**STATE OF MAINE**

**Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry**



**RFA# 202212200**

**Maine Farms for the Future – Phase 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Grant Coordinator** | *All communication regarding the RFP must be made through the RFP Coordinator identified below*.  **Name:** Alex Redfield **Title:** Farm Viability and Farmland Protection Specialist  **Contact Information:** [alexander.redfield@maine.gov](mailto:alexander.redfield@maine.gov) |
| **Submitted Questions Due** | *All questions must be received by the RFP Coordinator identified above by:*  **Date:** January 20, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time |
| **Application**  **Submission** | *Proposals must be received by the Division of Procurement Services by:*  **Submission Deadline:** February 6, 2023, no later than 11:59 p.m., local time.  *Proposals must be submitted electronically to the following address:*  **Electronic (e-mail) Submission Address:** [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov) |

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**Maine Farms for the Future – Phase 1**

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**State of Maine - Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry**

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**Maine Farms for the Future – Phase 1**

**RFA TERMS/ACRONYMS and DEFINITIONS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Term/Acronym** | **Definition** |
| **7-Year Farmland Protection Agreement (FPA)** | A written agreement between a farm selected to receive an investment support cash grant and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, wherein the farm agrees to keep an area of farmland of no less than 5 acres in active agricultural use and to protect that land from non-agricultural development for a period of seven (7) years. |
| **Agricultural Products** | Means fresh, or to be processed, food, fiber, or horticultural products grown on the farm, with the intent that the product be sold or otherwise generate income. Agricultural products produced on the farm may include the growing and harvesting of some specialty forest products, such as firewood processing, but may not include the products of a business engaged primarily in the growing, harvesting or processing of trees for the purpose of producing pulp or other materials used in paper manufacturing or wood manufacturing. An agricultural product may also include aquacultural products, so long as they are raised on the farm. |
| **Applicant** | Farm Owner/Operator that is applying for Phase 1 Business Planning Assistance and is a private, for-profit company that is owned by individuals, partners or corporations, that grows or produces agricultural products for commercial sale (excluding marijuana farms, except as permitted under 7MRS Ch.406A, Section 2231) |
| **Business Plan** | A document that identifies changes in farm management practices and investments in equipment and property that would increase the profitability and net worth of the farm (vitality). A typical plan identifies ways to increase on-farm income through such methods as improved management practices, direct marketing, and value-added initiatives; and describes current operations and future plans for the business, including but not limited to sections on mission/vision, legal organization, management team, product descriptions, market research, market promotion, customer profiles, financial statements, financial analysis of planned changes in the business and long-term goals for the business. |
| **Capital** | Cash or [goods](http://www.investorwords.com/2209/goods.html) used to generate [income](http://www.investorwords.com/2400/income.html) by [investing](http://www.investorwords.com/5906/investing.html) in a [business](http://www.investorwords.com/623/business.html), and/or the [net worth](http://www.investorwords.com/3267/net_worth.html) of a [business](http://www.investorwords.com/623/business.html) as in the [amount](http://www.investorwords.com/205/amount.html) by which its [assets](http://www.investorwords.com/273/asset.html) exceed its [liabilities](http://www.investorwords.com/5911/liabilities.html) and/or the [money](http://www.investorwords.com/3100/money.html), [property](http://www.investorwords.com/3900/property.html), and other valuables which collectively represent the [wealth](http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/wealth.html) of the [business](http://www.investorwords.com/623/business.html). |
