

Resource Guide: Agriculture Innovation Grant 2025-2026

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1. Purpose and Overview



This presentation is intended to provide applicants with a detailed briefing of the Agriculture Innovation grant program and a walkthrough of the application process.

Background

Agriculture is central to Pennsylvania's economy, heritage, employment, and land use. The Commonwealth's endorsement of agriculture innovation will ensure that this legacy carries onto the future.

This fund aims to support projects that address challenges in a new, novel, or more efficient ways than from the standard.

2. Eligibility and Check List



Eligibility

- A person who grows an agricultural commodity and who has anticipated sales greater than \$2,000 per year.
- A person who processes an agricultural commodity and has anticipated sales greater than \$10,000 per year.
- A person who provides technical assistance or services to farmers for conservation, engineering, veterinary care, animal disease management, farm management, agricultural commodity production, nutrient management or similar services.

Check List: the applicant can...

- meet the above eligibility criteria
- make purchases within the contracted grant period
- submit paid receipts for reimbursement
- demonstrate that the operation and project are in Pennsylvania
- identify a project that falls within the eight priority areas of the grant
- assure that they are in good standing with the PA Department of Revenue
- acquire a Keystone Login and apply online through the Single Application for Assistance
- Applicants must ensure they comply with all state laws and regulations, including obtaining any required permits

2. Eligibility (continued) Priorities



Eight Priority Areas

1. Utilization of innovation to improve energy efficiency, improve water quality, reduce water consumption, reduce odors or address solid waste concerns.
2. Utilization of innovation to improve production, processing, commercialization or utilization of agricultural commodities.
3. Innovation that produces energy from agricultural sources, including manure, food waste or biomass.
4. Innovation equipment that provides low-carbon or no-carbon energy sources from agricultural commodities.
5. Innovation technology that assists eligible applicants with the management of their farms, including diagnostic tools and services.
6. Innovation technology that assists a packer, processor or cooperative in more efficient sorting, grading or processing of agricultural commodities.
7. Innovation that improves biosecurity or health of plants or animals.
8. Innovation that supports cybersecurity or data analytics.)

The Department will evaluate an application based upon the degree to which the project is:

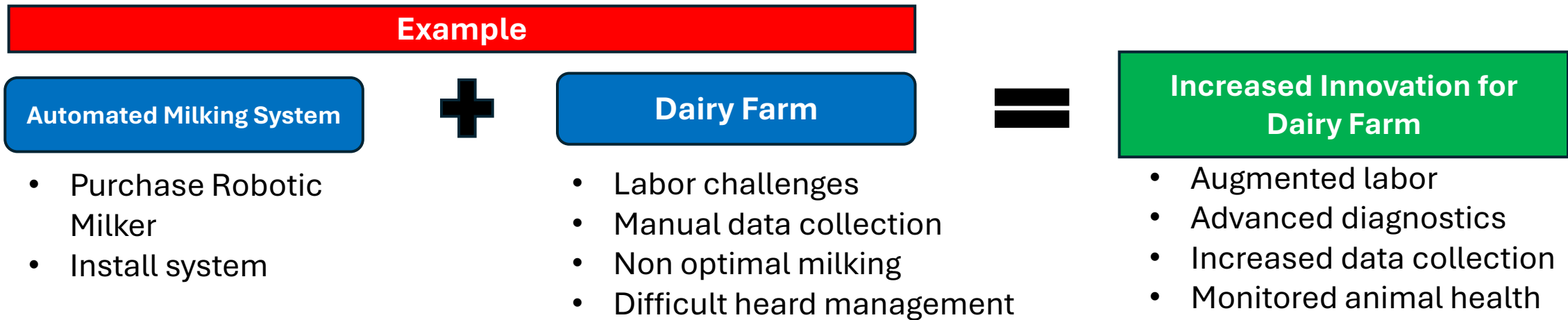
- a) **Relevant:** The innovation addresses an agricultural challenge or helps the agriculture sector deal with significant issues.
- b) **Practical:** The innovation's deployment should not burden users or add more complications than business as usual.
- c) **Accessible:** The innovation can be directly used by farmers or a service can be rendered at the farm level. Innovation at the processing level should enable further utilization of agricultural products to make them more readily available.
- d) **Scalable:** The innovation must have applicability to small-sized and medium-sized farms in this Commonwealth. Processors should be able to expand or replicate the innovation, or increase access, or both, for small-sized and medium-sized farms.
- e) **An improvement to the triple bottom line:** The innovation should be rooted in the principle of the triple bottom line (people, planet, profit). The innovation should improve society, the environment and the economy.

