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Agricultural Energy Program Grant

A collaborative project of the Department of Environmental Management, Division of Agriculture and Office of Air Resources, the Rhode Island Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc. and the RI Office of Energy Resources



For the implementation of agricultural projects that improve energy efficiency and facilitate renewable energy.

Description of Ag-Energy Program Grant 2019

Index

I.	Purpose	Page 2
II.	Project Categories	2
III.	Project Proposal Eligibility Criteria and Requirements.....	3
IV.	Funding Details	4-5
V.	Criteria for Evaluation.....	6
VI.	Duration of Contract, Disbursement of Funds, & Conditions of Cancellation...	7

**RIRC&D accepts applications twice per year.
Application dates for 2019**

Spring Deadline:
4:00 p.m. **Friday, March 29th, 2019**

Fall Deadline:
4:00 p.m. **Friday, October 18th, 2019**

Description of Agricultural Energy Program Grant

I. Purpose

The Rhode Island Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc. (RI RC&D) and the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations Department of Environmental Management, Division of Agriculture and Office of Air Resources (Department) request Rhode Island Agricultural Operations to submit applications seeking funding for agricultural energy projects in an effort to improve energy efficiency and promote renewable (clean) energy technologies.

DEPARTMENT and the RI RC&D share common objectives to:

- Keep agriculture a viable and growing sector of Rhode Island's economy
- Increase the number of small and emerging farmers participating in Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency projects;
- Reduce energy consumption thereby, decreasing the carbon footprint of the agricultural community;

Combination Advance/Reimbursement grants of up to \$20,000 will be awarded on a competitive basis. All projects must be completed within a year of award and all reimbursements are subject to Department funding sources. Satisfactory receipts for costs of approved practices must be submitted to RI RC&D and approved prior to any reimbursement.

II. Project Categories

Though all farm related energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that meet RI Ag-Energy Program requirements will be considered, higher priority project proposals should focus on either of two (2) specified categories and respective technologies listed below—

Category One: Energy Efficiency

Geothermal—

- High efficiency air-source/ground source heat pumps as applied to agricultural operations

Greenhouses and Nurseries

- Thermal curtains
- Envelope Insulation
- Natural ventilation
- Root zone heating (under bench)
- Electronic temperature controls

Dairy

- Plate cooler
- Variable speed vacuum pumps
- Refrigeration heat recovery / free heaters

Maple Sugaring, Food Production & Other Technologies

- High efficiency evaporators
- Reverse osmosis (RO) systems
- Heat recovery & steam enhanced units
- Higher efficiency heating, ventilation & air conditioning systems (HVAC)
- Insulation

- Lighting
- High efficiency refrigeration (optimally with heat recovery)
- Doors and windows
- Cold storage systems
- Process heat recovery
- Energy efficient technologies advancing urban food gardens

Category Two: Renewable Energy

- Solar photovoltaics (PV)
- Wind
- Geothermal as part of a net metered agricultural system
- Biomass as part of a net metered agricultural system

Description of Agricultural Energy Program Grant

III. Project Proposal Eligibility Criteria and Requirements

Eligible Agricultural Operations are those that fulfill the following requirements:

- The “Agricultural Operation” includes any commercial enterprise which has as its primary purpose horticulture, viticulture, floriculture, forestry, stabling of horses, dairy farming, or aquaculture, or the raising of livestock, including for the production of fiber, furbearing animals, poultry, or bees, and all such other operations, uses, and activities as the director, in consultation with the chief of division of agriculture, may determine to be agriculture, or an agricultural activity, use or operation. The mixed-use of farms and farmlands for other forms of enterprise is hereby recognized as a valuable and viable means of contributing to the preservation of agriculture;
- The “Agricultural Operation” has produced at least \$2,500 in annual income from farming operations in the previous year;
- The “Agricultural Operation” is a legally recognized entity within the State of Rhode Island that has the ability to enter into a legally binding agreement with the State;
- The “Agricultural Operation” demonstrates evidence of balance of project funding in addition to the funding requested by their responsive proposal to this Request for Application (RFA);
- The “Agricultural Operation” demonstrates the capacity to implement and administer projects and programs as defined in their responsive proposals to this RFA.

