



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rhode Island USDA Newsletter - November 2021

[Farm Service Agency](#) | [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) | [Risk Management Agency](#)

Application period opens for Pandemic Response and Safety Grant Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a [Request for Applications](#) (RFA) for the new Pandemic Response and Safety (PRS) Grant program and encourages eligible entities to apply now for funds. Applications must be submitted electronically through the grant portal at <https://usda-prs.grantsolutions.gov/usda> by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, November 22, 2021.

Approximately \$650 million in funding is available for the PRS grants, which are funded by the Pandemic Assistance provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021.



The PRS Grant program will assist small businesses in certain commodity areas, including specialty crop producers, shellfish farming, finfish farming, aquaculture, and apiculture; specialty crop, meat, and other processors; distributors; and farmers markets. Small businesses and nonprofits in these industries can apply for a grant to cover COVID-related expenses such as workplace safety measures (e.g., personal protective equipment (PPE), retrofitting facilities for worker and consumer safety, shifting to online sales platforms, transportation, worker housing, and medical costs. The minimum funding request is \$1,500 and the maximum funding request is \$20,000.

The [RFA](#) and the [PRS Grant Portal](#) provide more details about eligibility for the grant. Eligible entities are required to obtain a free DUNS Number from Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) BEFORE applying for this program. USDA has created a custom PRS DUNS number portal at <https://support.dnb.com/PandemicResponse>.

Application resources including Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), tip sheets in English and Spanish on applying for a DUNS Number, videos on “How to Apply” and more are available on the [PRS Grant Portal](#).

For more information, you can also reach out to the PRS help desk, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m. ET at (301) 238-5550 or usda.ams.prs@grantsolutions.gov.

Check your eligibility, obtain a DUNS number, and learn more about the application process at the [PRS Grant Portal](#).

Elections for the 2021 County Committee



Voting is now open for the USDA's Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Rhode Island County Committee.

It is important that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the USDA. The 2021 election in Name County will be conducted for the representative for Local Administrative Area (LAA) 1, Providence County.

County committee members are a critical component of FSA operations. Committees should be comprised of members who reflect the diversity of producers involved in production agriculture in Rhode Island. This means that producers representing underserved groups or communities should be on the committee to speak on behalf of their constituency.

Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources. Other minority groups including Native American and Alaska Natives; persons under the poverty level, and persons that have disabilities are also considered underserved.

County committee election ballots will be mailed to eligible voters beginning Nov. 1, 2021. The last day to return completed ballots to the Rhode Island USDA Service Center is Dec. 6, 2021.

For more information on eligibility to serve on FSA county committees, visit: fsa.usda.gov/elections.

Farmers.gov feature helps producers find farm loans that fit their operation



Farmers and ranchers can use the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* on farmers.gov to find information on USDA farm loans that may best fit their operations.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers a variety of loan options to help farmers finance their operations. From buying land to financing the purchase of equipment, FSA loans can help.

USDA conducted field research in eight states, gathering input from farmers and FSA farm loan staff to better understand their needs and challenges.

How the Tool Works

Farmers who are looking for financing options to operate a farm or buy land can answer a few simple questions about what they are looking to fund and how much money they need to

borrow. After submitting their answers, farmers will receive information on farm loans that best fit their specific needs. The loan application and additional resources also will be provided.

Farmers can download application quick guides that outline what to expect from preparing an application to receiving a loan decision. There are four guides that cover loans to individuals, entities, and youth, as well as information on microloans. The guides include general eligibility requirements and a list of required forms and documentation for each type of loan. These guides can help farmers prepare before their first USDA service center visit with a loan officer.

Farmers can access the *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* by visiting farmers.gov/fund and clicking the “Start” button. Follow the prompts and answer five simple questions to receive loan information that is applicable to your agricultural operation. The tool is built to run on any modern browser like Chrome, Edge, Firefox, or the Safari browser, and is fully functional on mobile devices. It does not work in Internet Explorer.

About Farmers.gov

In 2018, USDA unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where farmers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions, and manage accounts.

The *Farm Loan Discovery Tool* is one of many resources on farmers.gov to help connect farmers to information that can help their operations. Earlier this year, USDA launched the *My Financial Information* feature, which enables farmers to view their loan information, history, payments, and alerts by logging into the website.

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. In addition to the interactive farm loan features, the site also offers a Disaster Assistance Discovery Tool. Farmers can visit farmers.gov/recover/disaster-assistance-tool#step-1 to find disaster assistance programs that can help their operation recover from natural disasters.

For more information, contact your Rhode Island USDA Farm Loan Team at 401-828-3120 Option 3 or visit farmers.gov.