3. Grant Types and Funding Amounts



- **Planning Grant**
 - A grant to develop a strategic plan to utilize innovation to improve agricultural practices, technologies, operations or approaches within a specific business, geographic area, or network.
 - The amount of a grant should be no less than **\$7,500 and no more than \$50,000**.
 - A grantee must use non-State sourced matching funds equal to at least **30%** of the grant amount for the project.
- **On-site Grant**
 - A grant for a project that focuses on implementing innovation practices, technologies or approaches on an individual farm or property producing or processing an agricultural commodity.
 - The amount of the grant should be no less than **\$5,000 and no more than \$200,000**.
 - A grantee must use non-State sourced matching funds equal to at least **50%** of the grant amount for the project.
- **Regional Impact Grant**
 - A grant for a project designed to address challenges, promote efficiencies, or achieve specific goals for multiple eligible applicants.
 - The amount of the grant should be no less than **\$100,000 and no more than \$2 million**.
 - The grantee must use non-State sourced matching funds equal to at least **50%** of the grant amount for the project.
 - The project must impact two or more persons or businesses or be a cooperative association that grows, harvests, processes, packs or manages an agricultural commodity.

4. Model Ag Innovation Project



4. Model Ag Inno. Project Budget



Example

*This is an example of an On-site grant at the maximum request amount.

Category (\$)	Vendor	Short Desc.	State (\$)	Non-State (\$)	Total
Equipment					
Robotic Milker	AMS LLC.	Dairy milking system.	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$250,000
Contractual					
Installation	Builder LLC.	Install labor	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
Budget Totals			\$200,000	\$100,000	\$300,000

Please note

- For Planning grants, **non-state funds** should be greater than or equal to **.30 of the requested state funds**.
- For On-site and Regional Impact grants, **non-state funds** should be greater than or equal to **.50 of the requested state funds**.
- Non-state match funds cannot be from other state funds, must be cash match, and be used on items that are also eligible under this grant.

5. Allowable and Unallowable Costs



Allowable Activities (include, but are not limited to)

• Equipment

- New equipment (innovative technology, specialized machinery, or hardware) or used equipment (must be refurbished by an OEM with a warranty)
 - Precision agriculture
 - Robotics/AI
 - Automation
 - Energy (directly related to agricultural production)
 - Labor augmentation
 - Biosecurity
- Software associated with equipment or system (*software development is **not** eligible)

• Supplies

- Materials (needed to install or integrate the project)

• Contractual (Must be directly related to the grant project)

- Consulting (Project planning/coordination)
- Design (Engineering or design fees .)
- Labor (labor and installation directly related to the grant project.)

Important Note

- Any infrastructure project over \$25,000 will be subject to prevailing wage.
- For more information on prevailing wage, please visit the below:
 - <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/dli/resources/forms-and-documents/labor-management-relations/prevaling-wage-projects.html>

Please contact Michael Roth if there is an item you do not see on either list that you have questions about.

