



**AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

Version 5.0

ORANGE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM

This program is intended to provide assistance to Orange County farmers in developing new sources of agricultural income through the provision of grants. Individual grant limit is \$10,000. Farmer applicants must be able to demonstrate that their existing operation is a verifiable farm business meeting the following requirements:

- Land - owned or leased by applicant in Orange County
- Infrastructure - suitable for existing operation and any required expansion
- Market - defined, accessible, with history of sales
- Experience - knowledge, ability, and demonstrated relevant experience
- Concept – demonstrates a valid need and specific request

Eligibility

- The farm tract and farming operation on which the funds are to be used must be in Orange County in areas zoned appropriately for their use.
- Collaborative/Group grants must include at least 3 farmers and may include agricultural groups and agencies.
- Applicants and their businesses must not have any past due tax, fee, or fine applicable to Orange County. The Orange County Tax Office will review and follow-up with businesses that are found to have outstanding taxes and apply to the grant program. Applicants are responsible for annually completing and submitting a [business personal property listing form](#) to the Orange County Tax Office by January 31st each year. Additional information on this process can be located at the following page: <https://www.orangecountync.gov/1783/Business-Personal-Property>
- Applicant must be current with any existing Orange County Small Business Loan, or Emergency Small Business Loan Payments.
- Duplication of benefits prohibited. No individual business or affiliated owner(s) shall receive in excess of \$10,000 from Orange County's Small Business and Large Business Investment Grant Programs, the Agriculture Grant Program, and any other County grant awards over a three year period. Some individual programs may have more stringent restrictions in an effort to spread the funding across as many individual operations as possible. This prohibition includes a situation in which the same owner(s) owns multiple businesses. In such a situation if one or more of the multiple businesses applied for a grant(s) the maximum available to any one or more of such businesses is \$10,000.
- Individuals who have taken legal action against the County in the past 12-months, or have an active legal case, and who applies for any available County grant program, are ineligible to apply for and receive grant funding through Orange County Government until the settlement or dismissal of such legal action.
- Businesses in which Orange County elected officials have any financial or

ownership interest are ineligible to apply.

- Businesses in which grant program administrative staff of the Orange County Economic Development Office, the Orange County Cooperative Extension Office, and the review committee members of the Business Investment Grant and Agriculture Grant programs have any financial or ownership interest are ineligible to apply. Other Orange County employees and Advisory Board members not directly connected to the grant program are eligible to apply.
- Applicant must agree to the following terms and conditions to submit their application: “By submitting this application, you are (1) certifying that all the information provided in this application is true and accurate; (2) Granting us permission to contact your primary bank, mortgagor or landlord (as applicable), any owner of the business, or otherwise verify information included in your application if determined helpful in assessing your application; and (3) Agreeing to cooperate and assist in the verification of information provided in this application and to provide additional information if requested. Applicant further understands that should the Applicant herein be awarded assistance and there is a subsequent determination that misleading or false information was provided in this application or otherwise provided to obtain the assistance, the Applicant may be subject to civil or criminal penalties.”
- To guarantee grant funds are utilized for the purposes for which they are approved and issued, grant recipients shall execute and agree to be bound by a personal guaranty of the grant amount prior to disbursement. Failure to utilize grant funds as required may result in collection action against the grant recipient.

Agricultural Grant Subcommittee

- The Agricultural Economic Development Grant Subcommittee will be made up of five (5) voting members including:
- The Agricultural Representative from the Orange County Economic Development Advisory Board (OCEDAB),
- Two members of the Orange County Agricultural Preservation Board (OCAPB) who are farmers in Orange County (chosen by the OCAPB),
- One “at-large” farmer from Orange County,
- One “at-large” food system or agriculture business practitioner from Orange County with relevant and beneficial experience,
- Diversity among the Subcommittee is essential in ensuring equitable management of the Grant Program. Every effort will be made by the existing Subcommittee and support staff to seek qualified members from the categories above to encourage diverse participation with regard to race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, and age,
- Designated members from the OCEDAB or OCAPB may serve up to 3 years with an option for renewal if the Subcommittee approves, as long as they are active members of the designated Boards.
- “At-large” members are recruited by the Subcommittee for approval by the County Manager and may also serve up to 3 years with option for renewal,
- Participation is expected and essential. If a member misses more than 2 meetings

in a fiscal year (approximately 50%), the Subcommittee will have the option to remove that member.

