



**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**



## **NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION NORTH CAROLINA FFA**

Agricultural Education Program Improvement Grant

### **GRANT ABSTRACT**

The NC Agricultural Foundation, Inc., NC Agricultural Education, and NC FFA, with a grant from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, will provide 12 grants to local agricultural education programs in North Carolina. The twelve \$15,000 grants per program will fund transformational projects that will focus on growing leaders, building communities, and strengthening agriculture for high and middle school agricultural education programs across the state. Grants will be used to fund innovative, sustainable, and relevant projects that will assist local teachers and students in meeting the current needs of the agricultural industry in our state and in their specific community.

### **GRANT PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**Growing Leaders** - We aim to develop students who are college and career ready through agricultural education by engaging students with experiential learning opportunities and leadership development. Students will be inspired and prepared to enter the agricultural workforce.

**Building Communities** - Our goal is to provide funding to local agricultural education programs in North Carolina for them to fund innovative chapter projects that address needs in their community and local program. Agricultural education programs that receive a \$15,000 grant have the opportunity to teach new curriculum, enhance their current program, or rebuild a program.

**Strengthening Agriculture** - Grant funding will be provided to local agricultural education programs that are addressing agricultural industry needs in their local community. Grant projects must have a strong connection to the local economy and directly impact the preparation of students to enter the agricultural workforce with technical knowledge and leadership skills.

### **APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

Provide concise and informative answers using only the space provided in the application. Do not expand the text boxes or add additional pages. The information should give a clear understanding of the project. It is imperative that all requested information is given.

#### **Applicant's General Information – 5 points**

Information provided should be complete for maximum points.

**Project Summary – 10 points**

Information provided should be a short, concise summary of the project.

**Project Goals and Objectives (no more than 1 page) – 40 points**

The goals and objectives of the project should be provided in a bulleted list. The goals and objectives of the project should fall within the goals and objectives of the overall Agricultural Education Program Improvement Grant Goals and Objectives listed on the first page of this document.

The overall purpose of the grant is to provide funding for facilities, resources, and programs to improve student learning in agricultural education programs. It is not intended to be a source of money for consumable supplies/materials or to be used for short-term events. Grant funds may not be used to pay for student employment or internships.

**Expected Outcomes (no more than 1 page) – 40 points**

This section should completely answer the following questions:

- What will the project accomplish and what will be the short-term and long-term impacts of the project?
- What evaluation method(s) will be used to measure these impacts?
- What will be the benchmarks for measuring the project's success?
- If the project is to continue beyond the grant period, describe how the project will continue to be funded and/or self-sustaining.

**Project Budget – 25 points**

A detailed budget showing line-item project expenses and revenues for the entire project should be included. Items paid by grant funds should be fully described and relative to the goals and objectives of the grant.

**Intended Beneficiaries – 10 points**

A list of individuals, groups, organizations, etc. that will benefit from the project should be included.

**Matching Funds Partners (no more than ½ page) – 0 points**

- This section should describe and include realistic value estimates of any in-kind contribution such as personnel, services, equipment, etc.
- Are funds identified and verified to support project costs over the grant?
- For each additional funding partner/grant organizations, the following should be provided:
  - Name of the funding organization, contact name, phone number
  - Type of funding (grant, loan, private contribution)
  - Amount and date received and/or current status

**Project Timeline – 20 points**

A detailed timeline showing when significant events will happen during the project should be included. It should include the period during which the project will operate, when the requested grant funds will be used, as well as major milestones. The timeline should begin after March 17, 2022 and end by January 31, 2023.

**Project Impact Table – 30 points**

Economic Impact/Benefit Information should be included here that is relevant to the project goals and objectives. Estimated numbers can be used as not all impacts will be realized by all applicants.

**Recognition (no more than ½ page) – 5 points**

A description of how the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission will be recognized as a supporter of this project should be included. Describe how the North Carolina FFA and North Carolina State University will be promoted as well. Examples include website links, news releases, logos on printed materials, etc.

**Endorsement Letters – 10 points**

On school letterhead, please provide a letter of endorsement signed by the school principal agreeing that the school will meet all timelines, expectations, and financial commitments detailed in the project.

In addition, on school system letterhead, please provide a letter of endorsement signed by the CTE Director agreeing that the school system will meet all timelines, expectations, and financial commitments detailed in the project.

**Additional Information – 0 points**

Any additional information that is relevant to the project proposal may be included in this section. Examples include feasibility studies, photos, site plans/architectural drawings, specifications on needed equipment, etc. Some applications may not have additional material; therefore, there are no points awarded for this section. It should be helpful to the review committee to help them better understand the project.

**Verification – 5 points**

An authorized official of the school/organization MUST sign the verification statements that will bind the school/organization to the representations made in the grant.

**SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION**

The completed application is due by 11:59 pm on February 17, 2022.

Actual hand-written signatures are required.

Please scan signed documents clearly and include them with the application document. The completed application (including endorsement letters) should be submitted electronically as one PDF document to: [ncagedgrant@gmail.com](mailto:ncagedgrant@gmail.com).