| **DACF** | Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry |
| **Department** | Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry |
| **FAME** | Finance Authority of Maine |
| **Farm Business** | Agricultural products grown or produced on the farm are being sold commercially and the farm has documentation of gross and net farm income, expenses, net worth and farm debt. |
| **Farm Vitality** | An increase in long-term, maintainable, farm profitability and net worth. |
| **FFF** | Maine Farms for the Future Program |
| **Idea(s) for Change** | Ideas the Applicant proposed to research to improve Farm Vitality |
| **Land in Agricultural Use** | Land that is currently being used to grow agricultural, horticultural, and silvicultural products. |
| **Review Panel** | A panel appointed by the DACF Commissioner to review applications and make grant funding recommendations to the Commissioner. |
| **RFA** | Request for Applications |
| **Selected Farm** | A farm that previously applied and was selected for Phase 1 between January 1, 2000 and March 1, 2021. |
| **Service Provider** | The following entities: including but not limited to, individuals, private organizations, public organizations and agencies of the State, marketing consultants, accounting firms, business support organizations, farm support organizations and other organizations that the Department determines may provide valuable services such as, but not limited to, analyzing markets or developing financial data and instruction or classroom training in economics and business planning for the owner or operator of a farm. |
| **Services Package** | A number of specific tasks to be accomplished by a team of Service Providers and the owner or operator of the selected farm to develop a Business Plan. Services may include, but are not limited to, analyzing markets, developing financial data, creating production or processing efficiencies and registration for instruction or classroom training in economics and business planning for the owner or operator of the farm. All tasks must result in planning potential changes of the farm’s production, management or marketing practices and investments in equipment and/or property that would increase the future profitability and net worth (vitality) of the farm. |
| **State** | State of Maine |
| **Phase 1 Business Plan Development** | A grant awarded to conduct research on proposed Idea(s) for Change, that if found to be feasible are developed into a project or projects that are described in a written business plan. |
| **Phase 2 Investment Support – AMLF Loan Recommendation**  **Services Package** | The Review Panel may recommend, and the Department may provide a selected applicant with a recommendation to apply for a reduced-interest (2%) loan from the Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund. If the total cost to implement the Business Plan is less than $100,000 then the reduced-interest loan may be up to 90% of that cost. If the total cost to implement the Business Plan is more than $100,000 then the reduced-interest loan may be up to 75% of that cost. In either case, the total amount of the reduced-interest loan may not exceed $250,000. The reduced- interest loan may be used as match for the cash grant. |
| **Phase 2 Investment Support – Cash Grant** | The cash grant is for an amount not to exceed the lesser of $25,000 or 25% of the total investments identified by the Business Plan. Prior to the disbursement of cash grant funds, the Department may require the grantee to provide documented evidence of a proportionate amount of match equaling 75% of the total investments identified by the Business Plan. The match must be directly related to the implementation of the Business Plan and must have a real market value. Match may include, but is not limited to, in-kind labor and farm resources such as timber, sand, gravel or other natural resource materials used to implement the Business Plan; personal cash resources; loans, including a reduced-interest (2%) loan from the Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund; other grants; and other resources relevant to the Business Plan. |

