



2023 Rural Development Fund Grants Grant Guidelines

(Updated 8/31/2022)

The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) is offering a grant opportunity to promote the sustainability of land-based industries and support infrastructure that benefits rural communities.

Land-based industries included:

- Food and Agriculture
- Forestry
- Mining
- Oil and Gas Production
- Tourism

The grant funds are available for projects that address expansion and sustainability of land-based industries; worker training related to land-based industries; and energy, transportation, communications, water and wastewater infrastructure to benefit rural communities and micropolitan statistical areas. The definition of a micropolitan statistical area can be found at [BULLETIN NO. 20-01 \(whitehouse.gov\)](https://www.whitehouse.gov/bulletin/2021/01/20-01/)

Process:

MDARD will provide a proposal template with specific instructions to submit a grant proposal. MDARD will advise all applicants to the outcome of the grant review in late February 2023. The detailed grant timeline is noted below in the table for reference:

Proposal	
Release Request for Proposals	October 3, 2022
Informational Webinar Join on your computer or mobile app: Or call in (audio only): Phone Conference ID:	October 19, 2022, at 11 a.m.
Proposals Due	November 22, 2022, at 3 p.m. (EST)
Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC)	
Evaluation Meeting	January 12, 2023, at 8 a.m. (EST)
Award	
Announce Awarded Funding	February 2023

Funding Areas:

Funding will be focused on the following types of projects in rural areas:

- Infrastructure Development
 - Examples of projects could be roadways, bridges, renewable energy, wastewater, rural housing, broadband, etc.
- Rural Capacity Building
 - Examples of projects include museums, local and regional tourism campaigns, technical assistant programs, shared service models, feasibility studies, etc.
- Business Development
 - Examples for projects include business expansion ensuring long-term creation or retention of jobs with a strong local and/or regional impact. For this year, projects with a focus on livestock processing are encouraged.
- Talent Development and Training
 - Examples of projects include local and regional workforce development programs, workforce training, rural housing projects, childcare, etc.

Eligible Applicants:

- Individuals
- Organizations
- Businesses
- Local Units of Government (county, city, township, village, school district; any authority composed of counties, cities, townships, villages and school districts or combination of these entities)
- Federally Recognized Tribes
- Educational Institutions

Eligible Rural Communities & Micropolitan Statistical Areas:

Projects in the following counties are eligible rural (70,000 population or less), or Micropolitan statistical areas:

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|----------------|
| • Alcona | • Gogebic | • Mecosta |
| • Alger | • Grand Traverse | • Menominee |
| • Allegan | • Gratiot | • Missaukee |
| • Alpena | • Hillsdale | • Montcalm |
| • Antrim | • Houghton | • Montmorency |
| • Arenac | • Huron | • Newaygo |
| • Baraga | • Ionia | • Oceana |
| • Barry | • Iosco | • Ogemaw |
| • Benzie | • Iron | • Ontonagon |
| • Branch | • Isabella | • Osceola |
| • Cass | • Kalkaska | • Oscoda |
| • Charlevoix | • Keweenaw | • Otsego |
| • Cheboygan | • Lake | • Presque Isle |
| • Chippewa | • Leelanau | • Roscommon |
| • Clare | • Lenawee | • Saint Joseph |
| • Crawford | • Luce | • Sanilac |
| • Delta | • Mackinac | • Schoolcraft |
| • Dickinson | • Manistee | • Shiawassee |
| • Emmet | • Marquette | • Tuscola |
| • Gladwin | • Mason | • Wexford |

Grant Criteria:

The criteria was established by the Rural Development Fund Board on July 26, 2022, at their official board meeting.

- The maximum limit on grant fund requests is \$100,000. The total allotment for funding is approximately \$1.8 million. *(Please submit budget in whole dollar amounts and round to the nearest \$100.)*
- Applicants must provide a minimum **30% match**.
 - The match is 30% 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 \$30,000. If you are requesting a \$50,000 grant, you must provide a match amount of at least \$15,000.
 - Cash match is required.
 - Projects with a stronger match will receive increased scoring by the Joint Evaluation Committee. Do not commit to match funds that you are unable to fulfill.
 - In-kind match will be *considered* as part of the review criteria but will *not count* towards minimum match requirements.
- Match Commitment- The funds being provided under this grant require the Grantee to provide a funding match in order to secure a disbursement of funding. Project costs, grant amount, and match amount committed by the Grantee are identified in the Project Budget included in the Grant Agreement. If a Grantee fails to provide the match amount identified in the Grant Agreement, or if the total project cost for a completed project is less than the amount identified in the Grant Agreement, which leads to a reduction of the match amount, the Grantor may reduce the grant amount. The amount of this reduction will be communicated to the Grantee before a final grant payment is made to the Grantee. If total project costs are less than what is included in the Project Budget in the Grant Agreement, the Grantor will typically reduce the grant payment amount to a level that equals the percentage of the project identified in the proposed Project Budget that would have been funded by the grant payment. Under no circumstances will a grant payment be made if the Grantee fails to provide at least a 30 percent match.
- Rural area is defined as a county with a population of 70,000 or less and Micropolitan statistical area as defined by the United States Office of Management and Budget.
- Preference will be given to projects in Marquette County.
- Only one proposal per applicant will be considered. Your organization may be a partner on more than one application.
- Applicant is required to have three support letters.
- Applicants must be located in an eligible county in order to be eligible to apply. Applicants not located in an eligible county will not be considered for funding.
- Applicants must use the provided form, and all sections must be complete in order to be considered for review.

- If you have not received approval of permits, other grant sources, including necessary additional funding, from (MDNR, EGLE, MEDC), or have not started those processes if needed, please consider delaying submission of the application until the next round of grants is open.
- This grant is a **cost-reimbursement** program. Grantees are responsible for costs until proper reports/invoices/receipts are received and reviewed. Grantees are required to show proof of payment.
- Expenses for equipment items within the budget will be allowed for grant reimbursement from October 3, 2022, to the close of selected and awarded grants.
 - Equipment: Any tangible, nonexpendable, personal property directly related to the grant activities over \$4,999 per item. In the budget narrative, provide the basis of the cost estimate (e.g., price analyses, vendor quotes) for each piece of equipment, new or used, and its correlation to the purpose/goals of the project to justify your need for the equipment to be purchased.
 - All financial documentation and proof of payments must be kept and provided. No grant activities or budget expenses will be allowed prior to October 3, 2022.
- Grantees will be eligible for reimbursement up to three (3) times, at specified dates, during the 18 to 24-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 Grantees must be registered and in good standing with the LARA Corporations Division, register here [Corporations Division - Login Page](https://cofs.lara.state.mi.us/corpweb/LoginSystem/ExternalLogin.aspx)
<https://cofs.lara.state.mi.us/corpweb/LoginSystem/ExternalLogin.aspx>
- Proposals must be submitted via email to mda-grants@michigan.gov by **3:00 p.m. (EST) on November 22, 2022**. The confirmation emails are manually sent, so you will not receive an instant confirmation. If you do not receive a confirmation of receipt from our office after 48 hours, please call 517-614-7065.

Ineligible Projects:

- Projects or applicants in the following counties are not eligible for grant funding:
 - Bay, Berrien, Calhoun, Clinton, Eaton, Genesee, Ingham, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Kent, Lapeer, Livingston, Macomb, Midland, Monroe, Muskegon, Oakland, Ottawa, Saginaw, Saint Clair, Van Buren, Washtenaw, and Wayne.
- State agencies are not eligible for grant funding.
- 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.

- Projects that include telecommunications facilities owned or operated by an educational institution or an affiliate, a local unit of government or any other government entity.
- The construction of telecommunication facilities or wireless telecommunication facilities in areas where broadband services of at least three mbps downstream and 768 kbps upstream are available.

Project Criteria and Review:

The Rural Development Fund Board identified criteria in which projects will be scored upon in a 100-point scale, including, but not limited to:

- A well-defined and focused project.
- Overall impact of the project on sustainability of land-based industries and support infrastructure that benefits rural communities.
- Measurable outcomes.
- Capacity building in rural communities.
- The amount of match provided and the financial viability of the project.
- The long-term sustainability of the project.
- The near-term and long-term impact, including broad regional benefit.
- The level of support for the project within the community and region – Required -3 partner support letters outlining the significant impact of the project.
- The ability of the project to leverage other state, local and federal funding.
- The ability of the project to provide jobs and investment.
- Preference will be given to projects in Marquette County by receiving 10 bonus points.

MDARD will convene a Joint Evaluation Committee comprised of individuals with an interest in, and knowledge about, Michigan rural communities and land-based industries. The committee will score proposals, and recommendations will be made to the Rural Development Fund Board and the MDARD Director, who will make the final determination. All applicants will be notified at the end of the review period and when final decisions are made in late February 2023. 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.

If you would like to see a list of last year's awardees or would like more information on the program, please go to www.michigan.gov/mdardgrants.

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