Farm Stands

- To be eligible, a farm stand needs to meet the intent of an "Agricultural Operation" whereby the purpose of the farm stand shall be to sell agricultural products, a majority of which are produced by the applicants farming operation.

Eligible Proposals

Projects that support agricultural operations and activities as defined by [National Right to Farm Act](http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/righttofarm) (<http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/righttofarm>)

Energy Efficiency Audit

- The “Agricultural Operation” must have received a general energy efficiency audit, or demonstrate the initiation of such which shall be completed as part of the program fulfillment and will be accepted at completion of the project.

NOTE: In the event the completion of an energy audit is impossible or impractical for the proposed project, the Grant Committee may waive this requirement on an individual basis.

Ineligible Proposals

- Proposals for projects that have already been completed or for which the applicant seeks reimbursement are ineligible
- Proposals from applicants whose operation is out of compliance with any federal, state or local laws or regulations are ineligible.
- Requests for audits or feasibility studies are ineligible
- Any renewable energy projects using the Renewable Energy Growth (REG) Program are ineligible. **Note:** The funding source for this RFA is the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Projects may not utilize both REG and RGGI funding.
- Any renewable energy projects NOT designed to interconnect to the utility grid are ineligible. All renewable energy projects must be interconnected and provide an interconnection authorization from the utility in order to receive the final grant payment.

Description of Agricultural Energy Program Grant

IV. Funding Details

Maximum Funding

- **All funding is subject to appropriation**
- Maximum funding per applicant, per year, shall be \$20,000 which shall be for the direct costs associated with the materials and labor related to implementing the project.
- Satisfactory documentation for final reimbursement in the form of cancelled checks (both sides), bank statements, receipts, invoices, etc. for costs associated with approved projects must be submitted to RI RC&D and approved prior to reimbursement.
- For renewable energy projects, an interconnection authorization from the utility must be provided for final reimbursement.
- RI RC&D would like to fund as many eligible projects as possible; RI RC&D encourages projects requesting less than the maximum \$20,000. RI RC&D reserves the right to revise the initial funding request based on project evaluation.
- Though there is no maximum percentage of total project cost funding that can be requested, it is desired that projects are able to demonstrate contributions from other sources. This includes evidence of a match of dollars to the funding requested in this RFA.
- Funding requests can be for specific components of a project. However, the applicant must demonstrate that such a request will result in a complete functional and operable system.
- **Any incurred project costs that occur prior to an executed contract with RIRC&D are NOT eligible for reimbursement from RI RC&D.**
- Only work that satisfies the terms and conditions of this RFA, contract, and any other instructions by RI RC&D shall be eligible for reimbursement.

Installation Standards and Permits

All construction shall be completed and installed in accordance with all applicable federal, state and local codes, ordinances and regulations.

New construction and new equipment incentives shall be based on incremental costs from minimum code and standard efficiency baselines.

Equipment and materials must be new, and all PV equipment must be listed under [California Energy Commission list of eligible equipment](http://www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/equipment) (<http://www.gosolarcalifornia.ca.gov/equipment>) and UL listed.

- Solar PV projects shall meet the [Renewable Energy Fund's Minimum Technical Requirements](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4my6hqps6ziZIV3eTRRN0FzMXM/view) (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4my6hqps6ziZIV3eTRRN0FzMXM/view>).

If a project cannot meet 80% Total Solar Resource Fraction (TSRF), please provide a letter, on letterhead, indicating that the project will still provide financial benefit to the applicant and that the applicant is aware the project is not eligible for a Renewable Energy Fund grant from Commerce RI.