Rhode Island producers urged to consider NAP risk protection coverage before crop sales deadlines



The USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages you to review available USDA crop risk protection options, including federal crop insurance and Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage, before the crop deadlines.

Federal crop insurance covers crop losses from natural adversities such as drought, hail and excessive moisture. NAP covers losses from natural disasters on crops for which no permanent federal crop insurance program is available.

The following crops in Rhode Island have a NAP application deadline for 2022 coverage;

- **March 15th**, Annual Crops including spring or fall-seeded small grains
- **September 30th**, Value Loss Crops; Aquaculture, Oysters, Turf Grass, Christmas trees, Floriculture (except Chrysanthemums) Mushrooms, Ginseng
- **November 20th**, Perennial Crops, Grass, Mixed Forage, Alfalfa, Perennial Forage
- **December 31st**, Specialty Type Crops; Honey, Maple sap

Sign up Deadlines for Crop Insurance Under [Risk Management Agency](#) Programs.

- **March 15th**, Corn, Sweet Corn and Potatoes
- **November 20th**, Apples, Cranberries, Grapes and Peaches

You can determine if crops are eligible for federal crop insurance or NAP by [visiting the RMA website](#).

NAP offers higher levels of coverage, from 50 to 65 percent of expected production in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers of organics and crops marketed directly to consumers also may exercise the “buy-up” option to obtain NAP coverage of 100 percent of the average market price at the coverage levels of between 50 and 65 percent of expected production. NAP basic coverage is available at 55 percent of the average market price for crop losses that exceed 50 percent of expected production.

For all coverage levels, the NAP service fee is the lesser of \$325 per crop or \$825 per producer per county, not to exceed a total of \$1,950 for a producer with farming interests in multiple counties.

Beginning, underserved, veterans and limited resource farmers are now eligible for free catastrophic level coverage.

Federal crop insurance coverage is sold and delivered solely through private insurance agents. Agent lists are available at all USDA Service Centers or at [USDA’s online Agent Locator](#). You can use the [USDA Cost Estimator](#) to predict insurance premium costs.

For more information on NAP, service fees, sales deadlines, contact your Rhode Island FSA County Office at 401-828-3120 Option 2 or visit [fsa.usda.gov](#).

Qualified veteran farmers or ranchers are eligible for a service fee waiver and premium reduction, if the NAP applicant meets certain eligibility criteria.

RI woodland owners: funding is available to make your woods bird-friendly

Attention Rhode Island woodland landowners: Funding is available to improve your woodland habitat for important bird species and to manage your woods for wildlife and people. The Last Green Valley (TLGV), the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership (MassConn) and the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District (NRICD) are pleased to offer the next round of funding for woodland landowners to obtain forest management plans with bird habitat assessments.



The program is part of the \$6.1 million Southern New England Heritage Forest conservation effort, an unprecedented three-state collaboration made possible through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS funding is being matched, bringing the economic infusion into the region to \$12.2 million.

Information on how to apply, application materials, a list of communities that are included in this program, and contacts for each state are available on the [Last Green Valley website](#).

Keep the stubble during No-till November



Rhode Island farmers: keep the tillage equipment in the machine shed during No-Till November.

First launched in 2017, the NRCS project is a conservation twist on the national cancer awareness No Shave November campaign that encourages people not to shave during the entire month. The NRCS campaign encourages farmers to “keep the stubble” on their harvested crops fields. The campaign has reached about two million people nationally through Twitter and local media since 2017.

“No-till farming is a cornerstone soil health conservation practice, which also promotes water quality while saving farmers time and money. It is also a key climate smart practice, that helps store more carbon in the soil,” said Phou Vongkhamdy, NRCS State Conservationist for Rhode Island. “One of the first soil health principles is ‘do not disturb.’ This campaign is a fun way to remind farmers about the important relationship between tillage and soil health.” Improving soil health increases soil biological activity, which provides erosion control, nutrient benefits, and can simulate tillage.

More information about soil health and no-till is available on the national NRCS [Soil Health Awareness - Unlock the Secrets in the Soil](#) web page.



Rhode Island USDA

60 Quaker Lane

Warwick, RI 02886

RI NRCS Field Office: 401-828-1300

RI FSA State Office: 401-828-3120 Option 1

RI FSA County Office: 401-828-3120 Option 2

RI FSA Farm Loan Team: 401-828-3120 Option 3

Risk Management Agency: 919-875-4880

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (866) 632-9992 (Toll-free Customer Service), (800) 877-8339 (Local or Federal relay), (866) 377-8642 (Relay voice users).