- A quorum is required for the Subcommittee to hold an official meeting and conduct business. A quorum is considered attendance by a simple majority of the active members. Attendance may be in-person, virtual, or telephonic.
- The Subcommittee will meet quarterly (if funds are available) to review applications and also as required to conduct follow-up or general business.
- Support will be provided by staff from the Orange County Economic Development Office and Orange County NC Cooperative Extension Service

Procedures

1. Applicants will be referred to a common application link residing on both Orange County's website and Orange County NC Cooperative Extension's website, where they will complete and submit their application. Application deadlines are February 28th, June 30th and October 31st by 5PM. The Subcommittee will meet soon after each deadline if applications have been submitted for that period. Grant cycle deadlines may be adjusted should program funding runout early during the fiscal year. Please check the Orange County Economic Development website for up-to-date information on the next available grant cycle.
2. County staff will provide completed applications to the Subcommittee for their review after the closing deadline and before the scheduled review meeting.
3. Review meetings will begin at the start of each funded fiscal year and will continue until funds are expended for that funding year. At its scheduled meetings, the Subcommittee will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of complete grant application(s) and decide whether or not to take action on the request, based on the information provided. All Applications must be complete, including a descriptive budget. Additional information may be provided if necessary to add clarity or better justification for how funds will be used.
4. The Subcommittee shall approve, deny, or defer and request additional information from the applicant based on the strengths and weakness of the application as reflected in the comprehensive scoring sheet (discussed and agreed-to by the Subcommittee). The Subcommittee may request an interview from an Applicant if greater detail is required to act on the application. Support staff will attend each meeting and document actions of the Subcommittee.
5. The applicant will be informed by email by County staff of the Subcommittee's decision to deny, grant, grant with condition, or seek more information.
6. Should the Subcommittee fully deny an application, the Subcommittee will not consider any applications from that applicant for at least six months. Should an applicant think that their application has been improperly denied, then the

applicant may notify, in writing, the Subcommittee. The notice to the Subcommittee shall state why the applicant thinks the grant should be approved. The application shall then be given further consideration by the Subcommittee and its decision is final.

7. At its discretion, the Subcommittee may impose any additional terms to a grant request.
8. The Subcommittee may request alternative use for the funds from County management should an event or condition broadly impact agricultural operations in the County such that the intent, criteria, and schedule of funding be reconsidered to address that impact.
9. Applicants agree to utilize grant funds for their intended use unless having successfully presented a revised scope of work to the Subcommittee. Each venture receiving a grant must provide an expenditure report indicating how all funds were used and key milestones reached by the venture **within 180 days of the receipt of the grant**. An additional one-year expenditure report on jobs, sales and key milestones of the venture will be required within 365 days of receipt of the grant. This accounting will include a request for proof of expenditures made including copies of receipts and/or photos of the equipment or facility upgrades made. Any use of grant funds for non-intended uses must be justified by a revised scope of work pre-approved by the Subcommittee. This approval will occur through the completion and approval of the "Change of Use" form in the applicant's Submittable Account. Deviation from this approach may result in activation of the "Clawback/Collections Policy" outlined at the end of this document
10. If an applicant fails to complete item #9 in a timely manner, the County has the right to require all grant funds back from the applicant, and may initiate legal proceedings against the applicant.
11. The Subcommittee shall provide annual reports to the Economic Development Department of the number of grants requested, approved and denied, and an analysis of the program's success metrics to date.
12. Documents, including, but not limited to, financial statements, business plans, customer and supplier lists, description of inventory or assets, contractual obligations and existing liabilities, submitted during the application process shall be treated as confidential information.

