

# Growing Tomorrow Grant



***Deadline to Apply: July 31, 2026***

## **Background**

The Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation's Growing Tomorrow Grant was established through the generous support of former Ohio Farm Bureau Trustee Mike Boyert and his wife Patti of Medina County. The Fund was created to inspire, encourage and nurture young professionals and entrepreneurs to find creative and transformative ways to address these challenges while generating wider and deeper public knowledge regarding farming and food systems.

Grants may be used to provide startup funds for a new project or solution that specifically addresses one or more of the challenges outlined below, or to provide funds to enhance the impact of an existing project that is focused on one or more of those same challenges. The Fund is looking to fuel creative and transformative solutions to these challenges that can be sustained through solid business plans.

## **Challenges**

The Growing Tomorrow Grant specifically addresses the following areas in an effort to assist and raise awareness about the challenges facing farming communities in Ohio:

- **Sustainable Employment for Farming Communities:** For generations, Ohio has been known for its agriculture. Agriculture is one of the largest industries and economic contributors in the state. However, agriculturally focused regions have suffered significant economic losses in recent years, including in Ohio, and as a result, job losses and poverty are increasing in Ohio communities. Many of Ohio's small towns are made up of family farms and local businesses that support a farmer's livelihood. However, as economic losses in these towns increase, so does the damage to local businesses, which leads to community deterioration and an overall lack of economic opportunity for low- and moderate-income workers within Ohio's farming communities. By providing workers in these struggling areas with next-generation expertise and training, the Fund can foster the next generation of skilled agricultural workers and leaders and help them to develop creative, sustainable careers in farming and agricultural industries, support long-term, sustainable employment opportunities within Ohio, and help these communities and regions get back on their feet.

- **Agricultural Education and Awareness:** Despite the importance of agriculture for Ohio's economy and food supply, there are insufficient opportunities within the industry for farmers and agricultural innovators to learn from each other and to teach the public about the vital work they do. The Grant will support educational conferences and gatherings to allow farmers and others working in agriculture to learn and discuss new agricultural methodologies and techniques, particularly those focused on regenerative agriculture and environmental sustainability, spread awareness and knowledge about cutting-edge farming practices, and teach Ohioans about commercial and small-scale food systems and how agriculture connects with their lives on macro and micro levels.
- **Centering Environmental Stewardship:** Fostering the environmentally responsible practice of agriculture is a critical component in ensuring Ohio's ongoing ability to feed itself. The creation and adoption of new, environmentally sustainable techniques and practices designed to ensure the ongoing regeneration and productivity of farmland will be enormously important in Ohio's fight against food insecurity and climate-driven scarcity. The Grant encourages future generations of practitioners and innovators to develop, test, and demonstrate the efficacy of these new methods.
- **Combating Food Insecurity:** Moderate or severe food insecurity has been climbing slowly over the last decade, and low-income populations are often hit the hardest when food becomes scarce. The Grant encourages farmers and business owners to help develop agricultural innovations and find new ways of sustainably growing food and distributing it to Ohio communities that need it most.

## Timeline

- July 31: Deadline to apply
- September: Top applicants present their proposals
- December: Grant recipients are announced on Friday morning at the Ohio Farm Bureau Annual Meeting held in Columbus, Ohio on December 10-11, 2026.

## Eligibility

- Applicant can be either an individual or a married couple. Applicants who are married may choose to apply individually, rather than as a couple.
- Applicant shall be an Ohio Farm Bureau ("OFB") member(s), in good standing with their county Farm Bureau.
- The applicant shall have reached their 18th birthday at the time they apply for the grant.
- Applicant must own a new agricultural business or have owned a business less than five years.
  - Ag technology businesses (e.g., software or app development) are excluded from this competition and will be encouraged to apply for the American Farm Bureau Federation ("AFBF") Ag Innovation Challenge.
- If an applicant is in a partnership, LLC, or corporation with other vested parties, a letter of support for this project must be submitted by the other partners. Only one applicant in the partnership, LLC, or corporation can apply each year, and if an applicant is awarded a grant, other partners are not eligible to apply in future years (unless for an unrelated business).

- A previous applicant who has not been awarded grant funds is eligible to apply again, unless the project being proposed has already been awarded Growing Tomorrow Grant funds through a different applicant.
- Grant funds must be used exclusively for the project for which they are awarded and cannot be used to pay off debt, to make distributions to shareholders/owners, or to pay utilities, taxes, rent, lease, or loan payments or other business overhead costs.
- Persons who are ineligible to apply include:
  - Current members of the OFBF Young Ag Professional Committee.
  - Current members of the AFBF Young Farmer & Rancher Committee.
  - Previous Growing Tomorrow Grant recipients or AFBF Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge/Ag Innovation Challenge competitors.
  - Current Ohio Farm Bureau Federation Trustees and Ohio Farm Bureau Foundation Directors, officers, county Farm Bureau employees, state Farm Bureau employees.
  - Immediate family members of individuals listed in the previous bullet points.

## Guidelines

- The application must be submitted electronically via the online application form. No email or mailed applications will be accepted.
- Part A of the application must be completed in first person narrative (i.e. I, me, we, etc.).
- Do not use abbreviations or acronyms in Part B unless the term being used has been defined once with the abbreviation or acronym in parentheses behind it. *Example: United States Department of Education (USDE)*
- Applicants must use the templates linked below in Part B, section 5C and 5D.
- **Once an application is started, progress can NOT be saved to continue later. It is recommended that you prepare application content outlined below prior to starting your formal online application.**

## Application Content

The application consists of the following two parts:

### **Part A: 3-5 minute introduction video that includes the following:**

1. Personal Bio/Background
  - A. Who you are, what your business is, and how it generates income
2. Describe the impact you are working to make (a) in your community and (b) in the agricultural industry as a whole.
3. Describe how this grant will address challenges in one or more of the following areas:
  - A. Sustainable Employment for Farming Communities
  - B. Agricultural Education, Convenings, and Awareness
  - C. Centering Environmental Stewardship
  - D. Combating Food Insecurity
4. Goals: Where do you want to see your project in 5, 10, 15 years?
5. How has the Ohio Farm Bureau played a role in the success of your operation?

**Part B: project plan that includes the following:**

*Note: Aside from the financial templates linked below, no other additional document is required for Part B. There will be space within the online application form to type or copy/paste answers for each of the sections noted below.*

1. Executive Summary
  - A. Your company name and description, commodities produced, size and scope of operation, location of the business and length of time in operation.
2. Mission Statement
  - A. Share your company's mission statement and describe the values and principles of your business.
3. Project Goals and Objectives
  - A. Identify the one or more of the four areas of impact your project will address.
  - B. List the specific, measurable goals of your project.
  - C. List the objectives of each goal and how each objective will address the challenges described above.
4. Project Strategy and Analysis
  - A. What strategies are you going to implement to accomplish your project goals and objectives?
  - B. What sets your project apart from the competition?
5. Project Business Plan
  - A. Risk Assessment and Management
  - B. Financial projections
  - C. Balance Sheet (must use template provided [here](#))
  - D. Profit & Loss Statement (must use template provided [here](#)) **OR** Farm Analysis Tool (must use template provided [here](#))
  - E. Growth Plan: Provide a short-term description of the growth plan of the project. In the next one to two years, how will you grow the project financially?
  - F. Project Management: Who has ownership in the project and what are their roles? How is the project legally structured? (LLC, Partnership, etc.)
  - G. Succession Plan/Next Steps: A brief overview in the event that the project succeeds.

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***Questions or concerns? Contact [thicks@ofbf.org](mailto:thicks@ofbf.org)***