

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

(Updated 1/31/2023)

2023 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, develop food systems, 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 | February 2, 2023 |
| Proposals Due | April 4, 2023 by 3 p.m. (EST) |
| JEC | |
| JEC Received Proposals for Scoring | April 12, 2023 |
| JEC Meeting | May 24, 2023 |
| Award | |
| Announce Award Funding | July 2023 |

An informational webinar will be held on February 9, 2023, from 9-10 a.m. via Microsoft Teams. You can join the webinar at the following link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)

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 \$1.
- Expenses for equipment items within the budget will be allowed for grant reimbursement from February 2, 2023, 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 February 2, 2023.
- Applicants must provide a minimum **30% cash 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 30% match.
 - The required 30% cash match should not be paid by the applicant from federal or state funds received under another federal assistance agreement.
 - Salaries may only be included as cash match, cannot exceed 25% of the grant amount requested, and must be realized during the grant project. 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.
 - Awarded projects must maintain records that clearly show the source, the amount, and the period during which the match was allocated.
 - All matching funds must be:
 - Verifiable from the grantee's records; and
 - Necessary, allowable, reasonable, and allocable to accomplish the project's goals.
- Match Commitment - The funds being provided under this grant require the Grantee to provide a funding match 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.
- 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 and final site visit.
- 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 by 3 p.m. on April 4, 2023. Include in the subject line the name of your organization. If you do not receive a confirmation of receipt from our office within **48** hours after you submit, please call 517-614-7065.

- 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.
- Acquisition costs of general-purpose equipment or lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own, or rent-to-own). *General Purpose Equipment* means equipment that is not limited to technical activities. Examples include office equipment and furnishings, modular offices, telephone networks, information technology equipment and systems, air conditioning equipment, reproduction and printing equipment, and motor vehicles.
- 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 purpose/likelihood of succeeding – 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
- 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
- Meaningful, measurable, and realistic outcomes – 15 points
- Strong budget, expenditures are reasonable, allowable, necessary, and allocable to 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

MDARD will convene a Joint Evaluation Committee (JEC) 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 Request For Proposals 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

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