5. Allowable and Unallowable Costs



Unallowable Activities (include, but are not limited to)

- **Equipment**
 - Used equipment
 - Items that fail to meet the eight priority areas
 - Non-specialized vehicles (cars, tractors, UTVs, skid-steers)
 - Computers, tablets, or phones
 - Software development
- **Personnel (of the applicant)**
 - Wages/salary/stipends
 - Travel
 - Benefits
- **Consumables**
 - Seeds, seedlings, plant matter
 - Livestock
 - Sampling
 - Animal feed, supplements, medications, etc...
 - Fertilizer, bio stimulants, soil amendments, etc...
- **Other**
 - Any purchase outside the contract period
 - Utility bills
 - Unpaid taxes or liens
 - Property
 - Real Estate/Rent/
 - Lobbying/marketing/political contributions
 - Administrative costs
 - Materials not directly associated with the project
 - Utility infrastructure not associated with the project
 - Other grant funds

Please contact Michael Roth if there is an item you do not see on either list that you have questions about.

5. Excluded Activities



Excluded Activities

- **While there are many valuable areas of innovation, there are some that do not currently align with our focus areas. These include, but are not limited to:**
 - Marijuana, psychoactive cannabinoids, or precursors for psychoactive cannabinoids (planting, harvesting, processing, retailing, etc...)
 - Tobacco
 - Alcohol processing (post-harvest activities exclusive to alcohol production)
 - Software/App development
 - Bench-scale projects (activities limited to lab-based experimentation/research)
 - Projects not specifically located in and or supporting Pennsylvania Agriculture

Disqualification

- **An application may be disqualified for the following reasons:**
 - Technical and Administrative
 - Missing the deadline
 - Modifying grant documentation (changing questions or formatting)
 - Incomplete documentation (failure to answer all questions)
 - Budget Discrepancies (budget not aligning with narrative and or costs fail to meet grant conditions)
 - Eligibility and Alignment Issues
 - Geographic (not in Pennsylvania)
 - Ineligible Applicant
 - Activities are out of scope
 - Unaligned with grant mission
 - Ethical and Misconduct
 - Conflicts of interest
 - Plagiarism or AI overuse
 - Standard of conduct
 - Any form of harassment, intimidation, or offer of personal favors directed toward staff or evaluators will lead to the automatic disqualification of your application. This includes communications outside the application process.

Planning and On-site (Max points: 100)

- Project Narrative **(15 pts)**
- Addenda: Question 1: "Intent of this program" **(30 pts)**
 - Intent: The intent of this program is to support the competitiveness, resiliency, environmental stewardship, and vitality of Pennsylvania farmers and foresters.
- Addenda: Question 2: "Metrics" **(20 pts)**
 - Metrics: Metrics will need to be identified and tracked to show the success of this investment. Both outputs (ex. Number of jobs created, hours of labor saved, etc..) and outcomes (ex. Reduction in biosecurity vulnerabilities, increase in food safety, availability of clean energy, etc...).
- Addenda: Question 3: "Five Innovation Principles" **(10 pts)**
 - The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) has five innovation principles (see program guidelines for more detail). These principles aim to ensure innovations are relevant, practical, accessible, scalable, and value the triple bottom line.
- Addenda: Question 5: "Budget" **(15 pts)**
- Addenda: Question 6: "Timeline" **(10 pts)**

Evaluation Criteria (continued)



Regional Impact (Max points: 100)

- Project Narrative **(15 pts)**
- Addenda: Question 1: "Intent of this program" **(20 pts)**
 - Intent: The intent of this program is to support the competitiveness, resiliency, environmental stewardship, and vitality of Pennsylvania farmers and foresters.
- Addenda: Question 2: "Metrics" **(10 pts)**
 - Metrics: Metrics will need to be identified and tracked to show the success of this investment. Both outputs (ex. Number of jobs created, hours of labor saved, etc..) and outcomes (ex. Reduction in biosecurity vulnerabilities, increase in food safety, availability of clean energy, etc...).
- Addenda: Question 3: "Five Innovation Principles" **(10 pts)**
 - The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) has five innovation principles (see program guidelines for more detail). These principles aim to ensure innovations are relevant, practical, accessible, scalable, and value the triple bottom line.
- Addenda: Question 4: "Impact of your regional impact project" **(20 pts)**
 - Please describe the impact your regional project will have in Pennsylvania. Additionally, please identify and explain the role of partners who will be supporting and working on this project.
- Addenda: Question 5: "Budget" **(15 pts)**
- Addenda: Question 6: "Timeline" **(10 pts)**

