



SMADC Southern Maryland Farmer Mini-Grant Program (Round 9)
Criteria and Guidelines
Grant Opens November 1 and closes January 1, 2022
Grant Recipients notified Mid-February 2022

Stated Purpose: The Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) is offering another round of mini-grants. This program designed to assist new and beginning farmers who own or lease existing agricultural properties with small start-up projects, and to assist experienced farmers who are looking to diversify or expand a current agriculture project. The projects should be simple in scope and must be successfully completed within one year. SMADC awards will be up to \$2,000 per applicant and is a one-to-one match by the farmer.

In 2016 SMADC conducted surveys, listening sessions and invited the Southern Maryland farming community to tell SMADC what it needs. The Agricultural Mini-Grant program was established based on what SMADC heard from the farming community. SMADC's mission is to support farms and the future of agriculture in Southern Maryland. We are committed to expanding and promoting a viable market-driven, sustainable, and profitable agricultural farming community.

Examples of Projects that would be considered:

- Services or equipment that help transition a farm's sales strategy such as online sales, home delivery, on-farm sales, etc.; or for other projects that allow farm business to maintain and/or expand sales.
- Purchase of foundation livestock.
- Purchase of plant stock.
- Marketing and promotion of current farm operation.
- New fencing.
- Hoop house.
- Materials needed for value-added production.
- Materials needed for on-farm upgrades to enhance food safety.

Agricultural Mini-Grants may not be used for:

- Maintenance and repairs to farm equipment.
- Administrative expenses, website hosting costs, or events.
- In-kind labor and matching funds from other state or federal grants.
- Improvements to current infrastructure, or repairs to existing structures, unless it can be demonstrated that the improvements will expand the overall agricultural economic impact of a current farm project.

Eligibility:

- Does not include non-profits or community organizations.
- Farmers must have an official document that proves the enterprise is a farm business; a Schedule F, K1 Form, 1120S, or document showing farm ownership or a farm lease agreement. The document can be uploaded in the application portal.

- Applicants must be residing and farming in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, or St. Mary's counties.
- Youth (16 years and older) who are in or have been in FFA, 4-H, agricultural related programs, or classes, or have a farming background are encouraged to apply.
- The applicant must match funds awarded dollar to dollar. For example, if the applicant is awarded \$500, they must put \$500 toward the project budget.
- No more than one application awarded, per applicant and/or farm entity during a 12-month period, with a lifetime award limit of \$6,000, whichever comes first.

Funding: For this round of grants (November 1st - January 1st, 2022) \$41,195 of funding is available. The number of applicants may exceed the amount of funding available and therefore applications will be ranked. See "Evaluation Criteria" at the end of this document.

Criteria for grant awards:

- Consistent with definition of the Agricultural Mini-Grant stated purpose.
- Demonstrated ability of applicant to initiate, administer and complete project within proposed timeframe and budget.
- Matching funds are required for this grant.
- **One letter of reference from either your county's Soil Conservation District, Farm Bureau, University of Maryland Extension, or Economic Development Office**
- If the applicant is not 18 years old, a letter from their parents or guardian allowing them to apply for the Agricultural Mini-Grant is required.
- The first 30 COMPLETE applications (with the required uploaded attachments) submitted will be ranked higher and may be used as a determining factor in the review process.
- SMADC reserves the right to review applications, suggest changes, and have the applicant resubmit.

Application Procedure:

1. Applications must be submitted online.
2. Applications must be received by January 1st, 2022
3. After the applicant submits an application, an email confirmation will be sent to confirm receipt of application.
4. The first 30 COMPLETE applications (with the required uploaded attachments) submitted will be ranked higher and may be used as a determining factor in the review process.
5. Submissions will be reviewed and evaluated by the SMADC Review Committee.
6. Applicant will be notified if they are awarded the grant, are declined the grant, or if SMADC suggests changes to the application by February 15th, 2022.
7. Grant funds will be disbursed upon completion of the signed grant agreement between the grant recipient and SMADC.

Terms:

1. Signed agreement between applicant and SMADC
2. At the completion of the project, a report is required to be submitted to SMADC with the following information included:
 - A brief narrative about the project purpose, the impact of the project, and one or two photos of project*.
 - Statement of expenditures of both the awarded and the matching funds (attachment).
 - Copies of invoices and receipts (attachment).
3. SMADC will list award recipients on SMADC's website. Awardees may also be featured on SMADC's other materials, and SMADC will assist in marketing and promoting of the project. Your award letter and agreement will contain information on how to accomplish this.

Evaluation Criteria: The following chart is used by grant reviewers when evaluating grant applications. It is printed here for your information and reference.

1-5 (5 being the strongest)	Evaluation Criteria for SMADC Mini-Grant Applications
	Is the project well organized, thought out, and explained in a way that makes sense and sounds like it can be carried out successfully within one year?
	Is this a new application (5 for first time applicant).
	The intended project enhances the agricultural economic impact of the farm evident by the applicant's sales outlets.
	Is the outcome of the project realistic and achievable?
	The first 30 COMPLETE applications (with the required uploaded attachments) submitted will be ranked higher and may be used as a determining factor in the review process.
	Total

Contact:

Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC)

info@smadc.com

www.smadc.com

240-528-8850

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