



**NC STATE UNIVERSITY**



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

2023-2024 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 at least 20 grants to local agricultural education programs in North Carolina. The twenty \$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 agriculture 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.

**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

**Intended Beneficiaries – 10 points**

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

**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 February 2024 and end by December 15, 2024.

**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.

**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.

**Endorsement Letters – 10 points**

- **CTE Director and Chief Financial Officer Endorsement Letter**
  - On school/public school unit letterhead, provide a letter of endorsement signed by the CTE Director and school or school system Financial Administrator approving the grant proposal and agreeing that the school system will meet all timelines, expectations, and financial commitments detailed in the project. The CTE Director and Financial Administrator should indicate financial commitment to sustain any items purchased with grant funds.
- **Principal Endorsement Letter**
  - On school letterhead, provide a letter of endorsement signed by the building principal/director that approves the grant proposal. The principal should indicate the school's commitment to sustain any items purchased with grant funds.

**Grant Verification Signatures – 5 points**

Four wet (physically written) signatures are required for grant submission; agricultural education teacher, CTE Director, Principal/School Director and school or school system Financial Administrator. Digital or electronic signatures will not be accepted. These signatures bind the school to the representations made in the grant.

**SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION**

The completed application is due by 11:59 pm on January 12, 2024.

Actual hand-written signatures are required. Digital or electronic signatures will not be accepted

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
November 30, 2023	Notify Agricultural Education programs of funding and open the program grant cycle
January 12, 2024	Close Program Grant Cycle – Applications due by 11:59 pm
January 2024	Convene selection committee to review applications
January 31, 2024	Notify program grant recipients
February 2024	Orientation meeting with recipients via Zoom
February-May 2024	Public check presentations with local school administrators and school boards
February 2024-December 2024	Projects in progress
June 1, 2024	Biannual report due to North Carolina FFA
December 15, 2024	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 items necessary to the agricultural education program such as:
  - Equipment, computers, textbooks, resource materials, animals, etc. Comprehensive lists of equipment associated with each course are available on the [North Carolina FFA Curriculum](#) page. Items included in equipment lists serve as a guide for grant purchases; however, equipment lists are not all-inclusive.
  - Upgrade, repair, modernize, expand, or build indoor or outdoor facilities including a greenhouse or barn.
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. Permission/approval must be secured for the project from local school administration (principal) and school system administration (CTE Director) before submitting a grant application.
12. Prior to applying for a grant for construction, please work with local and public school unit administration to acquire the appropriate permission and permitting, including Americans with Disabilities Act compliance if applicable.
13. Grant funds should operate through school or school system accounts. Good bookkeeping is a necessity for this grant. These funds are subject to audit.
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 **all** 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. Funded projects must be completed as described in the project and grant timeline. 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. Please ensure all four wet (physically written) signatures are included in the grant application. These signatures bind the school to the representations made in the grant.
24. 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.
25. Grant recipients will be required to submit biannual reports to the North Carolina FFA to share project goals and objectives accomplished as well as the project impact table. Receipts for all items purchased with grant funds will be submitted at the biannual report and at project completion. At least ten captioned photos will be required at project completion.