



## EMERGENCY RESILIENCE GRANT

### 2025 Guidelines

#### PURPOSE

The American Farmland Trust (AFT) Brighter Future Fund's Emergency Resilience Grant was formed through generous support from donors and members. The intent of this grant is to offset financial disruption caused by the government funding freeze for farmers and ranchers through the implementation and improvement of business and financial resilience. Applicants seeking to offset financial disruptions due to government funding loss or delay will be prioritized with those applicants experiencing hardship due to other disruptive events such as natural disasters, loss of markets, or avian flu will also be considered.

Funding will be prioritized for small to mid-size farms who have previously faced challenges accessing traditional funding opportunities to enhance financial resilience, support business technical assistance, invest in business building, and/or foster soil health and environmentally beneficial agricultural practices.

Funding for this program is limited, and applications are competitive. Applications will be accepted starting 8:00am Eastern Daylight Time on April 16<sup>th</sup> until 11:59pm Eastern Daylight Time April 26<sup>th</sup>. Applications will be reviewed in the order in which they are received, and awards will be made until funding is exhausted.

[Real Farmer Care](#), fiscally sponsored by AFT, will also make an additional \$250 available for all awardees interested in applying for funds to support body work, personal professional supplies, physical therapy, and other self-care opportunities. Application for additional self-care funds is optional.

#### AWARD AMOUNT

2025 Emergency Resilience Grants will be awarded in amounts up to \$10,000 per project (or up to \$10,250 if also awarded a Real Farmer Care grant.)

#### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Requirements:

- Applicants must be based in the US (any of the 50 states or 5 territories).

- Grants will only be awarded to applicants who have been caused financial hardship as a direct result of disruptive events in recent months, including but not limited to natural disasters (flooding, wildfires, or avian flu), the loss or delay in funding due to the government funding freeze, or a loss of markets.
- Applicants will be required to provide proof of such financial distress or loss due to a disruptive event listed above.
- Applicants must also include documentation of cost estimates, as well as a proposed budget and timeline.
- A project may involve one or more individual farmers/ranchers or farm/ranch families but only one grant can be awarded per farm/farm family or group.
- Those who were awarded a grant from AFT's Brighter Future Fund in 2025 (including Regenerate VA Healthy Soils, Farm Vitality, or New England Regenerative Livestock Farming grants) are not eligible to apply to this additional funding opportunity.
- Applicants who applied but were not selected for funding during previous AFT grant cycles are encouraged to apply. Previous recipients of other AFT grants received in 2024 or earlier may apply; however, since funding is limited, AFT may prioritize those who have not received prior awards.
- Eligible farms or ranches must be for-profit and be able to provide proof of income (or similar, if the operation engages in barter, exchange, or community supply). Operations must be producing food or agricultural products for their community for sale, or barter or exchange. This grant does not intend to support operations that produce agricultural products mainly for personal, household, or family use.
- Nonprofit organizations are encouraged to take advantage of alternate resources designed specifically for nonprofits.

## **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS/EXPENSES**

Funds must be used to enhance financial resilience, support business technical assistance, invest in business building, and/or foster soil health and environmentally beneficial agricultural practices for farm or ranch operations that have been directly impacted by recent events. Examples include, but are not limited to:

### **Professional Services**

- Hiring a service provider to assist with the following:
  - Business, financial or estate planning consultant to assist with business plan, tax plan, or finance/loan plan.
  - Support business planning and other services necessary for farm or ranch land access or expansion, such as land search planning, property assessment, facilitation, succession planning, or crafting agreements.
  - Market planning and access to strategize improvement to market access and enhance profitability.
  - Implement effective financial record-keeping systems.
  - Support guidance for accessing USDA Financial programs.
  - Accessing agricultural credit via assistance in securing loans.

- Impact mitigation as response to specific external impact to the operation from natural disasters.

Eligible Projects/Expenses, continued:

### **Infrastructure and Equipment**

- Purchasing farming/ranching equipment or implements essential to transitioning a business.
- Improving infrastructure or equipment necessary to diversify income streams.
- Smart solar planning assessments that support and equip producers to benefit from solar energy production on their operations.

