

Farmer & Rancher Disaster Resilience Grant

Report on Grant Distribution/Awards for Round One

July 2024

[Farmer and Rancher Disaster Resilience Grant Website](#)

Program Overview:

During the 2023 Oregon Legislative Session, the legislature allocated \$2.65 million to the Oregon Community Food Systems Network (OCFSN) for the Farmer & Rancher Disaster Resilience Grant Program. This essential and nationally unique funding is for disaster resilience projects for Oregon's small and historically underserved producers to become more resilient to disasters such as extreme weather, heat, smoke, and drought.

This funding was initially included in the expansive 2023 Bipartisan Drought Relief and Water Security Package (BiDRAWS) and was advocated for by a broad cross-section of OCFSN members. Late in the session, the funding was moved to the Budget Reconciliation Bill (Senate Bill 5506) and passed at the end of session. This Farmer & Rancher Disaster Resilience Grant Program also builds on the successful OCFSN 2022 Farmer and Rancher Disaster Relief Program.

This document provides the details and outcomes from the first round of program grant funding. With guidance from farmers, a diverse group of community members, farmer supporting organizations and OSU extension experts, this program **quickly and fairly** distributed funds to small farmers and ranchers across Oregon who are building more on-farm resilience starting in the 2024 farming season.

Grant Program Goals:

- To create an accessible grant program that provides resources to improve disaster resilience on a diverse array of small farms and ranches in Oregon.
- To create a grant program that prioritizes small and historically underserved farmers and ranchers in Oregon.
- To prioritize farmers in Oregon counties most impacted by drought.
- To prioritize and invest in direct outreach to historically underserved farmers and their communities, conducted by trusted community members.

- To provide direct support to grant applicants to navigate their challenges with the application process. (All grant materials were translated into Spanish.)
- To do robust reporting and testimonial gathering to show the impact of this funding on producers and the Oregon food system.

Team Members Involved:

Grant Project Team - OCFSN Program Manager and contracted support team:

- Coordination, administration, applicant support, initial application review and rubric point verification, follow up with farmers, and reporting.

Farmer and Expert Advisory Committee:

- Individuals with farm or ranch experience and expert advisors to advise on the development of the grant program.

Grant Review Committee:

- Individuals from diverse communities across the state to review grant applications. At least two grant reviewers reviewed and scored every eligible application.

Farmer Outreach and Support Team:

- Individuals located across the state who are leaders in farming communities provided outreach and application support for farmers.

Application Process:

1. Applicant applied via online form (English or Spanish)
2. Grant Project Team reviewed submissions to check for completeness and reached out to any applicants to get more information or ask for clarification to ensure application is complete.
3. Two members of the Grant Review Committee reviewed each application against rubric.
4. Grant Project Team reviewed rubric outcomes and followed up with farmers if clarification was needed. Each drought declaration and culturally significant food score was also double checked for accuracy.
5. Grant Project Team and Grant Review Committee met to discuss outlier applications and made a final suggested award decision.
6. The Grant Project Team announced final award decisions and worked with applicants to complete the acceptance process.
7. Awardees received funding and will submit progress and final reports.

By the Numbers:

Applications:

Round 1 applications closed March 1st, 2024. There were two funding pools:

Large Grants = requesting \$10,000-\$50,000

Small Grants = requesting \$1,000-\$9,999

Total applications received = 211

Total eligible applications received = 179

Reasons applications were ineligible:

- Farm had not filed a 2022 “Schedule F” form
- Projects requested were not eligible expense
- Applicant was a nonprofit farm which were not eligible for the first round

Award Details:

114 farms and ranches awarded partial or full grant funding.

