geographic area.

Proposal Review

Projects will be scored on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to:

- A well-defined and focused project
- Overall impact of the project on the food and agriculture industry in the state of Michigan
- Measurable outcomes
- Capacity building/grower connection/increase in supply of locally available products
- Amount of product sourced and produced in Michigan
- The amount of match provided
- The long-term sustainability of the project
- The near-term and long-term impact, including jobs and investment in Michigan

This grant is a **cost reimbursement** program. Grantees will be eligible for reimbursement up to three (3) times during the 18-month grant cycle with the final reimbursement provided at the completion of the project. Each grantee will be required to submit written reports and appropriate financial documentation to MDARD for payment. Grantees may also be required to report on the outcomes and impact of their grant for a period of time (up to three years) after the grant period ends. All applicants must be registered as a vendor in the Contracts and Payments system with the State of Michigan prior to submitting an application. Registration can be completed here:

www.cpexpress.state.mi.us

MDARD will convene an evaluation committee comprised of individuals with an interest in, and knowledge about, Michigan agriculture, food systems, and value-added agriculture. The committee will score proposals, and recommendations will be made to the Director of MDARD, who will make the final determination on awards. All applicants will be notified at the end of the review period and when final decisions are made. As part of this process, MDARD may ask for additional information or clarification of a proposal and may award funding at a lesser amount than requested in a grant application.

All communications and inquiries concerning this RFP should be sent via e-mail to: mda-grants@michigan.gov.

MDARD reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject an application if it:

- ✓ Does not meet the program requirements including scope, eligibility, and allowable grant dollar use
- ✓ Is received after the deadline
- ✓ Is incomplete or missing any of the required forms, narrative, and budget
- ✓ Does not follow the outlined application requirements