Timeline and Deadlines



- **February 2nd, 2026 at 8:00 am EST**
 - Grant application opens
- **April 18th, 2026 at 11:59 pm EST**
 - Grant application closes
- **April 18th to May 1st, 2026 (subject to change)**
 - Grant review period
- **May 2026**
 - Public announcement of awarded projects

Application Steps

Overview of Application Steps

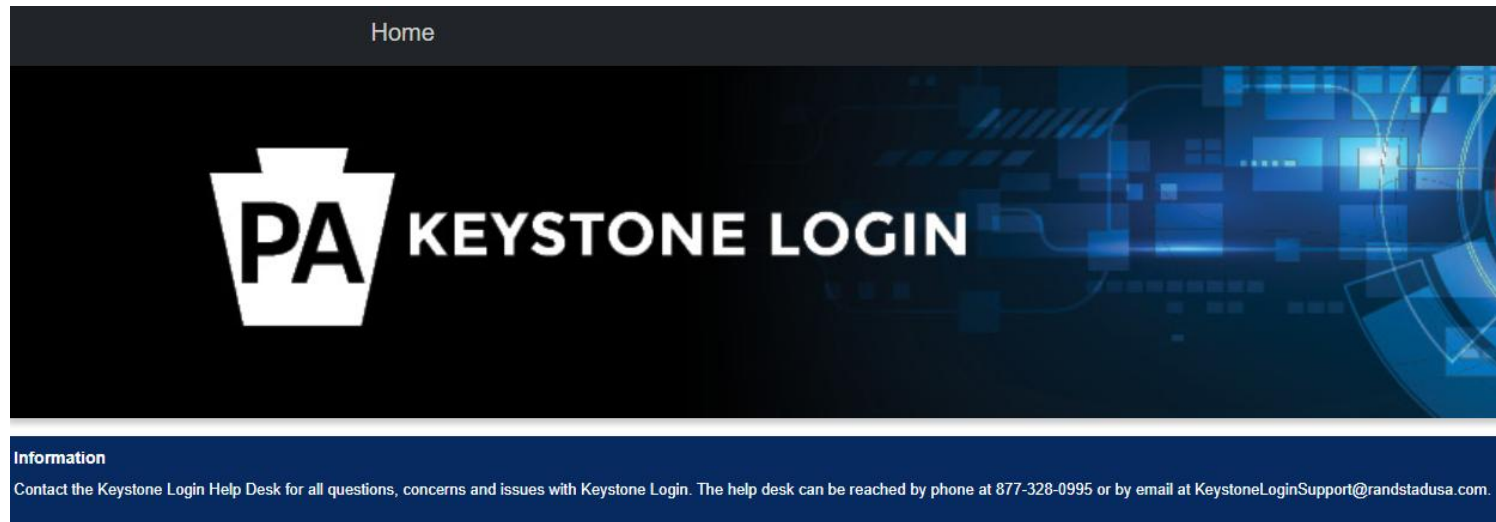


- **Step 1:** Register for a Keystone Login (Skip to step 2 if complete)
- **Step 2:** Log Into Single Application For Assistance
- **Step 3:** Apply for the PA Agriculture Innovation Grant
- **Step 4:** Apply for a Vendor Number with the Commonwealth
 - (Optional to do before you submit your application)

Step 1: Keystone Login



- Register with the Keystone Login
- If you already have a keystone login, skip to step two
- <https://keystonelogin.pa.gov/>

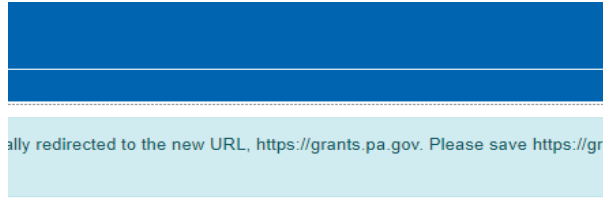


Welcome

Please select one of the following options:

- Log In
- Register
- Help
- What's New

Step 2a: Single Application for Assistance (SAFA)



Login

What's New?