- 38 large grants awarded
 - 50% of the 76 large grant applications received were funded.
 - Of the funded applications 10% were funded in full and 90% were funded partially.
 - For the large grant pool, over \$3 million was requested of \$1 million available. The grant team and Grant Review Committee decided to partially fund the majority of applications in order to get more funding to more farms. If the highest scoring large grants had been fully funded, only approximately 33% of applications would have been funded.
- 76 small grant applications awarded
 - 75% of the 103 small grant applications received were funded.
 - Of the funded applications 76% were funded in full and 24% were funded partially.
- 65 total (small and large grants) denied funding
 - Potential reasons for denial:
 - Low preference points on [rubric scale](#)
 - Weak connection to disaster resilience
 - Ineligible project expenses i.e. operational costs vs. disaster resilience project
 - Project was not ready for implementation
 - Project was for farm expansion rather than resilience
 - All well drilling, large tractor, and cooler projects were identified by the Review Committee to have permitting hurdles or general operating hurdles and deemed ineligible for this round of funding
 - Budget did not provide sufficient information for Review Committee to assess project

Demographics for Awarded Grants/Grantees:

- 110 grants awarded to English language applicants
- 4 grants awarded to Spanish language applicants
- Historically underserved farmers:
 - 41 - BIPOC
 - 13 - Military Veterans
 - 11 - Immigrant or Refugee
 - 8 - Single Caregiver
 - 7 - Trans or Gender Non-Conforming
- 39 - Located in counties with a drought declaration in 2022 or 2023
- 89 - beginning farmers and ranchers (first 10 years of farming)
- 27 - farmed 11 or more years

Location of Grantees:

- 39 - Willamette Valley
- 21 - Portland Metro
- 20 - Southern Oregon (includes Klamath and SE Oregon)
- 13 - Central Oregon
- 8 - Northeast Oregon
- 7 - Mid Columbia
- 5 - North Coast
- 3 - South Coast

Total Area:

Awarded farm cultivated acres totalled - 4,766 acres

Requested Funds:

A total of **\$4,013,203** was requested with **\$1,600,000** available for round one.

\$843,287 total was requested from small grants funds from eligible applications

\$3,169,916 total was requested from large grants funds from eligible applications

Awarded Funds:

\$586,914 total small grant funds awarded

Average small grant award amount was \$7,703

\$1,001,719 total large grant funds awarded

Average large grant award amount was \$26,361

\$1,588,633.00 total funds dispersed to small farms and ranchers in 2024

Administrative Funds:

\$81,982 in Program Administrative Costs (5% of round one funding)

- These costs include staff time, contractors, committee stipends, translation, events, financial management and more.

Total program expenditures this round = \$1,670,615

Number of Disaster Resilience Projects by Category:

71 - Irrigation and Water Efficiency
50 - Shading and Cooling
40 - Soil Health Management
32 - Purchase, Rental or Refurbishment of Equipment
19 - Other Crop Management
15 - Other
14 - Ecosystem Management
3 - Monitoring or Research
2 - Planning

Testimonials - feedback from awarded farmers:

“The survival of our farm – and that of countless others grappling with climate disasters – is at stake. Farming has never been easy, but climate change is making it exponentially harder every year. These grant funds offer small, under-resourced farms like ours a critical opportunity to make strategic investments so we can adapt towards greater resiliency. We tip our hats to the Oregon legislature for allocating these urgently needed funds to support local and regional food systems, small family farms, and diversified, climate-forward agriculture in our state.” – *Zoe Bradbury DeSurra, Groundswell Farm LLC*

“Funding from this Farmer and Rancher Disaster Resilience Grant will allow our successful tribal farm the ability to work together with multiple tribal reservations, tribal food/educational networks to provide tribal food to regional/state communities. Climate change, Drought Conditions, Wildfires, Economic Challenges and other farm related issues have significantly limited the ability for farmers in Oregon to successfully provide healthy, high quality food to our food insecure communities over the past few growing seasons. This funding is an honorable resource to farmers statewide to increase sustainable uses of resources that farmers rely on for food production.” – *Spring Alaska Schreiner, Sakari Farms*

“Unpredictable weather patterns have challenged our ability to grow produce for community on reliable timelines and lack of access to larger land opportunities for farmers of color means that we often have to stay urban. Farming in urban settings poses its own challenges with lack of tree canopy and reliable weather, tracking for our unique microclimates. Funding for infrastructure projects to help us be more resilient in

the changing climate will allow us to feed our communities reliably and reduce our crop and livestock loss.” – *Letty Dogheart, Flying Dogheart Farm*

The Oregon Community Food System Network (OCFSN) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation supporting collaborative efforts to strengthen local and regional food systems to deliver better economic, social, health, and environmental outcomes across the state.