

NYS Dairy Modernization Grant Application FAQs

1. How does the grant work? When will I receive the funding to make the required purchases?

The NYS Dairy Modernization Grant Program Grant Funds will be distributed as reimbursements on a quarterly basis, post-purchase/incurred, and shall only be distributed once the equipment is received and paid for in full, or after an approved service is finalized. Grantees shall report to FFGF not less than quarterly on the progress of the Work and provide backup documentation for any incurred reimbursable expenses. *No expenses incurred prior to the signing of an Agreement with the Farm and Food Growth Fund upon the notification of award will be reimbursed.*

2. Is there someone who can help me with the online platform?

For troubleshooting please reach out to us at dairymodernization@ffgrowthfund.org

3. How specific should my budget request be? Do I need to include actual quotes in the application?

Your budget should be very precise and you should submit as much supporting documentation as possible. A current quote for each piece of specialized equipment (and associated installation costs) is required. In addition, Scoring Indicator 5 is based on your budget and budget narrative/justification being realistic and sufficient to accomplish the work proposed, clear and concise, in alignment with each other, and demonstrating a well thought out project.

4. How will my application be evaluated? What are the keys to a successful application?

Page 13 of the [RFP](#) provides the Scoring Criteria for the grant program.

5. I'm working with a grant writer, under whose name should the application be submitted?

In the Individual Applicant Information section, you will be able to list both the Primary Point of Contact and the Business Owner. The email you use to sign up for the portal will be the main point of contact for the project. If there are any other parties that need to be in the loop, make sure you provide their contact information in the specified sections of the application. There is an additional section for applicants to list Technical Assistance providers that they have/are working with. Alternatively, that is where you may want to list your grant writer.

6. Why is the minimum grant request \$50,000? Doesn't that exclude small farms?

The NYS Dairy Modernization Grant Program is intended to support farm businesses of all sizes. For those farms seeking to implement smaller projects, our partners at the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center operate a number of grant programs that could be a perfect fit. Follow this [LINK](#) to see if there are resources available for your dairy operation.

7. Are installation of or upgrades to milking parlors eligible under this grant?

No, they are not. Any activities related to production are not eligible under this grant, even if they meet some of the grant priorities - eligible activities are related to storage, cooling, and transport.

8. We are interested in applying for funding to connect our milking parlor with our dairy processing center. Is this an eligible expense?

Parlor construction or upgrades would not be eligible, as they are related to production. Piping and cooling technologies that could be a part of upgrades for handling may be eligible under this grant, but anything related to milking or production is not.

9. Would a Dairy-Farmer-owned cooperative adding off-farm raw milk storage to facilitate peak period capacity and increase efficiencies qualify for this grant?

A project like this would be eligible only if one is able to demonstrate clearly in their application the benefits that specific farm(s) will receive as a result of this installation. If the application demonstrates how a specific farm or farms will benefit from the project, it may be eligible for funding.

10. Are manufacturers included in this grant opportunity?

This grant is primarily focused on individual producers and cooperatives. A manufacturer might be able to submit an application, as long as it meets the priorities of the grant and importantly, has equipment installations and benefits that pertain directly to the farms themselves. Any installation of equipment in manufacturing facilities *only* would not be eligible.

11. We already installed a bigger milk tank and are paying on it. Are we able to apply for this grant for that?

No. Any expenses incurred before you are awarded are not eligible for reimbursement. Your application would have to be approved for funding and an agreement signed with Farm and Food Growth Fund before any eligible expenses could be paid for to be reimbursed by this grant.

12. Are Milk Tankers eligible expenses even though the RFP says no vehicles?

Tankers are eligible equipment under the Dairy RFP, but tractors are not. The tractor would qualify as a vehicle.

13. This grant has similarities to the NE-DBIC grant offering: <https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/on-farm-milk-storage-handling/>. Is this grant program related to the NE-DBIC grant offering or is this funding completely separate?

This grant, while similar to the DBIC grant, is separate and unrelated.

14. Can this grant pay for costs associated with a new building to house a new bulk tank and for the new bulk tank?

Yes, new bulk tanks and related construction would be eligible expenses under this grant.

15. If I want to apply for a load out pump and a plate cooler, should I do two separate applications or roll it into one application?

You can combine your requests in one application - this is preferred, as each applicant can only submit one application unless they are a cooperative applying on behalf of separate and distinct farms.