For an overview of the changes in the new Single Application, please read [Help](#).

Username

Password

LOGIN

Powered by



[Register](#)

NOTE: If registering for the first time with Keystone Login, please include an email address with your account. It will be needed to successfully complete grant applications and grant processing.

[Forgot Password](#)

[Forgot Username](#)

[Learn more about Keystone Login](#)

[Having Trouble Registering](#)

- Sign into the Single Application for Assistance using your Keystone login
- <https://grants.pa.gov/login.aspx>

Step 2b: SAFA



[Home](#) [Help](#) [Contact Us](#)

[Submitted Applications](#) [User Settings](#)

The Single Application for Assistance portal URL was changed on September 21st, 2024. If you used the old URL, <https://www.esa.dced.state.pa.us>, you have been automatically redirected to the new URL, <https://gr> Favorites.

Begin a New Application

To begin a new Single Application For Assistance, enter a brief name for the project (up to sixty characters) and answer whether you need help selecting your program. If you already know the name of the program you want to apply for, answer "No".

Project Name

Do you need help selecting your program?

Yes ▾

Are you applying for assistance as outlined in a signed and accepted offer letter from the Governor's Action Team (GAT)?

No ▾

[CREATE A NEW APPLICATION](#)

Step 3a: SAFA Applicant Information



Applicant Information

To copy your Registration information into the application, click the "Use Account Information" button below.

USE ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Applicant Entity Type: Limited Liability Partnership Partnership
 Government Non-Profit Corporation
 Sole Proprietorship Limited Liability Company
 S Corporation C Corporation

Applicant Name:

NAICS Code

FEIN/SSN Number
*Please enter SSN/FEIN as 9 digits, no dash.

UEI Number:

Top Official/Signing Authority:

Title:

SAP Vendor #:
(xxxxxx or xxxxxx-xxx)

Contact Name:

Contact Title:

Phone: Ext.
(xxx-xxx-xxxx)

Fax:

E-mail:

Mailing Address:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

- **NAICS Code**
 - <https://www.naics.com/search/>
 - Agriculture is "11"
- **FEIN**
 - <https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/employer-id-numbers>
 - Federal tax identification number used to identify a business entity.
- **SAP Vendor #**
 - <https://pasupplierportal.state.pa.us/irj/portal/anonymous>
 - Need before final contracting
 - Okay to submit application without this.

Step 3b: SAFA Overview



Project Overview

Project Name: ◆

Test_Innovation

Is this project related to another previously submitted project?

No ▼

If yes, indicate previous project name:

Have you contacted anyone at Dept of Agriculture about your project?

No ▼

If yes, indicate who:

Is your community certified through [Sustainable Pennsylvania?](#)

No ▼

If yes, what level:

Bronze Silver Gold Platinum

Are you interested in applying for multiple funding sources for this project?

You are only permitted to apply for one program per application. By answering "Yes", you will be given the ability to apply for an additional program

No ▼

How many Site Locations are involved in the project?

1 ▼

- **Project Name**
 - This should not be generic.
 - It should include your organization Name
- **How many sites?**
 - How many locations will investments be made.

Step 3c: SAFA Sites



Project Site Location(s)

To add Project Site Locations, please see the [Project Overview](#) section.

