

## **FEDERAL FUNDING FOR AGRICULTURE: USDA FARMER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**



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Since 1933, the United States Congress has passed a “Farm Bill” about every five years. Throughout the past century, Congress has continuously increased the amount of funding available to farmers and agribusinesses through omnibus legislation. Funding provided through Farm Bill legislation can help producers stay on the farm, prevent producers from becoming ineligible for future assistance, and promote climate-smart agriculture by increasing access to conservation assistance.

But these funds are only effective if they are used, and that requires the submission of grant applications. Sadly, most of America’s farmers and ranchers do not realize these resources are available to help strengthen America’s ag-infrastructure.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) continuously posts funding opportunities for American farmers and agribusinesses. Some grant opportunities are specific to a certain group, such as organic producers, while others are more general.

These grant opportunities are offered by a variety of USDA agencies. Most of USDA’s funding opportunities originate out of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). As NIFA explains, it “*provides leadership and funding for programs that advance agriculture-related sciences*” and invests in and supports “*initiatives that ensure the long-term viability of agriculture.*” USDA’s Agriculture Market Service (AMS) also provides funding opportunities for farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses.

Open grant applications as of March 10, 2023, include the following:

- [Veterinary Services Grant Program](#): Grants for projects that will enable veterinarians, veterinary students, veterinary technicians, and veterinary technician students gain specialized skills to mitigate veterinary service shortages in the U.S. *Applications open until March 29, 2023.*
- [Education and Workforce Development](#): Grants for projects that develop the next generation of research, education, and extension professionals in the food and agricultural sciences. *Applications open until March 30, 2023.*
- [Sustainable Agricultural Systems](#): Grants for projects that promote transformational changes in the U.S. food and agricultural system. *Applications open until July 13, 2023.*
- [Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative](#): Grants for projects that seek to solve critical organic agriculture issues, priorities, or problems by integrating research, education, and extension. Among others, private organizations and corporations are eligible to apply. *Applications open until April 13, 2023.*
- [Farmers Market Promotion Program](#): Grants for projects that develop, coordinate, and expand direct-to-consumer markets and help increase access to locally grown food. *Applications open until May 2, 2023.*
- [Local Food Promotion Program](#): Grants for food businesses that aim to develop, coordinate, and expand their local food efforts. *Applications open until May 2, 2023.*
- [Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative Extension Disaster Education Network](#): Grants for projects that will maximize the resilience of the U.S. food and agriculture sector to biosecurity risks, extreme weather events, and cyber threats. *Applications open until May 11, 2023.*

These federal appropriations are not “handouts.” Rather, they represent strategic investments of federal tax dollars directed to strengthening America’s agricultural communities.

If you are a farmer or rancher interested in applying for a USDA grant, reach out to the GrayRobinson [Food Law Team](#). Our attorneys can assist you in determining which grant opportunities best suit your needs and assist you through the application process.



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Richard M. Blau leads GrayRobinson's national [Food Law Team](#), focusing on the laws that govern the production, importation, processing, marketing, distribution, and sale of foods and beverages throughout the United States. Blau works with all levels of the food industry. He has represented international importers and domestic manufacturers, statewide wholesaler trade groups and regional distributors, and retailers (including multistate restaurant and grocery store chains) across the nation. Blau has achieved numerous peer-related accolades for his legal work, including **Chambers USA** – Nationally ranked as "Band 1" for Alcohol Beverage Law & Food Law; **The Best Lawyers in America®** – Nationally listed for Food and Beverage Law; and **Super Lawyers** – Elected member.



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