



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

Agricultural Regional Projects Program

OCTOBER 6, 2025
OFFICE OF AGRICULTURAL WATER POLICY
315 S. Calhoun Street, Suite 700, Tallahassee, FL 32399

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I. Introduction

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) invites agricultural producers/landowners and other stakeholders (applicants/recipients) to apply for state funding to support regional agricultural water quality/quantity improvement projects. The purpose of the Agricultural Regional Projects Program (ARPP) is to enhance Florida's efforts to reduce nutrient loading in priority watersheds by funding projects that integrate both infrastructure-based solutions and enhance best management practice (BMP) implementation strategies. These projects are intended to address nonpoint source pollution from agricultural activities and contribute to broader water quality goals for reducing nutrient loads in priority watersheds.

Applicants will have the opportunity to apply for funding in two separate project categories:

- 1) Water Treatment and Infrastructure Projects; or
- 2) Enhanced BMP Implementation Projects.

Available funding will be awarded to agricultural water quality improvement projects that capture regional water and/or treat impaired water bodies affected by nonpoint source pollution from agricultural activities. Additionally, enhanced BMP implementation projects will emphasize advanced nutrient management strategies, precision agricultural techniques, and improved water use efficiency to complement infrastructure investments. Ideally, these projects will develop innovative solutions, and/or enhance regional collaborations aimed at conserving water, improving reuse efficiencies, and/or reducing nutrient loading from nitrogen and phosphorus into Florida's impaired water bodies.

FDACS will accept applications for projects in the following Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs):

- Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Caloosahatchee
- Wacissa, Suwannee, and Santa Fe
- Kings Bay and Crystal River Spring Group
- Rainbow and Silver Springs
- Chassahowitzka-Homosassa and Weeki Wachi Springs

II. Background and Program Information

Section 403.067(7)(e), Florida Statutes, mandates the development and implementation of regional projects aimed at reducing nutrient pollution to meet total maximum daily load (TMDL) requirements in BMAPs. Regional agricultural water quality improvement projects complement on-farm best management practices by targeting nutrient reductions at a broader regional scale to achieve water quality restoration goals. Regional projects may include nutrient capture and treatment systems, enhanced water management infrastructure, and innovative approaches to reduce nutrient runoff and leaching. Projects should be technically feasible, financially practical, and effective at reducing agricultural nonpoint source pollution.

III. Grant Program Objectives

This program aims to fund projects that help agricultural producers and other stakeholders implement innovative solutions for reducing nutrient loads in impaired water bodies. The primary objective of this program is to:

- Promote projects that reduce nitrogen and/or phosphorus contributions from agricultural activities to meet or exceed BMAP and TMDL requirements (where applicable).
- Support cooperative efforts between FDACS, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), water management districts, and local stakeholders to implement cost-effective water quality improvement projects.
- Encourage participation in regional initiatives that utilize innovative technologies and methods to enhance nutrient management and water quality outcomes.
- Prioritize projects that demonstrate a significant pollutant reduction potential, offer long-term water quality/quantity benefits, and align with Florida's environmental and agricultural sustainability goals.

IV. Eligibility

Entities/individuals seeking to mitigate nonpoint source pollution from agriculture within priority watersheds are encouraged to apply. Eligible applicants include:

- Local governmental entities proposing to address nonpoint source pollution from agricultural activities.
- Water management districts, soil and water conservation districts, institutions of higher education, or conservation groups.
- Private landowners, individuals or entities (i. e., environmental groups, regulated interests).

All applicants must demonstrate that the proposed project will provide measurable water quality improvements on a regional scale.

Attachment 1 provides a list of BMAPs and Agricultural Cooperative Regional Water Quality Elements (ACE) areas eligible for funding consideration.

V. Funding Information

- **Funding Amount:** The total amount of state funding available for recipient project awards from the ARPP is \$25 million dollars of which, \$5 million is required to be spent in the Lake Okeechobee basins. Financial feasibility and budgetary alignment will be assessed to determine whether the applicant cost estimates for design, construction, ongoing operation, and

maintenance are reasonable. For multi-year projects, the applicant budget plan should provide clear forecasts, including provisions for long-term operation and maintenance to ensure sustained impact and financial sustainability. Additional information for applicant budget plan requirements is available in Section XIII. Application Instructions and Submission Requirements.