**State of Maine - Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry**

**RFA# 202212200**

**Maine Farms for the Future – Phase 1**

**APPLICATION DETAILS AND INSTRUCTIONS**

1. **Purpose and Background**

The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (Department) is seeking applications for the Maine Farms for the Future Program.

Successful Applicants will be awarded a $6,000 grant to develop a detailed business plan to increase farm vitality; *the long-term, maintainable, farm profitability and net worth*.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Once the Phase 1 business plan is completed, the selected farm may compete for Phase 2 investment support to implement projects described in the business plan.

Phase 2 awards will be made through a separate RFA. The Phase 2 RFA and all applicable application information for can be found on the following website: [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants).

1. **Eligibility to Submit Bids**
   1. The applicant must be a private, for-profit company that is owned by individuals, partners, or corporations, that grows or produces agricultural products for commercial sale (excluding marijuana farms, except as permitted under [7MRS Ch.406A, Section 2231](https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/7/title7sec2231.html));
   2. The applicant must own and operate a farm business that has been producing agricultural products commercially in the State of Maine for at least two (2) years (no less than 24 months) at the time of application;
   3. The applicant must have ownership of the land that is being farmed, *or* be a partner or shareholder in a legal entity that owns the farmland;
   4. If the applicant has recently purchased farmland, they must provide evidence that they have had at least two years (24 months) of experience operating a commercial farm operation elsewhere in Maine;
   5. The applicant must have valid State of Maine certification (organic certification if an organic farm) or licensure relevant for their type of agricultural operation, i.e. Commercial Kitchen License, Milk License, Mobile Vendor License, etc.
2. **Awards**

No more than eight (8) Phase 1 Business Plan Development grants will be available in the 2023 grant cycle.

1. **Title and Chapter**

All general instructions for submitting the applicable application are provided in this document in accordance with [the Department’s Program statute](http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/7/title7ch10-Bsec0.html) and [Rules 01-001 Chapter 36](https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/01/chaps01.htm#001).

1. **Appeal of Contract Awards**

Any person aggrieved by the award decision that results from this Request for Applications may appeal the decision to the Director of the Bureau of General Services in the manner prescribed in 5 MRSA § 1825-E and 18-554 Code of Maine Rules, Chapter 120 (found here: [Chapter 120](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/policies-procedures/chapter-120)).  The appeal must be in writing and filed with the Director of the Bureau of General Services, 9 State House Station, Augusta, Maine, 04333-0009 within 15 calendar days of receipt of notification of contract award.

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**Maine Farms for the Future – Phase 1**

**KEY PROCESS EVENTS**

1. **Submitting Questions**

Any questions must be submitted by e-mail to the Grant Coordinator identified on the [Grant RFPs and RFAs webpage](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants) by January 20, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. local time. Submitted Questions must include the subject line: **“RFA# 202212200 Questions”**. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete/on time e-mail transmission and receipt.

1. **Question & Answer Summary**

Responses to all questions will be compiled in writing and posted on the following website: [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain a copy of the Question & Answer Summary. Only those answers issued in writing on this website will be considered binding.

1. **Amendments to the Request for Applications**

All amendments (if any) released in regard to this Request for Applications will be posted on the following website: [Grant RFPs and RFAs](https://www.maine.gov/dafs/bbm/procurementservices/vendors/grants). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to go to this website to obtain amendments. Only those amendments posted on this website are considered binding.

1. **Application Submission**
   1. **Applications Due**: Applications must be received by February 6, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. local time. Applications received after the 11:59 p.m. deadline will be ineligible for award consideration for that annual application enrollment period.
   2. **Submission Instructions**: Applications are to be submitted to the State of Maine Division of Procurement Services, via email, to [Proposals@maine.gov](mailto:Proposals@maine.gov).
      1. Only applications received by e-mail will be considered. The Department assumes no liability for assuring accurate/complete e-mail transmission and receipts.
      2. E-mails containing links to file sharing sites or online file repositories will not be accepted as submissions. Only e-mail applications that have the actual requested files attached will be accepted.
      3. Encrypted e-mails received which require opening attachments and logging into a proprietary system will not be accepted as submissions. Please check with your organization’s Information Technology team to ensure that your security settings will not encrypt your proposal submission.
      4. File size limits are 25MB per e-mail. Applicants may submit files separately across multiple e-mails, as necessary, due to file size concerns. All e-mails and files must be received by the due date and time listed above.
      5. Applicants are to insert the following into the subject line of their email submission: **“RFA# 202212200 Application Submission – [Applicant’s Name]”**
   3. **Submission Contents**
      1. Applications are to be submitted as a single, typed, PDF or WORD file and must include pages 12 through 20 of this RFA document.
      2. Applicants must also submit:
         1. Copies of current certifications (Organic, etc.) or licenses (Maple Syrup, Commercial Kitchen, Mobile Vendor, etc.) required to lawfully operate the farm business.
         2. The Applicant’s 2020 and 2021 Balance Sheet Financial Statement.