Site 1

Address:

City:

State: PA

Zip Code:

County: -- Select County -- ▾ ◆

Municipality: -- Select Municipality -- ▾ ◆

PA House: ◆

PA Senate: ◆

Designated Areas:

<input type="checkbox"/> Act 47 Distressed Community	<input type="checkbox"/> Brownfield
<input type="checkbox"/> Enterprise Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Greenfield
<input type="checkbox"/> Keystone Innovation Zone	<input type="checkbox"/> Keystone Opportunity Zone
<input type="checkbox"/> Prime Agricultural Area	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses PA Port

- **Address**
 - This should be for the physical project site, not an office or administrative building.
- **House and Senate**
 - This will auto populate

Step 3d: SAFA Narrative



Project Narrative

Adequate answers to the Project Narrative questions below are required. Uploaded attachments or mailed documents are no longer permitted in this section of the application. If a more detailed narra

1. What do you plan to accomplish with this project? ♦

Identify the problem(s) that need(s) to be resolved.

Character Count: 0/8000 characters.

- **Project Narrative**
 - This should be a general overview of your project. This should cover the who, what, where, and why of the project?

Step 3e: SAFA Budget

Program Budget

Please see the [Help](#) section for details on how to complete the Program Budget.

Spreadsheet

Basis of Cost

Budget Spreadsheet

The first column indicates the amount of funding you are requesting from Dept of Agriculture. description of specific line items.

Add funding source	PA Agriculture Innovation Grant	Total
Please Select a Category		
Add Category		
Cost Category - Collapse	\$0.00	
Equipment Remove	\$0.00	\$0.00
Supplies Remove	\$0.00	\$0.00
Contractual Remove	\$0.00	\$0.00
Other Remove	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$0.00	
Budget Total:		\$0.00

Please add "Non-State" as a funding source to note your match amount.

Program Budget

Please see the [Help](#) section for details on how to complete the Program Budget.

Spreadsheet

Basis of Cost

Basis of Cost

Provide the basis for calculating the costs that are identified in the Project Budget.

- Appraisals
- Bids/Quotations
- Budget Justification
- Contractor Estimates
- Engineer Estimates
- Sales Agreements

Budget Narrative

The narrative must specifically address each of the cost items identified in the Budget Spreadsheet.

Character Count: 120

For each of the Budget Categories used, please provide a brief description of the services, work, or equipment proposed.

- This section requires a high-level overview of the budget. A more detailed budget will be covered in the addenda.

Step 3f: SAFA Addenda



Addenda Word Document (to be downloaded to be completed)

- 1. The intent of this program is to support the competitiveness, resiliency, environmental stewardship, and vitality of Pennsylvania farmers and foresters. How will this project address these focus areas?**

- 2. What metrics will you be able to track to show the success of this investment? Please list the anticipated outputs (ex. Number of jobs created, hours of labor saved, etc..) and outcomes (ex. Reduction in biosecurity vulnerabilities, increase in food safety, availability of clean energy, etc...) that will be a result of this project.**
 - Ex.**
 - Outputs**
 - Ex.**
 - Outcomes**
 - Ex.**

Step 3f: SAFA Addenda (continued 2)



Addenda Word Document (continued)

3. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture (PDA) has five innovation principles (see program guidelines for more detail). These principles aim to ensure innovations are relevant, practical, accessible, scalable, and value the triple bottom line. How will this project demonstrate adherence to these principles?

4. Please describe the impact your regional project will have in Pennsylvania. Additionally, please identify and explain the role of partners who will be supporting and working on this project.

(FOR REGIONAL IMPACT PROJECTS ONLY)

Step 3f: SAFA Addenda (continued 3)



5. Budget Breakdown and Justification Please fill out the below budget template.
 [To add rows: right click on a row, click “insert”, click “insert row below”]

Category (\$)	Vendor	Short Desc.	State (\$)	Non-State (\$)	Total
Equipment					
Robotic Milker	AMS LLC.	Dairy milking system.	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$250,000
Contractual					
Installation	Builder LLC.	Install labor	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000
Budget Totals			\$200,000	\$100,000	\$300,000

Please note that the non-state funds here reflect the **50 percent of grant funds requested** and not 50 percent of total project costs.

