

# Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development (CT RC&D)

## 2024 Climate Smart Agriculture Grant (CSAG) Q&A

All interested Climate Smart Agriculture Grant (CSAG) applicants should visit [CTRCD.ORG/CLIMATE-SMART-AGRICULTURE](https://ctrctd.org/climate-smart-agriculture) to review the Grant Guidance. Additionally, a pre-recorded informative webinar will be available on Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, which you can register for [HERE](#).

If you have a question that is not answered in one of those locations or in the below responses, please email Sarah Layton, Agricultural Programs Coordinator, at [slayton@ctrctd.org](mailto:slayton@ctrctd.org) or call 860-345-3977 x102.

### Eligibility

#### Are urban farmers eligible to apply?

Yes, farms can be located anywhere within the state of Connecticut as long as the applicant meets the requirements outlined in the “Eligible Applicant” and “Eligible Locations” sections of the Grant Guidance.

#### Are nonprofit farms eligible to apply?

Yes, agriculturally focused nonprofit entities that are in production and meet eligibility guidelines outlined in the “Eligible Applicant” and “Eligible Locations” sections of the Grant Guidance are eligible to apply.

#### How is “New/Beginning Farm” defined?

For the purpose of this grant, New/Beginning Farms are defined as those that have been **both** in operation and production for at least one full year prior to the application submission date. If you are submitting an application in April of 2024, your current farm company must have completed the following prior to April of 2023:

- Registered as a business with the CT Secretary of State’s office, or registered with your town as a sole proprietor,
- Acquired the Farmers’ Tax Exemption Permit through the CT Department of Revenue Services,
- One full year of production on the farm business property (whether owned or rented) where the proposed project will be implemented/installed (in production since 2023).

#### What if I have other farm experience but am beginning a new farm business that is not yet in production?

Farmers with new businesses who are not yet in production are ineligible for grant funding, despite previous experience in other businesses/farms.

#### What if I began to grow this year (2024) for the first time?

Farmers who have begun growing/producing in 2024 for the first time are ineligible for grant funding.

#### What if I have a small farm?

Farms can be any size (either defined by acres owned/rented or production volume) if the applicant meets the requirements outlined in the “Eligible Applicant” and “Eligible Locations” sections of the Grant Guidance. Additionally, the minimum project cost must be met to receive the minimum grant award, as outlined in the “Instructions” tab of the “2024 CT RC&D Climate Smart Agriculture Grant Project Workbook,” which you can download from the “Documents & Forms” section of our CT RC&D’s website [HERE](#).

### **Can I submit more than one application?**

No, please submit one application per farm business. You may include a combination of on-farm energy and soil health projects within your proposal, as long as your grant request falls within the tier that you are eligible for.

### **I applied for a CT RC&D CSAG in the first round of funding and was not awarded; can I reapply?**

Yes, you may reapply with the same or a new project.

### **I applied for a CT RC&D CSAG in the first round of funding and was awarded; can I reapply for the second round of funding as well?**

No, your farm business is not eligible to apply for this second round of funding.

## **Grant Funding & Match**

### **What if my project doesn't meet the minimum grant project cost?**

To apply for **the minimum Tier 1 grant award of \$5,000**, total project costs must reach \$6,667 for soil health projects and \$10,000 for energy projects.

To apply for **the minimum Tier 2 grant award of \$25,000**, total project costs must reach \$33,333 for soil health projects and \$50,000 for energy projects.

For smaller projects that do not satisfy the minimum project cost, please consider looking into other Climate Smart Agriculture Sub-Grant opportunities. A link to the CT Department of Agriculture's press release where you can view all Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry Grant recipients is [HERE](#).

### **Can we apply for funding if we've already begun the project?**

Grant funding is to support the implementation of new projects and practices. Projects and practices that have been implemented/installed prior to the application, or those that are currently in the implementation/installation phase, will not be considered.

### **When can I start tracking match?**

Cash/in-kind match that directly and meaningfully support the proposed grant project will begin to be calculated upon grant submission.