**State of Maine - Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry**

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**Maine Farms for the Future – Phase 1**

**APPLICATION EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

1. Scoring Weights and Process
   1. Scoring Weights: The score will be based on a 100-point scale and will measure the degree to which each application meets the following criteria.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Scoring Criteria | Maximum Points Available |
| Management Capacity - *“Are you able to manage your business and implement your Idea for Change?”*  The management capacity of the applicant based upon the number of years farming and other related experience and training; the applicant’s decision-making authority over the land and resources; and the applicant’s statements of purpose and readiness to apply to the Program. | 20 points |
| Physical Resource Base -*“What resources do you have at your disposal?”*  The suitability and productivity of the farmland for its intended agricultural use, the physical condition of buildings and equipment, and other assets needed to maintain and increase productivity of the farm business. | 20 points |
| Farm Financial Health & Ability to Transform - *“Is the farm in suitable financial health to take on a new direction?”*  The ability of the applicant to describe the current financial condition of the Farm Business, including the current debt load relative to earnings, the assets and liabilities, and whether the debt load and access to new assets can be managed with the proposed ideas for change. | 25 points |
| Idea(s) for Change *- “What is the idea you’d like to explore if awarded FFF support?”*  The ability of the applicant to identify and propose ideas that will make fundamental changes on the farm that will improve viability, profitability, and capacity to pay back debt through the present or future cash flow of the business, while also attempting to make farming the primary source of the applicant’s income. | 25 points |
| Other Conditions  The degree of development pressure on the farm operation, the percentage of the operated farmland that is owned by the applicant, and the potential environmental and community economic development benefits derived from the proposed change. | 10 points |
| Total Points | 100 points |

* 1. Scoring Process: The Grant Review Team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed above. Members of the review team will not score those sections individually but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of those sections.
  2. Regarding the proposed funds requested and the proposed work, the Grant Review Team will consider the degree to which the project represents a good return for the investment (money, time) as well as whether the project work and cost estimates (tasks & budget) are reasonable for the expected outcomes, along with the amount and quality of proposed matching funds or services.

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**APPLICATION COVER PAGE**

***Handwritten applications will not be accepted.***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Farmland Owner’s Name: | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| Farm Business Name: | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| Tel: | Click or tap here to enter text. | | E-mail: | Click or tap here to enter text. | |
| Physical Address: | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| Town: | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| Zip: | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| County: | | Click or tap here to enter text. | | | |
| Number of years in in commercial operation (no less than 24 months): | | | | | Choose an item. |

* No personnel currently employed by the Department or any other State agency participated, either directly or indirectly, in any activities relating to the preparation of the Applicant’s application.
* No attempt has been made, or will be made, by the Applicant to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application.
* The above-named organization is the legal entity entering into the resulting agreement with the Department should they be awarded a contract.
* The undersigned is authorized to enter contractual obligations on behalf of the above-named organization.

*To the best of my knowledge, all information provided in the enclosed application, both programmatic and financial, is complete and accurate at the time of submission.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name (Print):** Click or tap here to enter text. | **Title:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** Click or tap here to enter text. |

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**DEBARMENT, PERFORMANCE and NON-COLLUSION CERTIFICATION**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Applicant’s Organization Name: | Click or tap here to enter text. |

*By signing this document, I certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the aforementioned organization, its principals and any subcontractors named in this proposal:*

1. *Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, and declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from bidding or working on contracts issued by any governmental agency.*
2. *Have not within three years of submitting the proposal for this contract been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for:*
   1. *Fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a federal, state, or local government transaction or contract.*
   2. *Violating Federal or State antitrust statutes or committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property.*
3. *Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or Local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (b) of this certification.*
4. *Have not within a three (3) year period preceding this proposal had one or more federal, state, or local government transactions terminated for cause or default*.
5. *Have not entered into a prior understanding, agreement, or connection with any corporation, firm, or person submitting a response for the same materials, supplies, equipment, or services and this proposal is in all respects fair and without collusion or fraud. The above-mentioned entities understand and agree that collusive bidding is a violation of state and federal law and can result in fines, prison sentences, and civil damage awards.*

Failure to provide this certification may result in the disqualification of the Applicant’s application, at the discretion of the Department.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name (Print):** Click or tap here to enter text. | **Title:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** Click or tap here to enter text. |

**State of Maine - Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry**

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**Maine Farms for the Future – Phase 1**

**APPLICATION**

The Applicant is asked to be brief and concise in providing written information required in the application.