- In order to be considered a qualified vendor, applicants must include legible photocopies of the following documentation.
 - Rhode Island Contractors' Registration and Licensing Boards registration
 - Rhode Island Renewable Energy Professional Certificate and/or a valid A electrical license (when applicable)
 - Proof of registration with the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Office. Corporations, LLC's., etc. must file the proper paper work with the Rhode Island Secretary of State's Office. Any fictitious names used must be on file with the Secretary of State and must reflect the registration number of the registered entity. A copy of the certificate of

Description of Agricultural Energy Program Grant

registration is necessary for each “business entity” even if said entity is owned by the same individual pursuant to RIGL 5-65-1 (3) (ii).

- Renewable energy projects shall meet all state and federal rules, regulations and requirements and shall be installed by contractors engaged, licensed and certified in the relevant technologies
- Wind energy projects shall meet the Renewable Energy Fund’s Minimum Technical Requirements. Turbines must be SWCC certified or have applicable IEC Standards

Site Visit

All projects which are favorably reviewed in the initial evaluation process will require a field visit prior to final award determinations being made. A favorable initial evaluation and field visit **DOES NOT** guarantee funding for a proposed project. The purposes of the field visit are as follows:

- Verify the information presented in the proposal;
- View the Agricultural Operation and assess the resource to be addressed;
- Verify the operation is engaged in commercial agriculture;
- Determine the appropriateness of the proposed project for the farm;
- Confirm the ability to implement and maintain the proposed project;
- Explore other items deemed necessary;
- Develop a basis for future “before and after” comparisons.

Large Scale Renewable Energy Projects

- Higher priority will be given to non-utility scale, or non-large scale commercial projects that demonstrate predominately agriculturally related renewable energy usage.
- Renewable energy projects must be net metered and connected to the utility grid.

Project Specific Energy Assessment & Project Design

- Projects should include, or demonstrate the commitment of professional design and, if applicable, engineering support needed for building the project.
- Preference shall be given to applicants who demonstrate they are construction ready.
- Proposals should include a project specific energy efficiency and/or renewable energy assessment documenting the proposed project energy savings and project cost-benefit analysis. (Note: The project specific energy efficiency assessment may be part of the farm’s general energy efficiency audit.)

Permits

- Proposals which are favorably reviewed and awarded a contract must apply for and receive all required permits, licenses, and any other federal, state, or local approvals necessary for the project prior to any reimbursement from RI RC&D.

Additional Funding Requirements

- Projects receiving and/or applying to receive funds through other programs, such as the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Commerce RI Renewable Energy Fund (REF), must provide this information in the RFA Project Economics Section. Federal Investment Tax Credit (FITC), known or anticipated, must also be shown.
- Preference shall be given to applicants who demonstrate having the balance of funding needed to implement the proposed project.
- No monies granted by RI RC&D shall be disbursed unless and until the proposed project is shown to be fully funded. If the Grantee can't obtain full funding, RI RC&D will declare the grant null and void and no monies shall be disbursed.

Description of Agricultural Energy Program Grant

V. Criteria for Evaluation

Responses to the Request for Application (RFA) are evaluated based upon the following criteria which are marked in importance by awarding points.