### **What if I don't have a commitment of funds to satisfy the match prior to submitting my application?**

If you have applied for funding through another agency but don't yet have a commitment of funds, you may submit a proposal specifying the amount of match you applied for and the expected timeframe of hearing from the other funding agent(s). This will be taken into consideration at the time of scoring. As part of the scoring criteria includes a review of committed match at the appropriate percentage, applications that do not have fully committed matching funds may be impacted.

### **Are there limits on what types of grants (USDA, CT DoAG, etc.) that can be paired with this grant?**

Federal, state, community, or private grant funds can be leveraged with CT RC&D's Climate Smart Agriculture Grant (CSAG) to fulfill the match requirement **except for** using other Climate Smart Agriculture Sub-Grant opportunities offered by CT DoAG Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry Grant recipients.

At the end of CT RC&D's CSAG application, we ask if you have applied for or received funding for a climate smart-related project from one of the following organizations since May 1, 2023:

- Connecticut Land Conservation Council
- New Connecticut Farmer Alliance
- Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy
- UConn Extension

Farms that have received funding from these above agencies through a Climate Smart Farming: Agriculture and Forestry Grant as funded by the CT Department of Agriculture are ineligible to apply for CT RC&D's Climate Smart Agriculture Grant for the same project but may apply for a different project.

## Documents/Forms

### **What is a Crop Plan and how do I know if I need to submit it with my grant application?**

A current Crop Plan is required to be submitted to the CT Department of Agriculture only if the farm is participating in the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and certified farmers' markets. If you are required to submit a Crop Plan to CT DoAG, please submit a copy with your CSAG application. If you are not required to have a current Crop Plan on file with CT DoAG, you are exempt from submitting to CT RC&D.

### **Do I have to have a Farmers Tax Exemption Permit to apply?**

Yes, this is a requirement per the CT Department of Agriculture, our funding agent.

### **Do I have to be registered with the CT Secretary of State to apply?**

If operating as a business, applicants are required to submit verification of **Active Business Status with the CT Secretary of State's office**. Applicants must visit the [Secretary of State's website](#) and perform a Business Records Search with their business name. Applicants must open the results for their business listing and provide a digital copy of the Business Details page with the grant submission.

If operating as a sole proprietor, applicants are required to submit a copy of the **Notarized Certificate of Trade Name** from the Town Clerk.

## Energy Projects

### **Does the size of the energy project need to be documented based on prior usage? Can we apply to install a solar project that overproduces based on our past usage because we plan to expand the farm?**

You may apply for a solar installation that is larger than current needs to accommodate farm growth, but you will need to provide justification. For instance, in addition to quotes from relevant contractors, you should include 12 months of utility bills showing your historic energy use and associated written narrative to explain the need for increased energy capacity related to current or future farm expansion.

### **Will an energy project be considered if the residence and business are both on the same electric meter? Are there any residential use restrictions?**

On-farm energy funding may be used to support/benefit uses intrinsic to the farm business and farm worker housing. Funding that would benefit the primary farm residence is not an acceptable use.

If the farm business and residential housing use the same meter, you will need to submit an audit or assessment to show how the farm business versus residence will benefit. Grants will be prorated accordingly.

### **Are there restrictions to where solar panels can be installed?**

Per CT DOAG, solar projects cannot be installed on soil classified as Prime, Important, or Locally Important soils. All proposed ground mounted solar projects must include:

- Justification for why a roof mounted system cannot be supported (ex. Building lacks structural integrity, etc.)
- Soil Map with the project location (including any trenching) clearly outlined within the “Not Prime Farmland” area. [Web Soil Survey](#) is a free and approved mapping tool.

## **Soil Health Projects**

### **Are all NRCS Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities funded?**

The 2024 NRCS Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities can be found [HERE](#).

Projects and practices listed within the following “Climate Change Mitigation Practice Categories” column will be considered for funding under the scope of this CSAG program:

- Soil Health
- Nitrogen Management
- Livestock Partnership
- Grazing and Pasture
- Energy, Combustion & Electricity Efficiency