- **Funding Priorities:** Priority will be given to projects that score highest according to the selection criteria outlined in Section XIV. The goal is to rank proposals based on water quality impact, feasibility, innovation, and collaborative value.

VI. Eligible Project Types

What projects are eligible for funding? Agricultural water quality improvement projects that capture regional water and/or treat impaired water bodies affected by nonpoint source pollution from agricultural activities. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Dispersed Water Management Projects (DWM)
- Rapid Infiltration
- Hydrologic Restoration
- Water Storage and Attenuation
- Hybrid Wetland Treatment Technology (HWTT)
- Floating Aquatic Vegetative Tilling (FAVT)
- Water Storage and Treatment Pond
- Bioreactors, bioretention, or biofiltration
- Watershed Improvement Impoundment
- Regional Manure Management
- Regional Cover Cropping
- Regional Integrated Crop Livestock Systems
- Regional Controlled Release Fertilizer
- Feasibility or pilot studies with the end goal of developing a large scale, regional project

To be eligible for funding, applicant projects must include a clear data collection plan, demonstrating effectiveness in addressing nonpoint source pollution from agricultural activities. Project sites do not need to be located on agricultural property.

VII. Anticipated Agreement Term & Renewals

Awarded applicants will be required to sign and comply with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services State Financial Assistance Recipient Agreement (Attachment 4). In addition to the standard agreement terms, the following special conditions shall be considered for each project category:

- **Water Treatment and Infrastructure project construction** must be completed within a three-year period. Multi-year projects are encouraged and will be given preference for funding, especially those demonstrating sustained water quality improvements over time or incorporating innovative techniques to address nutrient reductions. Extensions may be granted under exceptional circumstances, such as delays due to permitting challenges, extreme weather events, or other unforeseen factors, provided the Recipient submits adequate justification and a revised timeline for completion.

These projects must include a specific and detailed timeline for all phases, including planning, permitting, construction, and postconstruction operations. The proposed project lifecycle should also be established, with an associated timeline for operations and maintenance activities to ensure long-term functionality and water quality benefits. Renewals or additional funding for subsequent phases will be evaluated based on measurable progress toward stated project goals, adherence to the project timeline, and the demonstrated impact of initial implementation phases on improving water quality.

- **Enhanced BMP implementation projects** should be structured with a government agency, private entity, or educational institution serving as project sponsor to implement the initiative. This sponsorship model ensures effective coordination, resource management, and compliance with established guidelines while facilitating stakeholder collaboration. Sponsors play a crucial role in establishing demonstration projects, providing technical assistance, and overseeing education and outreach efforts to promote BMP adoption. Additionally, structured monitoring frameworks allow sponsors to quantify nutrient reduction benefits, ensuring measurable environmental improvements. By leveraging strategic partnerships—including water management districts, university extension services, agricultural producer organizations, and soil and water conservation districts—sponsors can enhance regional BMP programs, ensuring flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and long-term sustainability in Florida’s agricultural landscapes.

Applicants are encouraged to consider scalability and the potential for replicating successful practices in other regions to maximize the overall environmental impact and align with the program's goal of fostering innovative, cost-effective solutions for regional agricultural water quality challenges.

Applicants will submit the specific Grant Work Plan for their proposed project type: Enhanced BMP Implementation Projects or the Water Treatment and Infrastructure Projects.

Easement or other Land Use Restriction Requirement

As a condition of funding for **Water Treatment and Infrastructure Projects**, the recipient shall secure or establish a easement or other land use restriction on the property identified prior to project construction. This easement or land use restriction must support the overarching objectives of the regional project, including nutrient reduction and/or water conservation. The easement or land use restriction shall be structured to provide long-term protection and management of the designated area, aligning with the project's expected operational lifespan or an alternative timeframe as approved by the Department.

