

NH Farm Network Open Forum 1/9/2023

Short Presentations from Farmer Grant Sources:

Colleen Stewart, NH Food Alliance

NHFA started collating Farm/Food System Grants several years ago. UNH Extension and NHFA will work together to update. Some of these “grant round-ups” can be found at:

Grant round-up >>

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1n8FWffWtj8FlcdgmwyzfPd7rB4VlvXXqS6BUU_xlf1U/edit?usp=sharing

Older grant round-up >> <https://www.nhfoodalliance.org/blog/2021/05/nh-food-system-job-grant-board>

Josh Marshall, NH DAMF

- USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant Program – NH Specialty Crops eligible, deadline in early April. Eligible groups include: Commodity groups, Agriculture organizations, Colleges & Universities, Municipalities, State Agencies, Non-profit organizations. \$165,865.35 still available through additional program funding under HR 133 (“H.R. 133 Stimulus Funding”).
- NH DAMF Mini-Grant Program – matching grant up to \$1,000 for marketing and advertising
- NH DAMF Meat Processing Infrastructure Program (MPIP) – provides funding for infrastructure investments for local farmers and meat and poultry processing facilities to increase capacity and efficiencies of the meat and poultry processing industry within the state. 15% match fund requirement, deadline Jan 27th. MPIP will award up to \$750,000 through a competitive review process. The maximum individual grant award will be \$200,000 and the minimum will be \$1,000. There will be one round of funding.
- NH DAMF Integrated Pest Management Program (IPM) – to encourage principles and practice practices of integrated pest management (IPM). Funds are available for grant proposals designed to explore and encourage IPM for the benefit of the citizens of the state.
- Questions or Comments? Josh Marshall, Director Division of Agricultural Development NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food Joshua.k.marshall@agr.nh.gov 603-271-3688

Amanda Littleton, Cheshire County Conservation District

1. Conservation District Climate Resilience Grant

<https://www.cheshireconservation.org/climate>

Direct grant program to farms with a mission to support and empower local farms to build climate resilience.

Done through both climate adaptation and mitigation projects that also meet a farm's longterm viability and conservation goals.

Conservation Districts in NH put this together in response to extreme weather events, frequent and prolonged droughts, and increase pest pressures that farms are managing.

It was also put together with a high level of farmer input and farm service provider input to ensure it is meeting needs and addressing current funding gaps not covered by existing federal and state resources.

Types of Projects

- Soil Health Improvements (e.g. reduced tillage, cover crops, etc)
- Water Management (e.g. improved irrigation efficiency, etc.)
- IPM (e.g. netting for SWD, weather stations, etc.)
- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (e.g. efficient equipment and lighting, supporting solar installation, etc)

New Program that was piloted in the summer of 2022. \$50,000 was made available to 12 farms during the pilot. In 2023 there will be \$300,000 available (or \$30k/county).

Applications are due February 1st.

For more information, to ask questions, and brainstorm project ideas and resources please contact your County Conservation District.

Info Session 1/9/23 at 6pm. Past projects for the climate grant can be viewed at the bottom of the page: <https://www.cheshireconservation.org/climate>

Made possible through funding from the You Have Our Trust Fund, the NH Charitable Foundation, and anonymous donors.

2. NH Farm Future Grant

<https://www.cheshireconservation.org/nhfff>

Statewide program that is offered through the ten County Conservation Districts and is a partnership with the NH Community Loan Fund and Land For Good.

Offered since 2020, we have worked with 13 farms and 8 land trusts in NH.

Mission is to provide funding for farm viability planning in concert with the conservation of important farmland soils.

Goal is that farmland is conserved, productive, and accessible to future generations.

Grants are for \$20,000.

- \$10K goes to the land trust to cover the costs associate with the permanent farmland conservation project.
- \$10k goes to the farm that is conserving the land to be used for technical assistance in the following ways:
 - o Succession planning
 - o Business planning
 - o Legal services

Depending on where a farm, and the farmers, are in their lifecycle it will inform the needs and how the technical assistance can be used.

Grants are due May 31st. Funding is made possible through the You Have Our Trust Fund and the NH Charitable Foundation.

3. Monadnock Food Co-op Farm Fund

<https://www.cheshireconservation.org/farm-fund>

Available for farms in the 34 towns of the Monadnock Region which includes all of Cheshire County and adjacent NH towns.

Mission is to support local farmers committed to wholesale production in increasing sustainable food production and the viability of their operation to contribute to a thriving local farm economy.

