Farm to Family Program
Regenerative Value Chains Grant Guidelines

Updated: April 3, 2026

Application Deadline: May 1, 2026, at 5pm

Submit Applications via the MiAgGrants Online Grant Management System

Purpose

The aim of this grant program is to expand market opportunities for farmers that use regenerative practices by funding the purchase of on-farm point-of-sale equipment, marketing materials, light processing equipment, and wash/pack infrastructure. Examples of eligible expenses include meat freezers for livestock producers that use rotational grazing or marketing services to highlight regenerative practices on product packaging. Applicants for this funding opportunity must be farmers in Michigan who can describe how they apply regenerative principles to their operation.

Definitions:

- **Regenerative Practices:** Regenerative agriculture is an active approach to land management driven by improving soil health. Principles of regenerative agriculture include:
    - Understand the context of your farm operation
    - Maximize biodiversity
    - Integrate livestock and increase biodiversity
    - Keep soil covered
    - Maintain living roots year-round
    - Minimize soil disturbance

  There are many practices that align with the principles of regenerative agriculture. These may include, but are not limited to, cover cropping, nutrient management, irrigation management, tillage reduction, composting, managed grazing, integration of perennials, intercropping, and extended crop rotation. For

the purposes of this grant, producers are not required to have third-party certification of their regenerative practices.

- **Food Value Chains:** The USDA Agricultural Marketing Service describes food value chains as a business strategy to "transform the traditional competitive seller/buyer relationships to a collaborative approach." Value chains are trusting alliances among supply chain partners that recognize that creating maximum value for their products depends on interdependence, collaboration, and mutual support.
- **Direct Marketing:** According to United States Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (USDA ERS), direct marketing occurs when a food producer sells food directly to consumers, a retail market, an institution, or an intermediate market (such as a food hub).
- **Market Channel:** The pathway that a product takes to reach the consumer. Examples include farmers markets, farm stands, CSAs, food hubs, restaurants, institutions, grocery stores, and processors.

Background:

The Farm to Family Program focuses on strengthening market opportunities for regenerative farming and for farmers that grow nutritious specialty and staple crops. These small and mid-sized producers supply a rapidly growing market for local foods, but the local and regional food infrastructure has not kept pace with growth in demand. Direct marketing is a key component of the solution to this problem. According to USDA ERS, producers with more direct marketing experience had a higher percentage of earning positive net farm sales. An ERS study also found that beginning farmers with direct-to-consumer sales are more likely to continue farming than beginning farmers who market through traditional channels.

The aim of this grant program is to expand market opportunities for farmers that use regenerative practices by funding the purchase of on-farm point-of-sale equipment, marketing materials, light processing equipment, and wash/pack infrastructure.

Eligibility Requirements:

Applicants for this grant program must be farmers in Michigan who can describe how they apply regenerative principles to their operation.

For the purposes of this grant program, MDARD retains the right to make the final decision about whether or not an entity qualifies as a farmer that uses regenerative practices.

Eligible Projects:

Required:

- The project proposal defines how regenerative principles are practiced by any producers involved in the project.
- The project proposal demonstrates how equipment included in the budget will help to develop market channels for foods produced using regenerative practices.
- The project proposal demonstrates how the following goals will be met, and it describes targets for each.
    - Increase the volume of Michigan regenerative agriculture products sold between Fall 2026 and Fall 2027.
    - Increase the dollar value of Michigan regenerative agriculture products sold between Fall 2026 and Fall 2027.
    - Increase the revenue to Michigan farmers per dollar in sales of Michigan regenerative agriculture products between Fall 2026 and Fall 2027.
    - Increase the number or types of consumers with access to Michigan regenerative agriculture products between Fall 2026 and Fall 2027.
- Equipment purchased with grant funds will be installed on a farm property where regenerative principles are practiced or in a shared space where it can be used by multiple regenerative producers.
- The outcomes of the grant are planned to be achieved within one year.
- Grant proposals must include itemized costs for all budget items listed in the proposal. Equipment and infrastructure costs should be based on documented quotes and/or market research.
    - Food and produce facilities are encouraged to use MDARD's Used Equipment Guidance for Michigan's Food and Agriculture Industry, if applicable.

Preferred:

- The project is innovative in its approach and desired outcomes or the project expands on successful, evidence-based approaches.

- The proposal describes how the project will serve a geographic area that has limited access to local food value chains. Limited access can occur in rural, urban, and suburban areas and is for the applicant to demonstrate with data and examples.
- The project creates revenue that will support diversification on the farm.
- Applicant has completed a soil health assessment with a CTAP technician.
- The project helps to promote regenerative practices to consumers through marketing or education.
- Applicant does not have another active MDARD grant. An active grant is an award that has not reached the end of the grant period listed on your grant agreement with MDARD.

Eligible and Ineligible Costs

- Up to 10% Administrative Cost is allowed. Administrative costs are the grantee's direct costs for the overall management of the grant.
- Salaries, wages, staff benefits, and travel costs are not eligible costs under this grant.
- Equipment used primarily for planting, growing or harvesting crops is not an eligible cost under this grant.
- Refrigerated vehicles are not eligible costs under this grant.
- Eligible costs include, but are not limited to:
    - Refrigeration units and cold storage infrastructure
    - Color sorters, size sorters, conveyer systems, and associated infrastructure
    - Grain cleaning, dehulling, drying, and milling equipment
    - Drainage infrastructure
    - Washing equipment – spray tables, wash basins, barrel washers, spinners, etc.
    - Packing equipment – bagging and boxing systems, labeling systems, reusable bins, cardboard boxes, flats, shipper cartons, plastic clamshells, crispers, soaker pads, insert trays, liners, wire crates
    - Point-of-sale software and equipment
    - Marketing services such as website and/or brand development
    - Nutrition lab testing fees
    - Food safety audits and third-party certifications
    - Display cases and shelving

    - Equipment used for moving products such as pallet jacks, carts, trolleys, and forklifts
    - Sanitizers and cleaning agents for food contact surfaces
- For the purposes of this grant program, MDARD retains the right to make the final decision about whether or not equipment is eligible.