**MANAGEMENT CAPACITY**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Briefly describe your farm and business as you would to your customers. | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | |
| Number of years in commercial operation (must be 2 years or more) | Choose an item. |
| Business type: | Choose an item. Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Why will the Phase 1 Business Planning Grant help you? | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | |
| What specific skills and/or services would you like assistance with? (Check all that apply | |  |  | | --- | --- | | Bookkeeping / Bookkeeper’s services |  | | Diversification strategies |  | | Energy use assessment |  | | Explore business partnerships or models |  | | Farm transfer planning |  | | Financial management / decision making |  | | General planning skills |  | | Labor - hiring and management |  | | Labor – contract development |  | | Market research for new market channel(s) |  | | Marketing and promotion |  | | New / improved production methods |  | | Production recordkeeping |  | | Production management/efficiencies |  | | New product development - fresh |  | | New product development – value-added |  | | Other research (describe) |  | | Click or tap here to enter text. |  | | Perspective of experts | | |
| Are there other skills or types of assistance that you think would be valuable for you and your operation? | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Briefly describe your experience in and knowledge of farming. | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | |
| Number of full-time employees | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Number of part-time employees | Click or tap here to enter text. |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Identify the products you produce by ranking them. The #1 product generates the most income. The last # generates the least income. | | | |
| # |  | # |  |
|  | Apples |  | Agritourism |
|  | Berries |  | Beef |
|  | Cut Flowers |  | Creamery Micro-Dairy |
|  | Eggs |  | Dairy Cows Milk |
|  | Grains |  | Fiber |
|  | Hay |  | Goats |
|  | Herbs |  | Pigs |
|  | Honey |  | Poultry |
|  | Maple Syrup |  | Sheep |
|  | Potatoes |  | Other: Click or tap here to enter text. |
|  | Vegetables |  | Other: Click or tap here to enter text. |

**PHYSICAL RESOURCE BASE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total acres farmland owned. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Number of owned acres in agricultural production. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Number of owned acres in silvicultural production (timber, firewood, etc.). | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| The year you first farmed this land. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Is the farmland protected with a permanent agricultural conservation easement? | Yes  No |
| Do you lease additional farmland? | ☐ Yes ☐ No |
| If yes, how many acres are leased? | # Click or tap here to enter text.  NA |
| Note the percentage of your total farmland acreage that is classified as *Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance*. | Click or tap here to enter text. % Prime Farmland  Click or tap here to enter text. % Farmland of Statewide Importance  Click or tap here to enter text. % Farmland of Locally Important  Click or tap here to enter text. % Non-Farmland soils |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| List all large equipment and describe its current condition | |
| *Example: Tractor* | *Good* |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
| List all buildings and describe their current condition | |
| *Example: High Tunnel 20 x 80* | *Fair* |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |
|  | Choose an item. |