16. Will applications be approved & funded on a first come, first serve basis, or will all applications received by the due date be evaluated and scored?

This is a grant that will be scored after the closing date. All applications made will be considered equally and scored by a committee comprised of industry experts.

17. Can non-traditional dairy farms (such as farms on educational campuses) apply for this funding?

Any entities that meet the definition of a farm as outlined in the RFP under New York State regulations, that need to update or install bulk dairy storage, cooling or transport technologies as outlined in the RFP, and meet two or more of the priority criteria in the RFP are eligible and would qualify to apply for this grant.

18. One of the requirements if funded includes providing a "certificate of insurance listing the FFGF as an additional insured." Does this mean that the FFGF must be listed as additional insured through the duration of the contract, but once the contract is closed they can be removed?

Yes - listing FFGF as additional insured only has to be in place for the duration of the project. When the project is fully completed and officially closed out, FFGF can be removed from the certificate of insurance. You do not need to provide the certificate insurance unless your project is approved for funding.

19. Can the grant pay for an electric upgrade if the farm would need to upgrade to 3 phase in order to install new bulk tanks?

If the electrical work is critical to the function of the requested eligible equipment, that would be an eligible expense under this grant.

20. I am having trouble attaching documents - can I send them by regular mail?

No - documents must be submitted digitally. The application has sections where you can upload files. If you are having trouble submitting your files on the application, please contact us at dairymodernization@ffgrowthfund.org.

21. Is any documentation required to show that an applicant can pay for the project before being reimbursed?

For this grant, we do not have a requirement for proof of funds. Since it is reimbursement based, we will only disburse funds after purchases are made.

22. We are hoping to construct a new milk house needed to house a larger bulk tank - is this type of construction allowed?

Construction is allowed as long as it is required for and related to the installation of new equipment. See the eligible and ineligible expenses categories on the RFP for more details: https://www.ffgrowthfund.org/files/ugd/bf84f0_4ccf611ac3cc45cdb245906bc4a807e1.pdf

23. The RFP states: "Letters of Commitment are required in the event that a partner will be involved in carrying out any component of the project, and/or if the applicant ships milk, from the applicant's processor or buyer." Does this mean they need letters from the vendors doing the construction?

No, letters from vendors are not required. That language is referring to anyone who may have a stake in the finished project, such as a processor, or who is providing resources such as land, real estate or donations - not contractors or vendors involved in the installation.

24. If a farmer is able to get a cheaper quote after the application has been submitted, can this be updated or are they committed to using the same quote as when they applied?

Often the exact costs and types of contracts and equipment can shift slightly throughout this process. When applying, give the closest approximation you can of all costs. Slight changes in pricing can be accommodated or amended post-award as long as the project and equipment are mostly the same. The awarded amount for the grant cannot be exceeded due to changes in price or equipment.

25. I need help applying!

It may be useful to get in touch with your local Cooperative Extension office, as they may be able to help you. Your county economic development office may also have resources. FFGF also has service providers we can connect you with to help you with grant applications, but they would charge a fee for their services. Please contact dairymodernization@ffgrowthfund.org with any inquiries.

26. Can I apply for funding for equipment that we have already installed and paid for? What if I need funding sooner than the closing of this grant application period?

Any activities that are paid for in any way before an official notification of award *are not eligible* for reimbursement. If you need funding more quickly, there might be opportunities for funding through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center, linked here: <https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/>.

27. Is there a collaborator role with the NYS Dairy Modernization Grant application portal?

Currently there is no collaborator role enabled in our portal.

28. Are there any templates you recommend for Letters of Support or Letters of Commitment?

We do not have any templates as of this time. Letters of Commitment and Support must include the information requested in the RFP, which is as follows:

"Letters of Commitment should articulate project partners' or beneficiaries' involvement in the project, and identify the contributions they will make to ensure the project's success, or how they will directly benefit from the activities proposed. This may include description of the resources that are available for the installation to be successfully carried out, or how the processor's relationship will change with these improvements. Additional letters of support are encouraged. Letters of Support should demonstrate support from businesses, retailers, other farmers, organizations, or processors that are connected to or beneficiaries of the project, but not directly involved in carrying out the project. This may include demonstrating project feasibility or validating the benefits of any new equipment."