

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

GRANT PROGRAM FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO DEVELOP AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION PLANS

NEW INFO: October 1, 2007- Please see questions 14 and 15.

The following questions have been frequently asked:

1. Q: What is the deadline for submitting the grant application to the Department of Agriculture?

A: No deadline exists. Grants will be funded on a first come first served basis until funding available for FY2007-2008 has been awarded.

2. Q: What kind of response should be submitted to the Department?

A: Applicants need to respond by completing Application Form A (Narrative and Scope of Work) including developing a work plan for the required work tasks and filling out the Budget Form B-1 (Proposed Project Budget) and B-2 (Budget Summary).

3. Q. Will a municipal resolution be required for submitting the application?

A: Yes. The authorizing resolution must be signed by the chief elected official of the municipal legislative body.

4. Q. If the municipality intends to hire a consultant to develop the Municipal Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

must the consultant be hired at the time of application submission?

A. No. The municipality does not have to hire the consultant prior to a grant award. The municipality may want to identify who they are considering to do the plan if they obtain an award and detail their experience in developing local agricultural protection plans. It is important to note that costs incurred prior to the approval of a contract by the Department shall not be eligible for reimbursement.

5. Q. Please provide examples of activities that are eligible for grant funding.

A. Activities, programs or strategies intended to promote continued agricultural use in the community. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

Municipalities may develop or revise the agricultural sections of the municipal comprehensive plan to insure that local planning documents contain clear language and explicit policies that are supportive of the local agricultural industry.

Municipalities may initiate a review of existing municipal zoning ordinances and land use regulations to determine if these documents are consistent with the stated agricultural and farmland protection policies contained within the comprehensive plan.

Municipalities may evaluate the full range of zoning and land use techniques available to protect agriculture. (Please see American Farmland Trust's "Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York" for a review of zoning options and planning techniques to protect agriculture). Municipalities may evaluate the impact of various land use tools to protect

agriculture within their community and select a preferred approach. They may conduct a build out analysis for the selected approach and adopt best options to protect agriculture.

Municipalities may and are encouraged to survey farmers and citizens to identify agricultural and farmland protection needs. Public participation programs are important and are eligible for funding and this effort should include activities that involve area farmers, the public, members of the county agricultural protection board and local and county officials.

Municipalities may develop GIS maps or other mapping techniques to identify and overlay: prime agricultural soils, active farms by type, Agricultural Districts, and zoning within farm areas. Priority farms that are proposed to be protected should be identified.

Existing and proposed infrastructure plans may be evaluated for possible impact on agriculture production.

These are examples and other work activities to protect agriculture at the local level may be proposed.

6. Q. Are there reports or guides that may help local government officials develop ideas that may be helpful in formulating an approach to this planning grant?

A. Yes. Prior to grant submission, applicants may want to obtain a copy of the “Guide to Local Planning for Agriculture in New York” published by the American Farmland Trust. Information contained in the Guide may assist local officials in formulating a work plan tailored specifically to agricultural and farmland protection needs of their

community. Please contact John.Brennan@agmkt.state.ny.us to request a copy.

7. Q. Can you explain the basic match requirement for this grant program?

A. The match requirement for this program is 75% funding from the State and 25% funding from the applicant. The maximum amount of funds any one municipality may receive is \$25,000. For example, to receive the full \$25,000 state award the proposed planning project would have a total cost of at least \$33,333. (i.e., 75% of \$33,333 is \$25,000). In this example, 25% of \$33,333 totals \$8,333 and this will be the local share. Of the \$8,333 required by the applicant, the minimum local cash match contribution may be 20% of the \$8,333 or \$1,667 in cash. The remaining 80% of the local contribution may be \$6,666 of in-kind services.

8. Q. How should the cash match be documented?

A. An applicant may identify the cash match by resolution or in a letter from an authorized municipal official obligating the cash match. Please attached cash match documentation to the application.

10. Q. What type of activities can be covered by the in-kind match?

A. The in-kind match contribution may cover such costs as secretarial services by town personnel, printing costs associated with the project, costs of supplies, costs of preparing and sending communications, setting up public meetings, etc. These in-kind costs along with the cash match are to be used by the applicant to cover all in-kind services/activities. Please see Application form B-1

(Proposed Project Budget) regarding the applicant match column, which separates the applicant match into a cash column and an in-kind column.

- 11.Q. How would a municipality go about identifying or locating farmland or agricultural areas proposed for protection as identified within Circular 1500 under section 324-a, "...plans shall include but not limited to: a) the location of any lands or areas proposed to be protected. " This required task may be addressed in the scope of work in various ways and the following is one possible approach.

Activity #1) Review New York Agricultural District maps and reports for farmland areas within the municipality; identify important farmland outside the Agricultural District. Develop a town wide overlay map identifying prime agricultural soils and soils of state wide importance. Overlay maps of sewer lines and water lines.

Activity #2) Develop a summary report and master map of farmland and prime soils within the town; identify blocks of farmland to be protected.

Activity #3) Review master map of farmland proposed to be protected with farmers and the public, adjust as needed.

End Product: Develop a summary report and map(s) of farmland and agricultural areas proposed to be protected.

12. Q. If two municipalities intend to make a joint application, how should they go about submitting application information to the Department?

A. Two municipalities may jointly apply to the State for funding for a total maximum state funding award of \$50,000. A joint application may be formally approved by each municipality through an inter-municipal agreement. The agreement must address such key issues as work task

responsibilities, financial contribution of local match responsibilities including cash match, lead agent and a principal contact person for each municipality, public hearing arrangements, plan approval process, dispute resolution, and process of termination of agreement, etc. A resolution authorizing the submission of the application must be signed by the chief elected official of each municipality's legislative body.

13. Q. What is the duration of the project?

A. Proposed projects should be completed within 24 months from the date of the signed contract.

14. Q. Our town has selected the chair of the planning board to head up the advisory committee to oversee the development of the agricultural and farmland protection plan. This is a volunteer position, but can the time this person spends on plan development be counted as part of the in-kind match?

A. Volunteer services will not be accepted as part of the match.

15. Q. Are indirect and overhead charges acceptable as part of the municipal match?

A. Both indirect and overhead charges will not be accepted as part of the municipal match.