



## Brighter Future Fund's 2025 Emergency Resilience Grant Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: Who is eligible to apply?**

A: To meet basic eligibility, applicants must meet the following definition of “farmer” or “rancher” and the following requirements:

- For this program, we define “farmer” or “rancher” as an individual, group, or organization intentionally and actively cultivating annual or perennial crops or animals for harvest in one of the 50 US states or 5 US territories (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands).
- Eligible farms must be for-profit and able to provide proof of income (or similar if the farm engages in barter, exchange or community supply). This program does not intend to fund applicants who grow or raise products primarily for home, personal or family use.
- While agriculture across the US is broad, this funding is intended to support terrestrial, soils-based agricultural production, and we are unable to consider applications from aquaculture, equine, or forestry\* operations. (\*Agroforestry and silvopasture operations do qualify.)

### **Q: Which applicants will be prioritized?**

A: Applicants who meet all of the following will be prioritized for this funding:

1. All basic eligibility criteria above
2. Applicants operating small to mid-size farms/ranches who have previously faced challenges accessing traditional funding opportunities, and are experiencing hardships due to the government funding freeze, loss of markets, and/or recent natural disasters
3. Applicants who can demonstrate their commitment to fostering soil health and environmentally beneficial agricultural practices
4. Applicants who intend to use the funding to enhance financial resilience, support business technical assistance, invest in business building, and/or environmentally beneficial agricultural practices

### **Q: I've received a grant award from American Farmland Trust in the past. Am I eligible to apply for this grant?**

A: Due to the competitive nature of this funding opportunity, we will prioritize funding applicants who have not received prior funding from AFT; however, some prior awardees may apply.

You may apply if:

- you received a partial or final payment toward a 2024 grant (for example, a New England Regenerative Livestock Farming 2024 Grant, or a Farmland Access, Succession & Transfer Support 2024 Grant).
- you received an award from AFT in any other prior year.

You may not apply if:

- You received a new award from American Farmland Trust in 2025.

**Q: How much money will be awarded?**

A: Applicants may request up to \$10,000 each. An additional \$250 in self-care funding may be awarded if the applicant chooses to apply for the Real Farmer Care portion of the application.

**Q: What types of projects/purchases are covered under this grant?**

A: The Brighter Future Fund's Emergency Resilience Grants provide emergency relief to farmers and ranchers for hardships brought on by loss or delay in government funding, loss in markets, or natural disasters like hurricanes, flooding, drought, wildfires, avian flu, etc. Funds are intended to stabilize operations and mitigate loss.

To be considered, applicants must provide strong evidence of how the purchase or service will directly strengthen and build long-term business or financial resilience and/or expand market access.

Applicants may apply for a wide range of expenses, including professional services, business technical assistance, business improvements that advance long-term viability, infrastructure, equipment, costs associated with soil health practice implementation or adoption of other environmentally beneficial practices.

**Q: What types of projects/expenses are NOT covered under this grant?**

A: If the request does not provide strong evidence of how the purchase or service will directly strengthen business or financial resilience and/or expand market access, it will not be considered for funding. Some specific examples of expenses that may not be covered under the grant include payroll, insurance, housing costs, certain types of office equipment, and potentially other types of equipment or infrastructure projects if they would not build long-term business or financial resilience or facilitate expansion of market access. If you're not sure whether your proposed project would be covered, please email us at [brighterfuture@farmland.org](mailto:brighterfuture@farmland.org).

**Q: Can I apply for funds to reimburse my farm for items or services we've already paid for or been invoiced for?**

A: No, this grant will only fund approved expenses that are incurred after the issuance of the official award letter or between June 30, 2025 and December 31, 2025. We encourage applicants to contact us at [brighterfuture@farmland.org](mailto:brighterfuture@farmland.org) to discuss your unique situation and potential eligibility.