Partnership between the Cheshire County Conservation District and the Monadnock Food Co-op.

Offers direct grants to farms from \$500-\$20,000. A typical grant size is between \$5,000-\$10,000.

Meets the needs of farmers as they define them.

Eligible project types include the following:

- Equipment for production and harvesting
- Food storage infrastructure
- Marketing assistance (logo design, website assistance)
- Business planning assistance
- Supports for farmland conservation.

Applications are due on February 1st.

Kaitlyn Robinson (Aimee Quimby), Northern Community Investment Corporation NCIC

Grants

NCIC has grant funds from USDA Rural Development to support small for-profit businesses located in Grafton, Coos, and Carroll Counties in New Hampshire and also Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans Counties in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Eligible businesses must have fewer than 50 employees and gross annual revenue under \$1 million. This is a cost-share program where the grant will cover a portion of the project with the business responsible the balance. This is typically a 65-70% grant and 30-35% business

split but is dependent on factors such as funding available, total project cost, number of jobs impacted, and whether or not the business has received previous funding through the program. With this Small Business Cost Share Program, funds can be used to hire professional 3rd party consultants to assist in areas such as business planning, strategic planning, feasibility or market studies, marketing assistance, website development, training, financial management coaching, architectural/engineering designs, and more. These funds cannot be used for things such as equipment, inventory, operating expenses etc. We also receive grant funding through CDBG for micro-businesses. Eligible businesses must have 5 or fewer full time equivalent employees and must meet HUD low to moderate household income. These income limits vary by county. The use of funds is the same as the USDA cost-share program, however under this grant businesses are eligible to receive up to \$2,000 with no contribution required by them. Any amounts over \$2,000 would be the business's responsibility.

Both of these programs have a one-year term and run from July 1 – June 30.

For more information about either of these programs please visit our website at ncic.org. Contact person is Aimee Quimby at 802-748-5101 x 2019.

Additional Information share by Kaitlyn after the meeting:

There is an existing, no-cost platform available in NH through **Unite Us**. NCIC was introduced by Mollie White who is working in the childcare industry. Partners in the network are connected through Unite Us' shared technology platform, which enables them to send and receive electronic referrals, address people's social needs, and improve health across communities. The platform rolled out in the State fairly recently and is still being built out and tailored to NH. It provides a searchable database that individuals or service providers can use to ID partners/collaborators/services and then make referrals, and accept/deny them, directly from the platform.

If you are interested in a no-cost walk through of the platform, Nadine Lamontagne is the best contact. She can be reached at nadine.sacco@uniteus.com.

Website - <https://uniteus.com/networks/new-hampshire/>

Loans

NCIC also has loan funds available to businesses statewide in VT and NH. Our loan funds can be used for equipment purchases; working capital; etc – the things the grants can't cover. For more information about our loan programs or to access an application for funding, visit our website at ncic.org or contact Peter Corey at 802-748-5101 x 2012.

Grant Writing

NCIC also has experience writing USDA grant applications for farm and food businesses. Examples include the Value-Added Producer Grant Program (both planning and working capital are eligible), and Rural Energy for America Program (to buy equipment/implement energy efficiency projects such as reverse osmosis for maple producers, or solar panels). For more information about this program, please contact Katelyn Robinson at 802-748-5101 x 2027.

Bill Fosher, American Farmland Trust

Farmland Access, Succession, and Transfer microgrants

What: Up to \$5,000 per applicant to assist with costs associated with acquiring tenure, succession planning, or sale of farmland development rights. <https://farmland.org/>

Where: statewide (also includes other New England States)

When: next funding round expected in fall 2023

Who: contact Kristin Irving, kirving@farmland.org

Land management and rental contracts through NRCS

What: EQIP-like funding for conservation plans. Emphasis on soil health, water quality, and pollinator habitat. Livestock producers only.

Where: Cheshire, Sullivan, Grafton, and Coos counties only

When: next funding round anticipated in late February or early March 2023

Who: Contact Bill Fosher, bfosher@farmland.org

Soil health microgrants

What: up to \$10,000 per applicant to purchase equipment or implement practices that will enhance soil health. May be used to “top up” NRCS funded projects where payment rates are not adequate. Livestock producers only.