- Application is in compliance with the submission requirements and format for this RFA.
- Adequate supporting project documentation (e.g., general energy audit, project specific assessments, energy saving calculations, turn-key contracts, site plans, and equipment specifications, etc.).
- Adequate return on investment (ROI) documentation for either energy efficiency or renewable energy as defined herein.
- Adequate identification of permit needs.
- Adequate project implementation schedule.
- Adequate identification of any on-going operation and maintenance and/or periodic replacement needs and how they will be accomplished to ensure project longevity.
- Project has a realistic opportunity to have a successful long term impact given the expected life of the equipment and the resulting cost savings, cost avoidance, and other revenue streams contributing to the project cash flow.
- Project has a realistic opportunity to be successfully implemented given the scope, budget, necessary permits and timeline.
- Applicant demonstrates the capacity to implement and administer projects and programs as defined in the responsive proposals to this RFA.
- Project team make-up demonstrates the commitment, experience, and ability to assist the applicant in making the project proposed in this RFA successful.
- Adequate documentation of equipment, labor, and workmanship warranties.
- Minimum three year workmanship warranty for renewable energy projects.
- Project demonstrates balance of funding from other or in-kind sources.
- Applicant demonstrates the capacity to implement and administer projects and programs as defined in the responsive proposals to this RFA.
- Preference shall be given to applicants with construction ready projects and to those projects that have completed or will be in the process of design engineering, receiving quotes for materials and labor from qualified professionals engaged in the field of work specified, intend to begin and complete the construction/ implementation stage and can demonstrate balance of funding to implement the proposed project.
- All project priorities and preferences stated herein.
- All applications being considered for award will need a site visit. Information gathered during the site visit can be used as evaluation criteria. The Department (Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Division of Agriculture and Office of Air Resources) reserves the right to fund only applications that receive an initial favorable review and a satisfactory field visit to verify proposal details

Description of Agricultural Energy Program Grant

VI. Duration of Contract, Disbursement of Funds, & Conditions of Cancellation

The duration of the project will be stipulated in the Cooperative Contract Agreement entered into by the Grantor and the Grantee at the commencement of the project. Generally, a project should be completed within one year from the Beginning Date on the agreement, and the Grantee is allowed an additional 90 days (the Final Date stipulated) to complete all final requirements.

An extension MAY be granted if RI RC&D approves. Any request for extension will be reviewed on a case by case basis, and RI RC&D will make every attempt to work with the Grantee to make the project successful. However, if delays or problems have not been reported promptly, or if the extension has not been requested in a timely manner the extension may be denied and the grant declared null and void.

Reporting

An Interim Progress Report is mandatory and must be submitted on or before the Interim Report Date stipulated in the Cooperative Contract Agreement, usually six months after the Beginning Date. The report may be submitted on paper or by email, and it must accurately describe overall progress in conducting the program, and note any difficulties or problems met in carrying out the program, and report any delays that may affect completion date of the project.

Disbursement of Granted Funds

RI RC&D grant money awarded can only be dispersed to the Grantee upon proof that the project is fully funded. If the project is not fully funded, the grant will be declared null and void, and no grant money will be paid.

Initial Payment

To receive the first half payment of any RIRC&D monies awarded, the Grantee must provide documentation showing that all other grants or funding sources are in place and that the Total Project Cost required for the project as stipulated in the Project Finances section of the RFA is available to the Grantee.

One half the granted funds shall be disbursed when the following documents have been submitted to RI RC&D, reviewed for completeness, and approved (approximately one week):

- Documented proof confirming that the Project is FULLY funded
- A signed copy of the RI RC&D Cooperative Contract Agreement
- Original signed contract(s) with the project contractor(s)
- A completed W-9 Form
- A signed copy of RI RC&D's Project Reporting and Payment Schedule Agreement

If any required documentation is not submitted, is incomplete, or is deemed unacceptable to the Grantor, RI RC&D, the payment process will be delayed until complete and acceptable documentation is submitted to the Grantor.

Final Payment

This payment shall be made upon the following conditions:

- Proof of completion of the 30-day operational period that demonstrates that the project is fully functioning
- Final Report is received accounting for all monies spent and showing that they have been spent in accordance with the conditions agreed.
- Approval of the final reports by the Grantor.

All final documentation shall be submitted for review and approval as soon as it is received by RI RC&D.

Upon RI RC&D final approval, all remaining granted funds shall be disbursed to the Grantee

Terms of Grant Cancellation and Re-Payment of Grant Funds

If by the Final Date stipulated in the Cooperative Contract Agreement all required and requested information has not been received, the grant will be cancelled and any and all payments made to the Grantee will be immediately repaid to the Rhode Island Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc.

Renewable energy systems or energy efficiency Improvements that are not deemed operational by the Final Date shall not receive final payment and any and all payments made to the Grantee will be immediately repaid to the Rhode Island Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc.