

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

(Updated 1/19/2021)

## 2021 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 healthy food access within the state to enhance Michigan's food and agriculture industry.

MDARD will accept proposals that are intended to establish, retain, expand, attract and/or develop value-added agricultural processing in Michigan; expand or develop regional food systems; or expand access to healthy food, including farm markets, urban agriculture and hoop houses.

### **Process:**

Proposal	
Release Request for Proposals	January 28, 2021
Proposals Due	March 18, 2021 by 3 p.m. (EST)
JEC	
JEC Received Proposals for Scoring	April 2021
JEC Meeting	May 2021
Award	
Announce Award Funding	June 2021

An informational webinar will be held on February 4, 2021, from 10-11 a.m. via Microsoft Teams. You can join the webinar at the following link:

<https://bit.ly/2Nu7MEF>.

### **Funding Areas:**

Funding will be focused on the following types of projects:

- Food hub development
- Food access, including access to fresh/nutritional foods
- Value-added food processing
  - Innovation and equipment
  - Technical assistance, including feasibility studies that lead to jobs/investment
  - Outreach and training

### **Grant Criteria:**

- Grants will be awarded a **maximum amount of \$100,000**. Please submit applications 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 making the total project amount \$130,000. If you are requesting a \$50,000 grant, you must provide a match amount of at least \$15,000 making the total project amount \$65,000.
  - Cash match is required, and in-kind contributions will not be counted as part of the required match.
  - Salaries may only be included as cash match. Applicant must demonstrate that the time and salaries included were directly spent to support the project seeking grant funding.
  - Travel costs are only allowed under match funds.
- 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.
- Only one proposal per applicant will be considered. Your organization may be a partner on more than one application.
- If you have received a MDARD Value Added & Regional Food Systems Grant in the last two years, you are not eligible for this grant round.
- Applicants must use the provided application form, and all sections must be complete to be considered for review.
- Up to 10% Administrative Cost is allowed if the grantee is a non-profit. Administrative costs are the grantee's allowable direct costs for the overall management of the grant.
- All applicants must be registered as a vendor in the Vendor Self Serv system with the State of Michigan prior to submitting an application. Registration can be completed here: <http://www.michigan.gov/SIGMAVSS>
- This grant is a **cost-reimbursement** program. Grantees are responsible for costs until proper reports/invoices/receipts are received and reviewed. (See next bullet.)

- Grantees will be eligible for reimbursement up to three (3) times at specified dates, 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.
- Applications must be submitted via one email to [mda-grants@michigan.gov](mailto:mda-grants@michigan.gov) by 3 p.m. on March 18, 2021. Include in the subject line the name of your organization. If you do not receive a confirmation of receipt from our office after 48 hours, please call 517-388-5205.
- 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>.

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.
- Salaries, wages, and benefits
- Equipment installed outside of the State of Michigan.
- Travel costs

### **Project Review:**

Projects will be scored on a 100-point scale with a variety of factors, including, but not limited to:

- A well-defined and focused project – 15 points
- Overall impact of the project on the food and agriculture industry in the state of Michigan. Product sourced and produced in Michigan and capacity building/grower connection/increase in supply of locally available products – 25 points
- Measurable outcomes – 15 points
- Strong budget, expenditures correlate with the work plan and scope of the project – 10 points
- The amount of match provided – 10 points
- Does the plan of work contain appropriate activities for the project and are they detailed to show how the objectives will be met in a timely manner – 10 points
- The long-term sustainability of the project and the near-term and long-term impact, including jobs and investment in Michigan – 10 points
- The social impact benefits for the project including providing employment opportunities for low-income workers; providing greater healthy food access; or providing economic opportunity in a food desert – 5 points

MDARD will convene a Joint 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 MDARD Director.

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

#### 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](mailto:MDCRServiceCenter@michigan.gov)