## PROJECT AND GRANT TIMELINE

DATE	EVENT
January 6, 2022	Notify Agricultural Education Programs of funding and open the program grant cycle
February 17, 2022	Close Program Grant Cycle – Applications due by 11:59 pm
February/March 2022	Convene selection committee to review applications
March 17, 2022	Notify program grant recipients
March 2022	Orientation meeting with recipients via Zoom
April/May 2022	Public check presentations with local school administrators and school boards
March 2022 – January 2023	Projects in progress
June 1, 2022	Biannual report due to North Carolina FFA
January 31, 2023	Final progress report due to North Carolina FFA

## SCORING PROCESS

- At least three independent reviewers will score all applications.
- A scoring rubric along with this application and scoring guide will be used to assess each section of each application.
- Once all applications are scored, the scores for each application will be entered into a scoring summary spreadsheet.
- The state staff will compile the scores from all reviewers.
- All applicants will be ranked and funding levels will be determined for projects.
- The application review committee will meet to discuss the applications and compile the results.

## GRANT GUIDELINES, CONSIDERATIONS, AND BEST PRACTICES

1. Only one application per agricultural education program may be submitted.
2. Any middle or high school agricultural education program in public, private, or charter schools can apply for the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Agricultural Education Program Improvement Grant. Priority will be given to programs that have not received a grant previously.
3. Make sure the application provides a clear and definitive understanding of the purpose and value of the project. This should be clearly explained in the *Project Goals and Objectives* section of the application. Make sure to reference the project goals and objectives that are listed on page 1 of this document.
4. Applications are judged based on the content of the application. Ensure the project purpose, funding needs, description of the project, how it benefits students and how the project will be completed is explained completely. Be very clear. The judges must be able to read the application and have all of their questions answered.
5. Anticipated project costs included in the budget need to be real and not inflated.

6. This grant is designed to provide funding for sustainable projects that will impact present and future students. Grant requests that are for short-term, one-time purchases of consumable materials, or to fund one-time activities are not recommended.
7. Grant funds may not be used to pay for student employment or internships.
8. Grant funds can be used to purchase equipment, computers, textbooks, resource materials, FFA equipment, etc. as well as upgrades, additions, or to build new labs.
9. The project should be manageable in scope and size. If there is question about the merit of a project, do not apply for this grant. Full commitment is needed by the teacher and the school system administration for any project.
10. Projects should have a measurable impact on the school and community. Please refer to the impact table in the application for the specific list.
11. Make sure permission/approval is secured for the project from local school administration (principal) and school system administration (CTE Director) before submitting a grant application. For example, a grant application could be submitted to develop a small animal lab with live animals. After receiving the grant, the administration may share that live animals are not allowed on campus.
12. Keep in mind that construction projects on a school campus will likely require some type of permitting process. New permanent buildings on school campuses require approval from North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and require engineer-signed or stamped design drawings. Some municipalities and counties require additional plans prior to issuing permits. This process can be lengthy and may require more time to complete than this grant cycle provides. Typically, non-permanent construction does not require permits and approvals. Discuss all project ideas with administration and school system facilities personnel prior to applying for this grant.
13. Grant funds should operate through school system accounts. Good bookkeeping is a necessity for this grant. These are State of North Carolina funds and are subject to audit by the state auditor.
14. Please do not include any administration fees/charges in the grant application budget.
15. If a project requires more funds than the grant maximum (\$15,000), the application should provide the source and reliability of the additional funds. Indicating that funds have been requested from another source is not sufficient. A firm commitment from additional sources detailing the fund amounts and date of delivery of the funds is required. The grant evaluators will be looking for evidence that a project can be started and finished in the time frame of the grant.
16. Grant recipients will be awarded one half of their total budget upon return of the signed grant contract. Grant recipients will be responsible for paying the remaining project balance from other funds or sources. The remaining half of the grant funds will be paid as a reimbursement upon the completion of the project and after final reports have been

submitted and approved by the North Carolina Agricultural Education State Staff. Please plan appropriately with local school and/or school system administration.

17. Items purchased with grant funds cannot be used for other purposes. Should an agricultural education program close within five years of the end of the contract date, any equipment purchased must be sold at fair market value and the funds returned to the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission.
18. The intent of the grant cannot change after the grant is awarded. Project alterations are allowed due to factors such as fluctuations in costs; however, major changes are not allowed.
19. This grant will run through parts of two different school years. Teachers who may transfer or are planning to transfer to another school should not apply.
20. The point of contact for the grant is the person who will correspond with the state FFA office. The point of contact will be responsible for submitting all reports to the state FFA office. All reports are expected to be on time, complete, and accurate. It is acceptable for the agriculture teacher to be the point of contact with the state FFA office.
21. All individuals serving as point of contact for funded grants are required to attend an orientation meeting prior to the distribution of funds. The meeting will be held via Zoom with the actual date determined shortly after the grant winners are selected.
22. An important part of the grant is accurate recordkeeping. Grant recipients are required to keep records of all program documents including receipts. Grant reports must be completed on time and all expenditures must be backed up with matching receipts. The point of contact will be accountable for all required/requested documentation.
23. The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission asks that all funded projects receive as much publicity as possible within the community, school, school system, and state. Funded projects will receive signage that is required to be permanently displayed. The agricultural education state staff and representatives of the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission will visit schools to observe projects during the grant cycle and in the future.
24. Funded projects must be completed as described in the project and grant timeline.