VIII. Regional Project Coordinator

The Regional Project Coordinator is the Department's sole point of contact for information regarding this RFA from the date of release until an agency decision is posted on the Department's website. Refer ALL inquiries in writing to the Regional Project Coordinator by email at AgRegionalProjects@fdacs.gov.

The Department will not discuss with any applicants or their agent(s) the status of their pending application. Questions will NOT be answered via telephone.

IX. Special Accommodations

Any person requiring a special accommodation due to a disability should contact the Department's Regional Project Coordinator.

X. List of Attachments

The attachments listed in the table shown below are incorporated by reference. Copies of these documents are available in the Agricultural Regional Projects Program advertisement on the Department's grants page that accompany the RFA posting.

Attachment	Title
1	Focus BMAPs for Agricultural Regional Projects Program
2	Grant Work Plan – Water Treatment and Infrastructure Projects
3	Grant Work Plan – Regional Enhanced BMP Implementation Projects
4	Draft Contract – State Financial Assistance Recipient Agreement
5	Project Selection Criteria

XI. Application Phase

11.1 Question and Answer Period

Applicants may submit questions regarding the terms, conditions, and requirements of this RFA to the Regional Projects Coordinator at AgRegionalProjects@fdacs.gov by the deadline listed in the Timeline of Events within the RFA.

11.2 Pre-Application Webinar

A pre-application webinar will be hosted to provide potential applicants information on how to apply, eligible project types, selection criteria and ranking, and estimated timelines for project execution. Questions received during the *Question and Answer Period* may also be discussed during the webinar.

11.3 Minimum Mandatory Requirement Review Phase

All applications will be reviewed by the Regional Projects Coordinator to ensure that applications contain all mandatory sections and are complete. Complete applications will be sent to the selection committee for qualitative review and ranking.

11.4 Evaluation Phase

The Department will evaluate applications from Responsive and Responsible applicants, that provide all required documentation as specified in this RFA. An application is considered Responsive and Responsible when it includes all required components, and the applicant is eligible and capable of performing the proposed tasks. Applications that meet the minimum mandatory requirements, as determined by the Regional Projects Coordinator, will be invited to present their project via Microsoft Teams or another agreed-upon virtual platform. This presentation provides an opportunity to offer additional information or clarify application details.

Upon completion of project presentations, applications will be evaluated according to the selection criteria outlined in Section XIV of this RFA. Each selection committee member will work independently using the selection criteria to review and score the applicant's technical application. Upon completion of the technical application evaluation, the evaluators will submit their scores to the Regional Projects Coordinator for tabulation.

11.5 Conformance to Requirements (Responsive Review)

To be considered for an award, applications submitted to the Department must meet all material aspects to the requirements included in this RFA. Applications failing to meet all material aspects to the requirements included in this RFA will be deemed non-responsive and not eligible for an award, at the sole discretion of the Department.

11.6 Addenda/Amendments to the RFA

The Department reserves the right to modify this RFA by issuing addenda and/or amendments. All changes to the RFA will be made through addenda or amendments posted on the Department grants portal website. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to check for any changes on the Department grants portal website. Issuance of written addenda and/or amendments is the only method by which a RFA may be modified.

11.7 Agreement Formation

The Department will issue a notice of award, if any, to successful applicant(s). No contract shall be formed between the Department and the awarded applicant until both parties sign the agreement. **The Department will not be liable for any costs incurred by an applicant in preparing or producing its application or for any work performed before the agreement is effective.**

The agreement will consist of the agreement and attachments, which will incorporate the grant work plan and relevant portions of the application submitted by the awarded applicant (if any). If there is any discrepancy between the grant work plan and the incorporated relevant portions of the application, the terms most favorable to the Department shall prevail.

Note: Upon selection, awardees will work collaboratively with the Department to negotiate the final grant work plan, incorporating necessary modifications while maintaining the integrity of the approved project structure.

The Department objects to and shall not consider any additional terms or conditions submitted by an applicant, including any appearing in documents attached as part of an application, except those identified in the Agreement. The Agreement that results from this RFA will be published on the FDACS contracts transparency website available at contracts.fdacs.gov in accordance with section 215.985, F.S., “Transparency Florida Act.”