Expenses

Suitable expenses are those associated with the production and marketing of diversified farm enterprises, value-added, and agritourism endeavors. Grant funds may not be used to reimburse prior expenses incurred before grant funds are received. Funds are not intended for farmer or full-time employee salaries or normal farm operational costs

(utilities, insurance, rent, etc.). Funds should be used as stated in the applicant's proposal unless any requested changes are pre-approved by the Subcommittee.

Funding Limits

The maximum amount any one farm can receive within 3 years of initial funding is \$10,000. Multiple applications and subsequent awards of less than the \$10,000 limit may be made within the 3-year period by one farm entity but may not exceed \$10,000 in total awards for the 3-year period.

Advisors/Mentors

Although not required, advisors and mentors can bring valuable expertise and may increase the likelihood of success of your project. These may include County Agriculture Economic Development Coordinators, other farmers, marketing and production specialists, extension agents, crop consultants, non-profit organizations, businesses and other agricultural advisors.

GRANT APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:

1. Farm Name / DBA
2. Farm Address (must be located in Orange County, NC)
3. Years of Farming Experience
4. Number of Employees
5. Phone number
6. E-mail address
7. Website or Social Media (if available)
8. Percent of Personal Income from Farming Enterprise
9. Annual Sales
10. Amount of Grant Request (\$10,000 max)
11. Budget Summary – (purchase quotes/invoices showing how funds will be used)
12. Owner(s) First & Last Name
13. Owners Address (if different than farm address)
14. Briefly describe your project/plan (scope, intent, goal, etc.) 400 word limit
(Questions 15-20 have 250 word limit)
15. Describe the effects of a successful project (market access, income, jobs, changes to current operations, etc.)
16. Summarize your current market (type, trends, etc.) and describe how a successful project will allow you to more effectively serve that market and/or new markets.
17. Describe anything new or innovative about your project and also what others may learn from your experience.

18. List the major steps/phases of your project and provide an estimated schedule for completion.
19. Describe how your knowledge, skills and abilities support the success of the project.
20. Describe any additional resources/assistance (financial, technical, contractual services, equipment, etc.) needed to complete your project and identify proposed sources for that assistance.

ORANGE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS
CLAWBACK/COLLECTION POLICY

SECTION 1

PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY:

This administrative policy is intended to serve as a guideline by which grant funds may be collected or clawed back by Orange County.

The Economic Development Department administers the following Grant Programs: The Business Investment Grant Program; the Agriculture Grant Program.

Each program has requirements grantees must meet in order to satisfy the terms of their respective grant agreements. Failure to meet the requirements of the programs and the grant agreements and thereafter the failure to cure the initial problem will result in the County exercising its rights to collect or clawback the grant funds.

SECTION 2

COLLECTION PROCEDURE:

Upon discovery by Economic Development staff that a grantee or grantee's agent has failed to comply with the terms of the grant program or grant agreement Economic Development staff shall engage in the following process:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Step 1; | Upon initial discovery, send written notice to the grantee and grantee's agent. Notice may be via email or first-class mail, |
| Step 2; | Upon failure to comply send via first class mail final notice, |
| Step 3; | Upon failure to comply notify the appropriate entity to investigate further. |

Information to be included in Step 1:

- Identify the grantee and grantee's agent responsible for payment
- Identify the terms of the policy or agreement with which the grantee is noncompliant
- Notify the grantee how they may achieve compliance
- Notify the grantee they should come into compliance within 30 days

Information to be included in Step 2:

Notify the grantee that they must come into immediate compliance

Notify the grantee that failure to comply within 10 business days will result in further action

Notify the grantee that further action may involve reporting to law enforcement where fraudulent activity is suspected or collection litigation for all other situations

Step 3:

Notify law enforcement where fraudulent activity is suspected.

For all other situations notify the County Attorney's office possible collection litigation.

For Questions or Inquiries please contact:

Mike Ortosky

Email: jmortosk@ncsu.edu

Phone: (919) 270-6528

Grant applications must be completed and submitted online:

<https://orangecountyeconomicdevelopment.submittable.com/submit>