Step 3f: SAFA Addenda (continued 4)



6. Timeline Template.

[To add rows: right click on a row, click “insert”, click “insert row below”]

Month (1-24)	Week (1-4)	Activity	Vendor
1	1	Receive fully executed contract from PDA	PA Dept of Ag
1	2	Ex. Prepare electrical for installation	PA Electrical LLC
2	4	Install robotic milker	PA Ag Robotics Inc
3	3	Submit invoice to PA Department of Agriculture	Grantee
4	1	Submit final report to PA Department of Agriculture	Grantee

- Ensure that your activities occur between contract begin and end dates.
- Month 1 indicates the first month after receiving your fully executed contract.

Step 3g: SAFA Addenda (continued 5)



- **Project Type being applied for:**
 - Planning
 - On-Farm
 - Regional Impact
- **Please attach letters of support for this project (3 letters maximum). (REQUIRED FOR REGIONAL IMPACT PROJECTS)**
- **Please attach any other information that you feel is relevant to this project (product descriptions, design plans, Letters of Intent, etc...).**
- **Please download the Worker Protection Form and complete all areas. Upon completion, please upload and submit.**
- **I certify that I am one of the following (Eligible Applicant)**
 - (1) A person who grows an agricultural commodity and who has anticipated sales greater than \$2,000 per year.
 - (2) A person who processes an agricultural commodity and has anticipated sales greater than \$10,000 per year.
 - (3) A person who provides technical assistance or services to farmers for conservation, engineering, veterinary care, animal disease management, farm management, agricultural commodity production, nutrient management, or similar services.
 - (4) A person or cooperative association that utilizes agricultural commodities to create products or energy.

Step 3h: SAFA Signing Authority



Signing Authority

The Commonwealth has implemented an electronic contracting procedure for awarded funds using an E-signature process. Please provide the name and email address of the authorized individual who will execute a contract, if awarded.

Signing Authority ♦

Title ♦	First Name ♦	Last Name ♦	Email ♦	Add	Cancel
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>		
No data has been entered.					

Application Certification

Submit your Application

Step 4a: Vendor Number



- Go to "Non-Procurement Vendor Registration" and register.
 - https://www.pa.gov/services/budget/1_1_3-register-as-a-non-procurement-vendor-to-the-commonwealth-of-penn
- Recorded instructions for Non-Procurement Vendor Registration.
 - [Click Here](#)
 - https://pagov.sharepoint.com/sites/OB-BPS/_layouts/15/stream.aspx?sw=bypass&bypassReason=abandoned&id=%2Fsites%2FOB-BPS%2FShared%20Documents%2FStream%20Migrated%20Videos%2FOB-BPS%2FNon-Procurement%20Vendor%20Registration-20220711_105355-Meeting%20Recording-20220711_051951%2Emp4&startedResponseCatch=true&referrer=StreamWebApp%2EWeb&referrerScenario=AddressBarCopied%2Eview%2E53a1246f-100d-4485-9947-4dff1e8788a6
- As soon as you receive your vendor # (a six-digit number) please save it. This will be needed if your project is selected for funding.

- **After a grantee is selected and receive their fully executed contract**
 - PDA staff will provide a reimbursement template that is unique to the grantee.
 - The grantee will fill out the template each time they submit a reimbursement request.
 - The completed template and paid receipts are to be submitted to the grant coordinator by email. (No physical mail is necessary).
- **Reimbursements are calculated based on the ratio of the grant type**
 - Planning | Ratio 1/1.3
 - On-site/Regional Impact | Ratio 1/1.5

- **What counts as matching funds?**
 - Only cash match can be accepted. This can be any cash source other than State based funds.
- **What costs can be covered?**
 - Only equipment and contracting/consulting cost can be covered. No administrative, salary, stipend, or marketing cost can be covered or counted as match.
- **Is a processor or manufacturer eligible to apply?**
 - Yes, if they are receiving a raw material from agricultural entities (potatoes for chips, logs for lumber, etc...).

Thank you!

Contact Information:

Mike Roth (Director of Innovation)

microth@pa.gov

717-210-1217 (text preferred to schedule a call)