**Q: What is the application timeline?**

A:

- The online application will open at 8:00am Eastern Time April 16th and will close at 11:59pm Eastern Time on April 26th, 2025.
- Applications will be reviewed as they are received and decisions will be sent via email by May 16<sup>th</sup>.
- If selected for award, funds will be disbursed by July 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Q: How are applications accepted?**

A: Applications must be submitted through our online application portal (SurveyMonkey Apply). The link to apply will be available on [our website](#) while the application period is live. In order to submit an application online, applicants must have an email address. All grant and application-related communications will be sent to the applicant via email. If an applicant does not have an email address, a designated contact person, such as a friend, family member, neighbor, service provider or other collaborator, may create an application on behalf of the applicant.

We are not able to accept applications via email or mail. Applications must be submitted through our grant portal online. We will not accept late applications.

**Q: I don't have email / I don't have a computer. Can I apply?**

A: An email address is required to create an account and submit an application through our online grant management platform, and all grant-related communication will be sent via email to the email address of the application owner. However, applicants may have a designated contact person, such as a friend, family member, neighbor, or service provider create and submit their application on their behalf. Applicants may apply, and access the grant portal, using a smartphone.

Please contact our staff if you have additional questions about applying if you don't have an email address, computer, smartphone, or internet access: [brighterfuture@farmland.org](mailto:brighterfuture@farmland.org).

**Q: Will applications be accepted in languages other than English?**

A: The online application will be available in Spanish.

**Q: What does the application consist of?**

A: The application **questions can be viewed here**. The application is designed to be simple and straightforward. The main sections are:

- Eligibility Questionnaire (to determine if the applicant is eligible)
- Applicant Contact Information
- Applicant's Farm Information (description of farming status, land tenure, products, etc.)
- Description of proposed use of funds, including requested amount, breakdown of estimated costs, estimated timeline, and description of anticipated impact
- Demonstration of need

**Q: What are the requirements if selected for an Emergency Resilience Grant award?**

A: Applicants who are selected to receive an Emergency Resilience Grant award will be notified via email and will be required to read and agree to our grant terms via electronic signature. Awardees must provide a current IRS Form W9 (*Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification*) and bank account information.

Awardees will be required to provide follow-up information to AFT about how they spent the award funds. AFT will use this information to verify the permitted use of funds and evaluate the success of the grant program, including to ensure that funds were spent in alignment with program goals.

Within one year of the award date, awardees may be asked to submit a brief update or report verifying expenditures via AFT's grant portal system, including a written paragraph describing the impact of the funds and photos or videos documenting the use of funds. If awarded, recipients should keep receipts pertaining to the approved use of funds for their own reporting purposes as well as to provide AFT upon request.

**Q: How and when are the awards paid?**

A: The Brighter Future Fund aims to disburse Emergency Resilience Grant award payments by July 31, 2025. Funds will be paid via direct deposit to the awardee's bank account.

**Q: I work for a non-profit organization that has a farm supplying food to our local community. Can we apply?**

A: No. This funding is intended to provide relief to for-profit farm and ranch businesses. Farms associated with non-profit organizations should take advantage of alternate resources designed specifically for non-profits.

**Q: Do I need to own the land I'm farming to be eligible for this grant?**

A: No. Farmers or ranchers leasing land are eligible to apply; however, land tenure for a reasonable time period will be required for projects that involve on-the-ground improvements to farmland. If tenure is less than 5 years, please be prepared to demonstrate in the application that the tenure is sufficient in relationship for the improvements being made or services being provided.

**Q: We just started our operation and won't have an income or dollar value of any farm products sold in the last year. Are we eligible to apply?**

A: This grant does not intend to fund startup farm or ranch businesses. We encourage applicants to contact us at [brighterfuture@farmland.org](mailto:brighterfuture@farmland.org) to discuss your unique situation and potential eligibility.

**Q: Who can I reach out to for support with completing the application?**

A: Please direct all inquiries to [brighterfuture@farmland.org](mailto:brighterfuture@farmland.org)

**Q: Are there other grants at AFT that I can apply to?**

A: We encourage you to [sign up for email updates from AFT](#), and to visit AFT's grantmaking

webpage to learn more about our funding opportunities: <https://farmland.org/brighterfuture/>

**Q: I do not qualify for this grant. Can you point me to other resources?**

A: We encourage you to visit AFT's Farmland Information Center at <https://farmlandinfo.org/> and browse resources related to financial assistance and more.