### **TIMELINE**

- Applications open at 8:00am ET April 16<sup>th</sup> and close at 11:59pm ET April 26<sup>th</sup>
- All applicants notified of decisions via email by May 16<sup>th</sup>
- Funds disbursed by July 31st

If awarded, all proposed projects must be completed by July 1, 2026.

### **HOW TO APPLY**

- To apply, applicants must submit a completed Emergency Resilience Grant application to AFT. Applications must be submitted online through AFT's grant management system. A link to the application system can be found on our website:  
<https://farmland.org/brighterfuture>.
  - Applicants need an email address to register. Applicants may have a collaborator apply on their behalf but an email address is required.
- The application consists of the following:
  - Eligibility questionnaire
  - Applicant name, farm/ranch business name, and contact information, including email address, farm location, and phone number
  - Brief description of farming or ranching background and description of current business structure, primary products, land tenure situation, and approximate annual gross cash farm income
  - Proposal for use of funds, including description of impact on business due to recent events (applicants are required to upload documentation to demonstrate financial distress due to recent events), estimated costs, project budget and timeline
  - Optional demographics questions (for informational purposes only; will not be used in application evaluation)

## AWARD PROCESS

If selected for award, AFT will notify applicants via email and require awardees to read and electronically sign a simple award form detailing awarded amount, approved use of funds, terms of use, payment information, and timeline. A copy of the letter of award will be emailed to the awardee and may be downloaded from the awardee's individual grant application portal.

### Terms for all awards:

- Expenses incurred prior to receiving written notification of award from AFT may not be payable by the grant without written approval from AFT.
- Funds may be used for professional services, infrastructure, or equipment purchase.
- Funds will be paid directly to the awarded recipient; AFT will not provide payment to any third party.
- AFT shall have no obligation to disburse amounts in excess of the approved grant amount for services not completed, or goods or services not approved by AFT. Any expenses that exceed the grant maximum amount are the responsibility of the awardee.
- Any unspent grant funds may be dedicated towards further services for the applicant, pending written approval from AFT.
- AFT shall have no obligation to consider requests for project extensions; except in limited circumstances in which consideration may be given upon written request.
- AFT will require the awardee to upload a current IRS Form W9 (*Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification*) via our secure online portal (or other secure form) in order to fulfill AFT's obligation to report grant activities on its annual report to the IRS. AFT does not file Form 1099s with respect to this grant.
- AFT prefers to issue payments to awardees via ACH/direct deposit and will ask awardees to provide bank account and contact information to our Finance Department via a secure form.

If selected for an award, AFT may ask for the following:

- Current photo representing yourself and your farm or ranch.
- A brief summary regarding planned use of the funds and results you expect to achieve with the assistance of the funds.
- A statement agreeing to complete a brief final report and interview by AFT upon completion of the project. For awardees who opt in, we will share selected projects via social media and in promotional materials. While sharing stories is a priority for AFT, we understand there may be reason for discretion and will honor those instances. Participation in public-facing stories will not affect the applicant's receipt of funding.

## SPECIAL NOTES

- Funding is contingent on the awardee completing a Grant Award Form and submitting it within 7 days of award notification. Notification of award and other grant-related communication will be conducted via email and/or phone. Failure to respond by stated deadline could result in loss of award funds.

- Awardees will be required to provide follow-up information to AFT about their award-funded project. Within one year of receipt of grant funds, awardees may be asked to submit: all receipts showing how the funds were spent, a written paragraph describing the overall project, progress toward completion if the overall project is not complete, the overall impact of the funds, and photos documenting how award funds were used. AFT will use this information to verify permitted use of funds and evaluate the success of the grant program.
- The Brighter Future Fund has been established by AFT to provide support to awardees who need financial assistance to undertake proposed activities which further AFT's charitable purposes. These grants are motivated by charitable intent. AFT however does not make any representation as to the tax consequences of any award, if any.
- We encourage applicants to be thoughtful and diligent in completing their application, but AFT will not evaluate applications by grammar or writing style. Complete the questions to the best of your ability and take advantage of the narrative questions to describe your farm/ranch, your personal and professional goals, and the challenges you face in reaching them. Feel free to write in whatever style feels truest and most comfortable to you.

## QUESTIONS

For any questions about eligibility or to seek assistance with accessing or completing the application, please contact our team at [brighterfuture@farmland.org](mailto:brighterfuture@farmland.org).