

Farm Service Agency Microgrants 2024

Black Food Sovereignty Coalition and Ecotrust are distributing microgrants from a total budget of \$150,000 through a cooperative agreement with the USDA Farm Service Agency.

**Applicants can apply for a one-time grant of \$5,000.
If awarded, funds must be spent by January 31, 2025.**

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- Applicants must be stewarding land or ranching in the Portland Metro area (Oregon) **OR** applicants' commercial production sites must be located partially or wholly in one of the selected urban areas: Portland and the neighboring cities of Beaverton, Gresham, Hillsboro, Milwaukie, Lake Oswego, Oregon City, Fairview, Wood Village, Troutdale, Tualatin, and Tigard.
- Applicant must provide a list of projected expenses (simple budget) for grant funds anticipated use.
- Each farm business may only receive this microgrant once. Please ensure you apply at the time that is most beneficial to your farm business.
- Applicant must derive a portion of their income from their farm business.

**Applications are due
August 13, 2024.**

**Visit our webpage to apply:
bit.ly/2024FSAwebpage**



Scan the QR code
to visit our webpage.

MICROGRANT PURPOSE

- Increase the capacity of urban BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) farmers and other producers for growing food, medicines, fibers, or commodities or for expanding their growing operations;
- Increase urban BIPOC farmers' and other producers capacity for implementing climate-friendly and/or conservation practices that improve soil quality and increase their resilience to a changing climate if funding is not currently available through existing USDA programs.

HOW TO APPLY:

Please submit a proposal by completing the application form on our webpage by the close of business on **August 13, 2024, 11:59:00 PM PT** at bit.ly/2024FSAwebpage

Include in your proposal:

- Complete demographic and contact information
- Answer three questions (listed to the right)

If you require translation services to complete this application, please email fsamicrogrants@ecotrust.org to request translation services in a timely manner.

Please note the grant committee will contact you if further information is needed about your proposal.

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Three questions to answer with your proposal:

- How will this project help increase your capacity for growing food, medicines, fibers, commodities, etc.? Or, how will this project increase your capacity for implementing climate-friendly and conservation practices that improve soil quality and increase resilience to a changing climate?
 - Provide as much detail and information as you can, including the technique, approach and the intended outcomes in up to 5,000 characters including spaces. *There are no preferences for what applicants produce on their operations or for the current scale of the farm.*
- Please attach a simplified budget (if purchasing items, please make a budget that shows the name, amount, and purpose). The total budget must add up to \$5,000.
- Briefly share in a sentence or two a bit about your business's vision, mission, and/or values.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATION INFORMATION

PROGRAM TIMELINE

July 16, 2024

Applications open

July 30, 2024 at 3pm PT

Virtual info session via Zoom

Join at bit.ly/2024FSAinfo

August 13, 2024 at 11:59 PM PT

Applications close

October 2024

Funds disbursed to applicant

January 31, 2025

Funds must be spent

February 28, 2025

Grant reporting due

APPLICATION REVIEW CRITERIA

The selection committee comprises staff members from Black Food Sovereignty Coalition, Ecotrust, and USDA Farm Service Agency.

Projects will be prioritized based on potential impact and success.

The highest scoring applicants will be selected and awarded microgrants, and all applicants will then be notified of selection statuses. Microgrant awardees will sign a contract with Ecotrust agreeing to the terms and conditions of the microgrant and will be **required to submit a finance report detailing the use of their funds. The entire microgrant award will be issued as a one-time \$5,000 payment.**

GRANT AWARD REQUIREMENTS

If awarded, the recipient (or beneficiary) must:

- Submit a short (no more than one page) narrative report that demonstrates how funds were used, **inclusive of financial summary and receipts/invoices must show proof of payment.** Language translation is available upon request.
- Spend the entirety of their grant before their report is due on February 28, 2025 (Savings accounts for later use are not eligible for these funds).

The awardee's name will be included in a public announcement of grant recipients.

Ecotrust and USDA will work with some grant recipients to share their stories through national communications channels. We will also ask that you sign a USDA photo release form so that USDA may highlight your story. Grant recipients have the option to opt out of this coverage. We encourage grant recipients to opt in as success stories to help demonstrate the need to increase funding levels to USDA programs that benefit urban farmers.

Please note that this grant is taxable income. Please consult with your tax advisor on any potential impacts this might have on your tax liability.



*Hands holding fresh mint.
Photo by Noah Thomas*

SELECTED URBAN LOCATIONS

The intended area includes Portland and the neighboring cities of Beaverton, Gresham, Hillsboro, Milwaukie, Lake Oswego, Oregon City, Fairview, Wood Village, Troutdale, Tualatin, and Tigard. Applicants' commercial production sites must be located partially or wholly in one of the above locations.

