



Department of
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For Immediate Release: October 15, 2024

STATE AGRICULTURE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES \$4.25 MILLION AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT BEGINNING AND DISADVANTAGED FARMERS

Applications Will Open This Fall for First Round of Beginning Farmer Grant Program and Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Farmer Grant Program

Funding Will Facilitate Start-up, Improvement, and Expansion of Farm Operations, Offer Support for Marketing, Training, Construction, and More

New York State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball today announced that applications will open this fall for two competitive State grant programs: the Beginning Farmer Grant Program and the Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Farmer Grant Program. The programs, which offer support to New York farmers who are new to the field or who face disproportionate social and economic barriers to success, will provide funding for a wide range of start-up and operational costs and offer support for marketing, training, and more.

Commissioner Ball said, “Access to capital is one of the largest barriers to the start-up and success of new and beginning farms. I’m proud that the Beginning Farmer Grant Program and Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Farmer Grant Program will help to alleviate these concerns for our new and underserved farmers by offering funding for projects like purchasing land, structures, livestock, and equipment; training staff; and creating marketing campaigns to help reach more customers. I thank the New York Farm Viability Institute, the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust, and Resist Inc. for their partnership in getting this funding into the hands of those that need it most. I encourage all eligible applicants to learn more about these programs and start preparing proposals.”

The Department [previously announced its partnership with the New York Farm Viability Institute and the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust](#) (NEFOC) to administer these programs on its behalf. The programs were funded in the Fiscal Year 2022-23 New York State Enacted Budget and build upon the State’s priority to expand opportunities in agriculture to more New Yorkers.

Both the Beginning Farmers Grant Program and the Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Farmers Grant Program aim to expand opportunities to farmers who are less likely to enter or succeed in the field, whether due to lack of experience, inability to access resources, or social and economic discrimination. Opening doors to all farmers is a critical step in ensuring a strong, diverse, and well-supported agricultural future for New York.

Both programs provide funding for:

- the start-up, improvement, or expansion of a farm operation;
- the purchase of agricultural land and physical structures;
- the purchase of machinery, equipment, or livestock;
- the construction or improvement of physical structures, including semi-permanent structures;
- worker or apprenticeship training; and
- marketing activities.

Beginning Farmer Grant Program

Administered by the [New York Farm Viability Institute](#), the Beginning Farmer Grant Program's goal is to assist beginning farmers with the financial costs associated with the creation or expansion of a new farm operation. The program will award grants to for-profit farm businesses operating within New York State that are start-ups or have been in business for less than ten years.

A total of \$850,000 is available through this program, with awards ranging from \$5,000-\$25,000 and \$50,000-\$250,000, based on project complexity. Applications will open October 25, 2024 and will be available through January 24, 2025. Questions regarding the Beginning Farmer Grant Program can be sent to New York Farm Viability Institute at arandolph@nyfvi.org.

Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Farmer Grant Program

The Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Farmers Grant Program is administered by the [Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust](#) (NEFOC). Funding will be offered under the program name "Landing Access: Novel Directions (LAND) Project." The LAND Project's goal is to assist farmers who face disproportionate barriers to success due to discrimination. The program will award grants to for-profit business owners who experience discrimination by virtue of their membership in a particular group and whose ability to enter into farming or the success of their farm enterprise has been impaired due to disproportionate access to capital, credit opportunities or land, among other things.

Applications open on December 30, 2024 and will be available through February 14, 2025. A total of \$3.4 million is available to farmers through this program, with grants of up to \$5,000 offered in this first round of funding. Subsequent rounds of funding will offer awards of up to \$250,000. Questions regarding the LAND Project can be sent to info@nylandproject.com.

Dave Grusenmeyer, New York Farm Viability Institute Executive Director said, "Agriculture is a challenging business to get into. Some say if you aren't born into it you can't get into it. It is certainly a difficult challenge. Through my career, individuals of all ages have asked about grant funding to help them get started in a food production enterprise. My response has always been, 'when you find one let me know, because I've never seen one'. In New York that dream has come true through these two programs. Through the leadership of the Governor, the Legislature, and the Department of Agriculture and Markets, New York is far ahead of other states in supporting farmers, through numerous programs, to produce safe and healthy food for New Yorkers."

Christine Hutchinson, Black Land Stewardship Cultivation Co-Director at Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust said, "It is imperative we provide socially and economically disadvantaged farmers with the support they need to bless this land with their hands and fill our plates with nourishment."

New York State continues to prioritize increasing access to agriculture and local products for all New Yorkers through additional efforts including the Urban Farms and Community Gardens Grant Program, continued funding for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS), the enhanced FreshConnect Fresh2You initiative, the Farmers' Market Nutrition Programs, New York Food For New York Families, and many more. [Learn about the Department's programs and initiatives](#) focused on providing new markets for farmers, increasing food access to underserved communities, and building healthier communities.

New York also continues to support several groundbreaking State programs that focus on improving access to locally grown foods through its 2024-25 New York State Budget, including the Nourish New York program, the 30 percent NYS Initiative in schools, and the Farm-to-School program. Additionally, this year's Budget included the second round of funding as part of the Regional School Food Infrastructure Fund, which provides \$50 million over five years to support regional cooking facilities that will facilitate the use of fresh New York State farm products in meal preparation for K-12 school children.

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