



NEWS FROM
ULSTER COUNTY
County Executive Jen Metzger

******For Immediate Release******

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Ulster County Launches Grant Program to Support Local Farmers

**APPLICATIONS FOR FARM VIABILITY & SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS OPEN TODAY;
VIRTUAL INFO SESSION ON APRIL 2**

KINGSTON, NY - Ulster County Executive Jen Metzger announces the launch of a \$586,000 Farm Viability & Sustainability Grant Program, with grants that range from \$25,000 to \$75,000 to support local farmers in maintaining viable and resilient farms now and in the future. The grant program is funded through the ARPA-supported Agricultural Crisis Relief Program passed by the Legislature in 2023.

The County grant program is being administered by Hudson Valley Agribusiness Development Corporation (HVADC), and applications will be accepted from March 19 through April 30. A [live virtual Open Office Hours session](#) is scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, from 12 noon to 1 p.m., to provide farmers with more information and answer any questions. To register for the virtual information session, visit tinyurl.com/53cpfmwd.

The program is specifically for projects that address **both** farm viability and energy efficiency/climate resiliency. Funding is available for projects related to the following program priorities:

- Increased Farm Viability: Market development, enhanced production, and improved profitability/cost savings.
- Energy efficiency related to on-farm or farm-business operations.
- Facility upgrades in farm operations.
- Climate resiliency in farm operations and practices, including projects, equipment, and supplies that improve soil health, prevent erosion, and save/reuse water. Projects that increase a farm's product diversity, health, and self-reliance with the ability to

adapt when confronted with changing market conditions, uncertain environmental conditions, and/or supply chain interruptions.

Farm Viability & Sustainability Grants are intended to be used for services, equipment, production costs, and other expenses to build both economic and environmental sustainability within Ulster County's farm sector. Examples of eligible equipment and expenses include, but are not limited to, biodiesel/electric trucks/tractors, cold storage, farm equipment, precise irrigation systems, solar panels, washing/packing materials, associated supplies, and energy efficient upgrades of equipment and/or systems.

"Our local farms are so important to our economy, communities, and character as a County, and we are committed to keeping farming strong here," **said County Executive Jen Metzger.** "This grant program will bolster the long-term economic and environmental sustainability and resilience of our farms by addressing both the market and climate challenges they face."

"Ulster County farms have long been a mainstay of our local economy and are at the heart of our communities," **said Deborah DeWan, Ulster County Agriculture Services Program Administrator.** "But today, many farms are struggling in the face of increased production costs, challenging market systems and the real-time effects of climate change. We are excited to make this opportunity available to our farmers as they seek to meet these challenges."

"As one of the only farmers in the Ulster County Legislature, I was proud to co-sponsor this resolution. Agriculture and Ag-tourism are major economic drivers of our County. Supporting our local farmers is not just about preserving our agricultural heritage — it's about investing in the future of our community," **said Legislator Herb Litts, who also serves as a legislative liaison to the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District Board.** "Our farmers are facing unprecedented challenges, and it's crucial that we act now to support them. This grant program addresses the urgent challenges our farmers face today, from rising costs to climate impacts, ensuring they have the resources to adapt, and keep feeding our region for generations to come."

"Bringing this type of assistance to farmers in Ulster County not only serves our farms and farmers but also our communities by making farming lands and practices more sustainable," **said Legislator Kathy Nolan, who co-sponsored the resolution, and also serves as a legislative liaison to the Ulster County Soil and Water Conservation District Board.** "This program provides a concrete incentive for farmers to move to more energy efficient and less polluting farming equipment and to institute practices that improve soil health, while also supporting increased productivity. I'd love to see this grant funding result in more farmers

driving around on cost-saving electric tractors and to residents and visitors being able to find more products of local farms at our farm stands, food pantries, and specialty shops!”

Eligible applicants include for-profit farms classified as “Farm Operations” under [Section 301](#) of NYS Agriculture and Markets Law, as well as not-for-profit organizations involved in farming activities, and must have an annual income below \$1 million. Applicants must also have filed a Schedule F in 2023 and received an Agricultural Assessment to be eligible.

Farmers can access the full Request for Proposals, apply online, and explore additional resources through the application portal at www.hvadc.org/ulster-county-farm-grants.

Technical assistance will be available throughout the application process until the April 30 deadline. For any questions, reach out via email at ucfarmviability@hvadc.org.

The [HVADC](#) is the region’s sole economic development agency with a specific focus on the viability of the agricultural economy in the Hudson Valley. It assists both new and existing agri-businesses such as farms, food businesses and food distributors, by providing technical and business consultation, access to capital, and resources. As a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), the non-profit promotes balanced, market-based solutions that lead to enhanced agricultural entrepreneurship, rural economic growth, diversity inclusion, and community enhancement.

To learn more about the Farm Viability & Sustainability Grant Program, and for application links, visit participate.ulstercountyny.gov/farm-grants.

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