**FARM FINANCIAL HEALTH & ABILITY TO TRANSFORM**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Attach your 2020 and 2021 Balance Sheets to the end of this Application. | | |
| 2020 Debt / Income Ratio | | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 2021 Debt / Income Ratio | | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 2022 Projected Gross Income | | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| To what degree is the farm supporting your household? | | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | | |
| How often do you bring your overall farm financial records up to date? | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | Weekly |  | | Monthly |  | | Every Few Months |  | | At Tax Time |  | |
| Methods you use to track farm revenues and expenses (check all that apply) | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | Quickbooks or other online software with point-of-sale (Square, Shopkeep Etc.) |  | | Quickbooks or other software |  | | Excel, Google Sheets, or another Spreadsheet System |  | | A Farm Ledger |  | | Pencil, paper and notebooks |  | | Loose notes & receipts |  | | A family member |  | | A hired bookkeeper |  | | A hired accountant |  | |
| Describe your experience with planning and implementing changes in your business. | | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | | |
| What is your perspective on farm debt and debt management? | |  |  | | --- | --- | | Comfortable with debt when managed well |  | | Somewhat comfortable with debt |  | | Uncomfortable with debt, but not entirely opposed |  | | Avoid debt at all costs |  | | |
| Would you like to maintain or change your debt situation? Please be specific about what you would like to change, and when. | | |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | | |

**IDEA(S) FOR CHANGE**

|  |
| --- |
| My/Our long-term vision for the farm business is…. |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |
| To achieve this vision, and make the farm more viable, in the next 3 years I/we need to… |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |
| These changes will impact the long-term, maintainable, farm profitability and net worth of the business by… |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |
| These changes will impact my/our quality of life by… |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

**OTHER CONDITIONS**

*Complete the following statements to describe how your Idea(s) for Change might impact your farm business’ ability to: hedge against development pressure; increase number of farm employees; provide community benefits; and conserve other natural resources on the farm.*

|  |
| --- |
| Development pressure\* on our farm/farmland is (high, moderate, low) because… Our idea(s) for change will … |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Our Idea(s) for Change might help the farm to provide more employment opportunities by… and/or support regional agricultural infrastructure by… |
| Click or tap here to enter text |
| Our Idea(s) for Change might also enhance the farm’s importance in the local community by… |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Our Idea(s) for Change might help the farm protect and improve the farm’s natural resources (water, soil, air, wildlife habitat, etc.) by… |
| Click or tap here to enter text. |

**If awarded a Phase 1 Business Planning Grant, I understand that:**

1. I will attend one or more virtual meetings to learn more about the program and to help the program administrator learn more about me/us, the farm, my/our business and my/our “Idea(s) for Change”.
2. I will work with the program administrator to:
   1. Identify agricultural and small business service providers and/or training opportunities that might help my/our research;
   2. Create a plan-of-work to utilize grant funds to:
      1. Consult certified business advisor(s) and/or business planning consultant(s) and other professional advisors, to improve the financial recordkeeping and marketing functions of the farm business;
      2. Complete the on-line business planning course in collaboration with Farm Smart Maine [(linked here)](https://adventuresinfarmbusinessplanning.teachable.com/p/adventuresinfarmbusinessplanning) or an equivalent business planning course to be selected in consultation with the Program Administrator;
      3. Consult agricultural service providers to A) conduct research as needed and obtain appropriate training to improve crop/product recordkeeping, production systems and methods for the farm business; and B) obtain expert advice, estimates, drawings, plans, research, technical and professional assistance that may be related to studying the feasibility of the proposed *Idea(s) for Change*.
      4. Create a budget for the use of the grant funds, not to exceed $6,000, to improve financial recordkeeping and management; address production and marketing research needs; and/or investigate a barrier to my/our research that may be unique to the farm. You may allocate the $6,000 among different expenditures or use it for a single purchase. This budget may include purchasing financial and/or recordkeeping software and point-of-sales technology for the farm business and obtain training on the use of any such software and technology to improve overall production and financial recordkeeping.
3. Submit progress reports to the program administrator whenever requesting a disbursement of grant funds.

By signing below, I/we acknowledge that that the information presented in this application is true, and that I/we understand and agree to the above requirements.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** Click or tap here to enter text. |
| **Authorized Signature:** | **Date:** Click or tap here to enter text. |

1. Chapter 36: Rules for Governing the Maine Farms for the Future Program, Section 1. Definitions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)