Where: Cheshire, Sullivan, Grafton, and Coos counties only

When: next funding round expected in fall 2023

Who: contact Kristin Irving, kirving@farmland.org

Regenerative ag project grants

What: larger grants (\$25,000 to \$30,000 per applicant). Details TBD; may focus on specific equipment and/or high-impact projects. Applications will probably be through a nomination and invitation process. Still being shaped and we welcome suggestions. Livestock producers only.

Where: Cheshire, Sullivan, Grafton, and Coos counties only

When: next funding round expected in fall 2023

Who: contact (for now) Bill Fosher, bfosher@farmland.org

Payment for ecosystem services

What: payment per acre for modeled carbon sequestration of field management practices adopted. Many details to be worked out. Livestock producers only.

Where: Cheshire, Sullivan, Grafton, and Coos counties only

When: next funding round expected in fall 2023

Who: contact (for now) Bill Foshier, bfosher@farmland.org

Soil Health – in development for Western region

<https://farmland.org/western-new-england-regenerative-livestock-farming-grants/>

Olivia Saunders, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture and Education (SARE)

Farmer Grant – \$30k up to a 3 year period, closes mid-Nov

Partnership Grant – Grower or service provider within group, \$30k, 1-year pause on applications

<https://northeast.sare.org/>

<https://northeast.sare.org/grants/get-a-grant/>

Jean Conklin, Senior Agricultural Lender for Walden Mutual Bank

Walden Mutual is a new bank located in Concord, NH that lends to the farm and food ecosystem who also takes deposits that are then lent out to farms and food producers in NE and NY.

Contact: waldenmutual.com or jean@waldenmutual.com

Xochi Berry, NOFA-NH

Provides funds for limited income NH residents to purchase CSAs where NOFA contributes 50% of the cost of the share, recipients contribute 25%, and farm donates 25% with fundraising encouraged

Farms must be both Certified Organic and NOFA members

www.nofanh.org/farm-share-program

Jesse Wright, Farm Strong NH, (Farmer and Rancher Stress and Assistance Network)

USDA funds managed by UNH Extension in partnership with NH DAMF for farmers for services that directly reduce stress. Tax/Accounting Assistance, Mental Health Therapy Visits, Legal Assistance. Funds available through mid-2023. More info at: <https://extension.unh.edu/farmer-stress>

Upcoming events:

Farm Labor Dashboard: Partnership Grant with UNH, UVM Extensions among others
Planning for Payroll—3 part event

- 1) Farmers that would like to get ready to hire employees
- 2) Ag service Providers
- 3) Open Office Hours style Follow-up

<https://www.uvm.edu/aglabor/dashboard/2023-workshops>

Jan 10th Food Security <https://www.nofanh.org/kickoff-event>

Jan 18th Food and Climate Panel <https://www.nofanh.org/pes>

NOFA NH Winter Conference <https://www.nofanh.org/nofawinterconference>

NOFA NH Bulk Order Program <https://www.nofanh.org/bulk-order>

CADE – webinars coming up

<https://www.cadefarms.org/workshops-and-webinars>

Vital Communities Grant

<https://vitalcommunities.org/farm-viability-a-priority-for-nh-nonprofits/>

Soil Steamer Virtual Workshop

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/soil-steamer-virtual-workshop-tickets-505731645967>

Birding on the Farm Workshop Series

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/birding-on-the-farm-workshop-series-tickets-494310535117>

Seacoast Farmer Network Gathering happening at Vernon Family Farm on the evenings of the third Thursday of each month

<https://www.vernonfamilyfarm.com/events/2022/1/18/farmer-fireside>

Northeast Grazing & Livestock Conference

<https://www.negrazingnetwork.com/2023northeastgrazingconference/>

If any farmers are looking at collaborative ventures (does not have to be a legal co-op), the folks at NCBA CLUSA can help: <https://ncbaclusa.coop/>

Farmers encouraged to reach out, including for help with grant writing etc.

Teia Evans, TEvans@ncba.coop

Discussion on Unmet Needs in NH Agriculture

- Farmer to Farmer Mentorship Needed for beginner+ farmers who have their farm up and running
- Assisting growers with upcoming FSMA Compliance regulations.
- NH DAMF used to have a grant for small infrastructure projects (was this just nutrient compliance?) to develop things like small manure composting facilities (also pack/wash stations?). Funding stream has dried up, but it met a need and was a straightforward application process. Great for a small farm needing assistance controlling waste.

Ideas for moving forward with action on these needs:

- We need to talk with our legislative officials on what needs we are seeing—the programs only exist if there is funding.

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