



MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

FARM AND RANCH STRESS ASSISTANCE MINI-GRANT PROGRAM

GUIDELINES

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This program was created to address mental health needs in rural communities and the agriculture industry through the use of mental health speakers, workshops and new or expanding trainings that support emotional, psychological, and social well-being. The overarching goal of the Mini Grants Program is to facilitate and support outreach activities by providing a range of services, including trainings, workshops, and support services that will directly improve agriculture-related stress and agricultural suicide prevention for Montana.

Activities could include but are not limited to:

- Mental health speaker for your annual conference
- Mental health awareness workshops
- Trainings to help increase knowledge and skills on recognizing mental health issues
- Stress assistance workshops

Approved Mini-Grants will reimburse community organizations in Montana for the expense of trainings, workshops, and support services that will directly improve agriculture-related stress and agricultural suicide prevention. The maximum award amount is \$10,000. The minimum award amount is \$1,000.

AUTHORITY AND TOTAL FUNDING AVAILABLE

This funding is approved under the USDA Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network program (FRSAN). The Department expects to award \$150,000 in funds for this project. Applications will be accepted until funds are expended.

CRITICAL DATES

September 1, 2021	Post Notice of Funding
September 7, 2021	Review of applications begins
September 10, 2021	First day activities may begin
August 15, 2024	Last day to submit a proposal
August 31, 2024	Last day to complete project activities
September 30, 2024	Last day to submit request for reimbursement

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Applicants must be Montana based.
2. Registered with SAM.gov
3. Registered and in good standing with Montana Secretary of State
4. May not be debarred or suspended from receiving federal or state funding
5. Activity must be relevant to farmers and ranchers in Montana and address causes and solutions for agriculture stress in Montana.
6. Only one award per organization. County Subsidiaries of an organization will count as a different entity
7. Each award must benefit more than one company / or individual.
8. The Montana Department of Agriculture will make the final decision as to a company's eligibility for this program.
9. The activity must take place between September 1, 2021 and August 31, 2024.

ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

1. Speaker Fees
2. Travel costs for speaker (airfare or mileage, hotel, per diem) (These must follow federal per diem guidelines for Montana - <https://www.gsa.gov/travel/plan-book/per-diem-rates>)
3. Room Rental Fees
4. Educational materials
5. Materials to promote awareness of trainings and events

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

1. Expenditures directly related to the operation of the business (staff salaries, printing of generic business brochures and handouts, general advertising not related to the activity).
2. Expenses related to influencing legislation or decision makers
3. Meal expenses
4. Alcohol
5. Expenses not directly related to this request for proposals

APPLICATION & REVIEW PROCESS

Potential participants must complete and return the Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Mini-Grant Program application with required attachments at least **10 business days prior to when the activity will take place.**

A review panel, consisting of Department of Agriculture staff will review applications. To be eligible for reimbursement, written or electronic approval from the Montana Department of Agriculture **MUST BE** received before activity takes place. **No applications will be considered after an event has occurred.**

AWARD LIMITATIONS

An organization may receive 1 award per Federal fiscal year (September 1- August 31). The total individual award amount is limited to eligible expenditures not to exceed \$10,000 per organization. The minimum amount is \$1000. All awards are dependent on funds available.

The recipient shall function independently in performing the activity and shall assume sole responsibility of any debts or liabilities that may be incurred in regard to the activity. The award cannot be reassigned.

REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Approved applicants must submit a completed W9 and EFT form at the time of contracting to be eligible for reimbursement. A final report must be submitted to the department upon completion of the activity. A brief outline of the activity, how many people were in attendance and overall outcomes.

To receive reimbursement, visit your account in Amplifund. Reimbursement forms must be completed in entirety and submitted to the Department of Agriculture within 45 days of the activity.

APPLICATION FORM

A sample application can be found at agr.mt.gov/FRSAN.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

After grant awards have been made, all Grant Proposal packets and the associated evaluations will be available to the public. PRIOR TO SUBMITTING a proposal to the Department you must send a written description of the information you believe is subject to confidentiality (including trade secrets, as defined by Mont. Code Ann. 30-14-402). Department legal staff will review the description to determine if the information is such that there is an individual privacy interest worthy of constitutional protection. If the privacy interest clearly exceeds the merits of public disclosure, the Department will furnish the applicant with a confidentiality agreement to be signed and submitted with the constitutionally protected information. Information received pursuant to an approved confidentiality agreement will be available for review only by evaluation committee members, the Department of Agriculture Director and Department legal counsel. Applicants shall pay all legal costs associated with defending a claim for confidentiality should another person or entity submit a "right to know" (open records) request.

SCREENING CRITERIA

- Are all required materials included in the application?
- Are all sections of the proposal complete?
- Is the applicant's organization eligible to apply?
- Are the applicant and listed contractors eligible to receive federal funds (not suspended or debarred)?
- Is the application in compliance with applicable federal and state regulations and in alignment with this notice?
- If a previous grantee, has the organization successfully completed past projects?
- Does the applicant have the background and ability to successfully manage and complete the proposed project?
- Will the project be completed in the grant period?
- Is the applicant in good standing with the Department of Agriculture?
- Is the applicant registered with Montana Secretary of State and SAM.gov

APPLICATION REVIEW

Applications will be scored in the following areas

- Activities and Achievements – 10 possible points
- Timeframe – 5 possible points
- Budget – 5 possible points

GRANT AGREEMENT

Approved applicants will receive a contract formalizing the relationship under which the project will be conducted. Grantees must sign and return the contract to MDA before funds can be drawn on the project. In signing the contract, the grantee agrees to complete the project as described in the final proposal accepted by MDA, this will include any agreed upon revisions between the grantee and MDA.

REQUESTS FOR RECONSIDERATION

Applicants who wish to have the results of Screening or Evaluation reconsidered may make such request based on substantive issues of fact concerning bias, discrimination, conflicts of interest and/or non-compliance with procedures described in this Funding Notice.

The request for reconsideration must be submitted in writing to the Department of Agriculture Marketing Manager within 7 days following notification of the Screening or Evaluation results.

Requests for reconsideration must describe the substantive fact(s) concerning bias, discrimination, conflict of interest, or noncompliance that affected the screening or evaluation of their proposal.

MDA Legal Counsel and/or their designee will review the request for reconsideration to determine whether the claims made are substantiated and likely to have resulted in an inaccurate, inconsistent or unfair assessment of their proposal.

The applicant will be notified of the results of Legal Counsel's review within 7 days of the receipt of their request.

Should MDA Legal Counsel find that claims are substantiated, all application materials and the accompanying request for reconsideration will be provided to the MDA Director for review.

For more information contact:

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