11.8 Disclosure of Application Contents

All documentation produced or received as part of the RFA will become the exclusive property of the Department and will not be returned to the applicant. Once the Regional Projects Coordinator opens the application, the application will be available pursuant to a public records request, subject to any confidentiality claims and the timeframes identified in section 119.071(1)(b), F.S.

11.9 Withdrawal of Applications

The Applicant may withdraw or modify an application at any time prior to the due date by submitting a request to the Regional Projects Coordinator. Applications will be retained and available for public record; however, withdrawal will remove the application from consideration of award.

11.10 Administrative Cure

In the interest of maximizing competition, application qualification and cure process seeks to minimize, if not eliminate, applicant disqualifications resulting from nonmaterial, curable deficiencies in the application that are identified in the minimum mandatory review phase. Therefore, the Department may, in its sole discretion, notify applicants whose qualifying information or documentation does not meet the requirements of the RFA and allow for the correction of errors and omissions prior to making a final determination of responsiveness. Timely cures made pursuant to this section will be accepted by the Department.

11.11 Clarification Process

The Department may request clarification from an applicant for the purpose of resolving ambiguities or questioning information presented in the application. Clarifications may be requested throughout the application process. The Applicant's answers to requested clarifications must be in writing and must address only the information requested. Applicant's answers to requested clarifications must be submitted to the Department within the time specified by the Department in the requested clarification.

11.12 Information from Other Sources

The Department reserves the right to seek information from outside sources regarding the applicant, the applicant's offerings, capabilities, references, and the applicant's performance, if the Department determines that such information is pertinent to the RFA. The Department may consider such information throughout the application process including, but not limited to, determining whether the award is ultimately in the best interest of the State. This may include, but is not limited to, the Department engaging consultants, subject matter experts, and others to ensure that the Department has a complete understanding of the information provided pursuant to the application.

11.13 Right to Reject (Responsible Review)

The Department may reject as Non-Responsible and are not eligible for award any application submitted by an applicant whose past performance, current status, or application does not reflect the capability, integrity, or reliability to fully, and in good faith, perform the requirements of the application.

11.14 Cancellation, Non-Award, and Withdrawal

When the Department determines that it is in the best interest of the State, it reserves the right to:

- Cancel this RFA
- Make no award and reject all applications
- Withdraw the RFA at any time, including after an award is made
- Withdraw or amend its Notice of Award at any time prior to execution of a contract, including, but not limited to situations in which the grantee(s) fails to execute the contract
- Issue another RFA

11.15 Misrepresentations

All information submitted, and all representations made, by the applicant in an application may be relied upon by the Department in determining Responsibility of an Applicant for Award. Any misstatement or omission, whether intentional or not, may be treated by the Department as a fraudulent concealment of the true facts relating to the application. Such misrepresentation will be a basis for the Department to disqualify the Applicant as Non-Responsible, and bar the Applicant from participation in any re-application pertaining to this subject matter (regardless of whether the re-application resulted from the Applicant's misrepresentation) and may be punishable under law, including, but not limited to, Chapter 817, F.S.

11.16 Licensure & Registration

Prior to the execution of an Agreement, the selected Applicant must be properly licensed to do business within the State, and all entities must be appropriately registered with the Florida Department of State, if required by law.

11.17 Replacement and Alternate Applications

The Department will consider one (1) application packet per individual applicant. An entity which applies individually may also participate in an application(s) listed as a partnership between multiple entities.

Applicants may submit revised responses at any time prior to the response due date as specified in the Timeline of Events. Revised responses must include a statement, signed and dated by an Authorized Signatory, withdrawing all prior responses from the applicant.

11.18 Diversity

The State is dedicated to fostering the continued development and economic growth of minority-owned, veteran-owned, and woman-owned businesses. Participation of a diverse group of applicants doing business with the Department is central to the State's effort.