Timeline:

- **Application Available:** March 31, 2026
- **Application Due:** May 1, 2026, at 5pm
- **MDARD Review of Applications:** May-June 2026
- **Grant Award Announcement:** July 2026

Application Process:

- Applications for the Regenerative Value Chains Grant are due **May 1, 2026, at 5pm**.
- Only one application per applicant will be considered.
- Grants will be awarded a maximum amount of **$50,000**. Please submit applications in whole dollar amounts and round to the nearest $1.
- Applicants must use the Regenerative Value Chains Grant application within the MIAgGrants online grant management system to apply for this grant.
- Applicants must establish a MiLogin account to submit grant applications via the MiAgGrants system.
    - MiLogin allows users to access many state services and systems online, across multiple departments, using a single user ID and password.
        - For increased security, MiLogin requires a multifactor authentication before you can access MiAgGrants or other state systems.
    - There are two primary types of MiLogin accounts:
        - Citizen's Account: An individual using State of Michigan online services for their own personal transaction.
        - Business Account: An individual using State of Michigan online services on behalf of a business, organization, or corporation.
    - If you currently have a Citizen and/or Business Account to access State of Michigan online services and applications, you should already have a MiLogin account. Please use your user ID and password from those systems to log into the MiLogin portal, instead of creating a new account.

- Please be sure to submit the entire application. All sections must be complete to be considered for funding.
    - Complete and save all pages of the application, then navigate on the left side menu of the application and scroll down to the "Status options" section. Click "Submit Application or Application Submitted" to send the application to MDARD for review.
    - After submitting the application, please check the status of the document on the "document landing page" and make sure it shows "Application in Review" to confirm the application's submission.
    - Once submitted, your application status will move from in-progress to submitted in the system.
- If you have any questions or need help with the MiAgGrants system, please reach out to the systems administrator, Muneeb Khan at KhanM16@michigan.gov.
- MDARD reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to reject an application that:
    - 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.

Evaluation Process:

- MDARD Farm to Family Program staff will collaborate with MDARD Regenerative Agriculture Program staff to evaluate whether proposals submitted by the deadline meet the following minimum requirements:
    - The applicant is a farmer that uses regenerative practices
    - The project develops market channels for regenerative products
    - The proposal includes specific targets for:
        - Volume of regenerative products sold
        - Dollar value of regenerative products sold
        - Revenue to producers from regenerative product sales
        - Number or types of consumers with access to regenerative products
    - Budget item costs are based on quotes or market research
- Proposals that do not meet the minimum requirements will be disqualified from receiving grant funding.
- Qualified proposals will be scored higher or lower based on their ability to demonstrate the following:

    - The project implements innovative and/or evidence-based approaches to marketing
    - The proposal describes how the project will serve a geographic area that has limited access to local food value chains
    - The project creates revenue that will support diversification on the farm
    - The applicant has completed a soil health assessment with a CTAP technician
    - The project promotes regenerative practices through marketing or education
    - The applicant does not have another active MDARD grant
- MDARD may reach out to applicants with clarifying questions.
- Partial grants may be awarded in the case of ineligible budget items or limited funding.
- Highest-scoring proposals will be recommended for funding. At least 10 grant awards will be funded.

Reporting Process:

- All awardees must be registered as a vendor in the Vendor Self Service system with the State of Michigan prior to signing the grant agreement. Registration can be completed via SIGMA Vendor Self Service.
- Each grantee will be required to submit written reports and appropriate financial documentation to MDARD. Grantees may also be required to report on the outcomes and impact of their grant up to three years after the grant period ends.
- Reporting must include metrics to assess progress towards measurable outcomes listed in the grant application and/or grant agreement.
- All costs will be reimbursed after quarterly reporting requirements have been met. Costs may be submitted as incurred. Once approved, MDARD will reimburse total expenditures in the quarter in which they are submitted via the SIGMA system.
- Grantees may be reimbursed the entire award before the end of the grant period, but they will be required to continue submitting reports on the impact of their project quarterly until the end of the grant period.

Contact:

For more information about the Regenerative Value Chains Grant Program, please email MDARD-FarmToFamily@michigan.gov or schedule a meeting with the Farm to Family Team.

Equal Opportunity:

The State of Michigan and the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development prohibit discrimination on the basis of religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, height, weight, marital status, partisan considerations, or a disability or genetic information that is unrelated to the person's ability to perform the duties of a particular job or position.

To file a complaint of discrimination, please contact: MDARD Office of Legal Affairs, 525 West Allegan, Lansing, MI 48909, or call 517-284-5729.

You may also contact the Michigan Department of Civil Rights at:

- Phone: 313-456-3700
- Fax: 313-456-3701
- Toll-Free: 800-482-3604
- TTY: 877-878-8464
- Email: MDCRServiceCenter@michigan.gov

Reasonable Accommodations

The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) strives to ensure site accessibility for all its users. Our grant process is inclusive and accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities. If you require reasonable accommodations, please respond with the following information to MDARD-FarmToFamily@michigan.gov.

When contacting us, please include the following information so that we can respond in a manner that is helpful to you:

- Nature of the accessibility issue
- Web address of the content you are attempting to access
- Your preferred format for the content

- Your contact information

Please submit accessibility requests no later than **April 10, 2026.** Please allow up to two weeks for the processing of this request. Thank you.