DEFINITIONS

Please note: the USDA defines **Urban Agriculture** to include the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products (food or non-food) in urban and suburban areas. Urban farming can provide environmental, economic, and social benefits to the surrounding communities. ([USDA](#); website accessed on 2024-06-11)

The term “**Beginning Farmer or Rancher**” means a participant who has not operated a farm or ranch, or who has operated a farm or ranch for not more than 10 consecutive years, and who will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm or ranch.

The term “**Socially Disadvantaged**” means an individual or entity who is a member of a socially disadvantaged group. A socially disadvantaged group is a group whose members have been subject to racial or ethnic prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities.

Socially disadvantaged groups consist of the following:

- American Indians or Alaskan Natives
- Asians
- Blacks or African Americans
- Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders
- Hispanics

For an entity, at least 50 percent ownership in the farm business must be held by socially disadvantaged individuals.

([NRCS](#); website accessed on 2024-06-11)



*Ecotrust staff volunteer at a partner farm.
Photo by Jason Hill*

ELIGIBLE USES OF MICROGRANT FUNDING

Items marked with an asterisk (*) are considered climate-smart projects.

- To leverage or implement conservation practices*
- Purchase on-farm infrastructure
- Leasing of processing facility and cold storage
- Provide cost share for supplies and equipment if funding isn't currently available and/or hasn't already been awarded through other existing USDA programs for the designated microgrant recipients.*
- To expand their growing operations if funding is not currently available through existing USDA programs.
- Irrigation improvements to reduce water use*
- Solar powered water/well pumps*
- Other water efficiency projects (piping, mulching, system automation and remote monitoring, or other irrigation modernization)*
- Shade cloth to protect plants from heat*
- Shading structures for plants (greenhouses, high-tunnels, etc) and/or livestock*
- Opaque plastics and row covers*
- Shade structures for workers*
- Refrigeration and cold storage
- Reduced or no tillage (labor or equipment purchases)*
- Composting, mulching, or addition of other organic amendments (compost, compost systems, spreaders; biochar, chippers or biochar reactors; aggregating organic debris to distribute to farmers; mulchers or equipment to spread mulch)*
- Cover cropping and seeds*
- Rotational grazing (fencing, shade structures, water troughs)*
- Tree planting*
- Planting of drought/heat/climate resilient seeds/varieties*
- Transition to or implementation of dry farming practices*
- Adapting planting and harvest times, transitioning to new varieties, and transitioning to new crops, diversification of overall production to avoid late season heat impacts*
- Increase season extension infrastructure*
- Frost protection for earlier planting to avoid late season heat*
- Purchasing animal feed
- Livestock trailers
- Creating an on-farm disaster plan (heat/smoke policies, evacuation plan)*
- Implements/equipment to improve soil health or support other resilience activities/strategies (no-till seed drill, flail mower, roller crimpers, manure spreader, and others)*
- Purchasing water and/or paying water bills
- Personal protective equipment, on-farm safety gear, etc.
- Market support, equipment, application and vending fees, market labor, etc
- SNAP/FNS authorization, SNAP processing equipment, PNW CSA Coalition membership/fees, etc.
- Other expenses may also be considered

INELIGIBLE USES OF MICROGRANT FUNDING

- Cannabis or hemp, regardless of tested THC level
- Staff time (salaried or hourly, full-time or part-time employees) that is unrelated to the specific grant-funded project being implemented
- Community or backyard gardens and other hobby-gardening projects that do not represent a commercial production venture

If you are unsure whether an activity is eligible for microgrant funding, contact fsamicrogrants@ecotrust.org

Please note that if funds are being utilized or supporting a project that has environmental disturbances, additional approval will be required from USDA FSA.

Please review the [environmental review process](#) which includes a list of potential environmental disturbances.

ABOUT THE PORTLAND URBAN AGRICULTURE COOPERATORS PROGRAM

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing \$1.5M to support urban farms across the Portland Metro region. Ecotrust has been selected by the USDA to lead these efforts. Ecotrust will expand the Farm Service Agency's existing outreach efforts to urban agriculture producers through technical assistance, outreach, and education, and will allocate resources to urban agricultural producers to implement conservation and climate-friendly farming practices that reduce susceptibility to natural disasters and increase supply chain resiliency.

ABOUT BLACK FOOD SOVEREIGNTY COALITION

Black Food Sovereignty Coalition (BFSC) exists to ignite Black and Brown communities to participate as owners and movement leaders within food systems, placemaking, and economic development. We serve as a collaboration hub for Black and Brown communities to confront the systemic barriers that make food, place and economic opportunities inaccessible to us. BFSC is focused on meeting these barriers with creative, innovative, and sustainable solutions.

ABOUT ECOTRUST

At Ecotrust, we work in partnership from California to Alaska toward the vision of a more just, prosperous, and climate-smart future. Across more than 30 projects and with hundreds of partners, our approach focuses on impact at the intersections of equity, the economy, and the environment. Together, we uplift Indigenous leadership to respond to contemporary lands and water management challenges, connect schools with local producers, provide technical support for community-centered businesses, and more. We welcome you to join us in the pursuit of radical, practical change.



Ecotrust