The Office of Supplier Diversity (OSD) has been established within the Florida Department of Management Services (DMS) to certify qualifying minority-owned, veteran-owned, and woman-owned certified business enterprises (CBEs). CBEs are encouraged to participate in the State's procurement process as both prime applicants and subcontractors. Non-CBE applicants are encouraged to partner with CBEs for agreement performance.

XII. Timeline of Events

The following schedule will be strictly adhered to in all actions relative to this RFA. The Department reserves the right to modify this schedule and will notify participants by posting an addendum to this RFA on the Department's website at [Grant Opportunities / Business Services / Home - Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services](#). It is the responsibility of the applicant to check the Department's website on a regular basis for such updates.

ARRP Grant Announcement	October 6, 2025
Applicant Question & Answer Period	September 26 – October 13, 2025 (5 PM EST)
Application Submission Deadline	November 7, 2025 (5 PM EST)_
Initial Review & Virtual Presentations	November 7 – December 5, 2025
Notice of Award	December 12, 2025
Subrecipient Agreement Execution	January 2026

XIII. Application Instructions & Submission Requirements

13.1 MyFloridaMarketPlace (MFMP) Vendor Registration

Prior to execution of the Agreement by the Department, applicant must be registered with MFMP. Information about the registration process is available on, and registration may be completed at <https://vendor.myfloridamarketplace.com/>

Prospective applicants who do not have internet access may request assistance from the Regional Projects Coordinator.

13.2 Application Submission

All Applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. EST, November 7, 2025 using the [Agricultural Regional Projects Program](#) link found on [Grant Opportunities / Business Services / Home - Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services](#).

Applicants must provide the required information through the [Agricultural Regional Projects Program](#) link found on [Grant Opportunities / Business Services / Home - Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services](#). Additionally, any supporting documents (e.g., Grant Work Plan, Nutrient Load Reduction Plan, Project Timeline, etc.) should be attached as applicable. Applicants' responses should include the following required information:

1. Applicant Information

- Applicant's name and contact details including any consultants or contractors who may be implementing the project on behalf of the landowner/producer.
- Agricultural operation description.
- Project location (address, watershed, and treatment area information).

2. Project Description

- Submit a *preliminary* Grant Work Plan that reflects the scope, objectives, and approach of the proposed project using one of the two provided Grant Work Plan templates found on [Grant Opportunities / Business Services / Home - Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services](#)
 - 1. Water Treatment and Infrastructure Projects (Attachment 2) **or**,
 - 2. Regional Enhanced BMP Projects (Attachment 3).
- In addition to the Grant Work Plan, provide a nutrient load reduction/water savings plan:
 - 1. Detail the methods for reducing nitrogen and phosphorus inputs or loads, the expected reductions and/or water savings.
 - 2. Expected impact on a regional scale that benefits multiple stakeholders over a large watershed or basin
 - 3. Geographic Area Maps and Identified Impacted Watersheds

3. Project Timeline

- Outline a project timeline with specific milestones.

4. Feasibility and Cost-Effectiveness

- Provide a detailed budget, including cost estimates, in-kind contributions, and potential cost-sharing from partners including any available matching funds.
- Highlight cost-effectiveness in relation to the nutrient load reductions.
- Cost effectiveness will be evaluated as part of the selection criteria process.
- Calculations for total project cost and operations/maintenance costs

5. Partnerships and Collaborations

- List any partnerships with local governments, water management districts, universities, or conservation groups.
- Attach letters of support from project partners.

6. Data Collection and Monitoring Plan

- Describe how water quality/quantity improvements will be measured and reported outlining the specific parameters (e.g., nutrient levels, flow rates, sediment loads, etc.).
- Identify monitoring locations, frequency, and methods to ensure data consistency and reliability
- Provide description of pre-project conditions to establish a baseline for comparison. Include details on existing water quality, land use, and hydrology.
- Define measurable goals for water quality improvements, such as percentage reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus levels
- Explain how progress toward these goals will be tracked and evaluated over time.

13.3 Confidential Application Materials and Redacted Submissions

If the applicant considers any portion of its application to be confidential information or exempt under Chapter 119, F.S., or other authority (Public Records Law), then the applicant must simultaneously provide the Department with an unredacted version of the materials and a separate redacted copy of the materials the applicant claims as confidential information or exempt and, in an index, as described below.

The applicant shall mark the unredacted version of the document as “Unredacted version – contains Confidential Information” and place such information in an encrypted electronic form. If submitting a redacted version of its application, the applicant shall mark the cover of the redacted copy with the applicant’s name, Department’s RFA name, and number, and the words “Redacted Copy.” The redacted copy should only redact those portions of material that the applicant claims are Confidential Information or exempt from Public Records Law. An entire application should not be redacted. An entire page or paragraph which contains confidential information or exempt material should not be redacted unless the entire page or paragraph is wholly confidential information or exempt from Public Records Law. In the redacted copy, the applicant shall redact and maintain in confidence any materials the Department provides or seeks regarding security of a proposed technology system or information subject to sections 119 F.S.

In addition, the applicant should submit a separate index listing the confidential information or exempt portions of its application. The index should briefly describe in writing the grounds for claiming exemption from the Public Records Law, including the specific statutory citation for such exemption.

The redacted copy will be used to fulfill public records and other disclosure requests and will be posted on the Department’s website. In addition, the Department will follow the procedures described in Attachment 4, Public Records Requirements, of the Draft Agreement.

By submitting an application, the applicant agrees to protect, defend, and indemnify the Department for any and all claims arising from or relating to the applicant’s determination that the redacted portions of its application are confidential information or otherwise not subject to disclosure. If the Applicant fails to submit a redacted copy of its application, the Department is authorized to produce the entire unredacted application submitted to the Department in response to a public records request.

XIV. Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria list of criteria.

Criteria
Project Type
Strategic Location and Multi-Source Targeting
Nutrient Load/Leaching Reductions
Cost Benefit
Water Quantity
Project Readiness
Data Collection, Monitoring, & Reporting
Innovation and Sustainability
Collaboration and Partnerships
Availability of Matching Dollars

See **Attachment 5 – Regional Project Selection Criteria** for a full breakdown of the criteria used to score projects. Projects will be grouped by BMAP region with the highest overall scores prioritized for selection. In particular:

- High-impact technologies and projects targeting high-load ACE areas are positioned to earn maximum points within those categories.
- Projects that are ready-to-implement, offer significant nutrient reduction, and are cost-effective will rise to the top of the list.
- Proposals demonstrating regional collaboration, innovation, and robust monitoring framework gain added competitive strength – even when traditional measures like load reduction or scale are less dominant.
- Matching funds are indicative of collaboration and long-term viability and applicants will receive full points for matching funds equal to or greater than 50% of the total project cost.

XV. Award

15.1 Basis of Award

An Agreement(s) may be awarded to a Responsible and Responsive applicant(s) whose application(s) receives the most points.

The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers, or separable portions, and to waive the minor irregularity, technicality, or omission if the Department determines that doing so will serve in the best interests of the State.

15.2 Posting of Decision

The Department will post a Notice of Intent to Award, stating its intent to enter into one (1) or more Agreements with applicant(s) identified therein, on the Department's grants webpage following the conclusion of the evaluation process and approval of funding decisions.

15.3 Execution of Agreement

The awarded applicant(s) shall sign the Agreement within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the Agreement for execution. The Department reserves the right to withdraw an award if the Agreement is not timely signed, or if it determines in its sole discretion that it is in the best interest of the State to do so.

XVI. Reporting and Compliance

As stated in Section 13.2, successful applicants will submit a monitoring plan that includes progress monitoring activities on all phases of project design, permitting, construction activities, and nutrient monitoring as applicable within their applications.

At the end of the project period, a final project report is required which must include:

- Nutrient reductions data.
 - Project expenses and budget updates documentation.
 - Any challenges encountered and solutions implemented.
 - All other data and information agreed upon between the applicant and Department.
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XVII. Contact Information

For further information or assistance with your application, please contact:

AgRegionalProjects@fdacs.gov.

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