

PUBLIC NOTICE

AGRICULTURE

STATE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

Notice of Availability of Funding

Wildlife Fence Cost-Share Program for Unpreserved Farms

Take notice that, the Division of Agricultural and Natural Resources (Division) in the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (“Department” or “NJDA”) hereby announces a program to provide cost-sharing grant awards for wildlife fencing to eligible farmer applicants in New Jersey. This notice of funding availability is issued pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:14-34.4.

a. The name of the grant program that has funds available: The Wildlife Fence Cost-Share Program for Unpreserved Farms in the Division is offering cost-sharing grants to eligible farmers on unpreserved farmland in New Jersey to construct fences to protect agricultural products from being damaged or eaten by wildlife (WFCS Grants). Please note that the WFCS is for unpreserved farmland and is administered by the Division, and it is, therefore, different and separate from the State Agriculture Development Committee’s (SADC’s) wildlife fence cost-sharing program, which is for preserved farmland. Preserved farms are not eligible for WFCS Grants.

b. The purpose for which the grant program funds shall be used: To aid in the construction of deer and bear (or other wildlife) fencing, any eligible owner, operator, or lessee of unpreserved farmland as set forth at N.J.S.A. 4:20-6.1.a, as amended at P.L. 2023, c. 223, may apply to the Division to receive matching grant monies to construct, maintain, or restore wildlife fencing. The Division will award grants not to exceed a total of \$50,000 per applicant for up to 50 percent of eligible project costs. The grant funds will typically be paid to successful applicants on a

reimbursement basis upon presentation of proof of payment of project costs, after installation of the fencing and approval of the same by the Division. However, applicants may request a partial advance payment of grant funds supported by proof of sufficient cash or cash equivalents on-hand (which may include a line of credit or approved loan) to cover the total expected project costs, less the anticipated advance payment amount. The advance payment, if authorized, may not exceed 25 percent of the projected eligible project costs, or \$25,000, whichever is less.

c. Amount of money available in the grant program: A total of approximately \$1,047,818.64 is available for this grant program for Fiscal Year 2026, which ends on June 30, 2026.

d. The groups or entities that may apply and necessary qualifications: The owner, operator, or lessee of a commercial farm that does not include preserved farmland, who meets each of the four following eligibility criteria:

1. The applicant's farming operation must meet the definition of a "commercial farm" at N.J.S.A. 4:1C-3, pursuant to at least one of the following criteria:
 - a. It is a farm management unit of no less than five acres producing agricultural or horticultural products worth \$2,500 or more annually, and satisfying the eligibility criteria for differential property taxation, pursuant to the Farmland Assessment Act of 1964, P.L. 1964, c. 48 (N.J.S.A. 54:4-23.1 et seq.);
 - b. It is a farm management unit of less than five acres, producing agricultural or horticultural products worth \$50,000 or more annually and otherwise satisfying the eligibility criteria for differential property taxation, pursuant to the Farmland Assessment Act of 1964, P.L. 1964, c. 48 (N.J.S.A. 54:4-23.1 et seq.); or

- c. It is a farm management unit that is a beekeeping operation producing honey or other agricultural or horticultural apiary-related products, or providing crop pollination services, worth \$10,000 or more annually;
2. The applicant's farming operation must have had a minimum of \$10,000 in gross sales from agricultural or horticultural products grown or derived from the applicant's farm operation as reflected in either personal or business Federal tax return forms;
3. The applicant must be willing and authorized to enter an agreement pursuant to N.J.S.A. 4:20-6.1.d(1), which imposes a requirement to maintain the land for eight years in agricultural or horticultural production, and other requirements, including an obligation to repay the grant on a *pro rata* basis if the land is not farmed for the full eight-year period; and
4. If the applicant is a lessee (tenant) or operator who does not own the farmland, the applicant will need to provide written approval to install the fencing on the land from the owner of the land on which the fencing is to be installed. Such written approval is required at the time of application for a grant.

e. The procedure for eligible individuals or entities to apply for grant funds:

- Applicants must fill out the application form.
- Applicants must review the standard agreement form and Appendices A and B and sign a certification agreeing to those terms.
- Applicants must submit all documentation requested in the application, including documentation regarding the amount and cost of wildlife fencing to be constructed.

- The application form, including Appendices A and B, and all other necessary forms can be found on the Department's website at

<https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/divisions/anr/agriassist/deerfencing.html>.

f. The address of the division, office, or official receiving the application:

Director-Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources

New Jersey Department of Agriculture

200 Riverview Plaza, 3rd Floor

Trenton, NJ 08625-03360

njdadeerfence@ag.nj.gov

g. The deadline by which applications must be submitted to that division, office, or official:

The NJDA is now accepting applications for WFCS Grants. There is no deadline to apply. Applications will be evaluated on a first-come, first-served basis until all available WFCS Grant funds are exhausted. As awards will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis, it is highly recommended that applicants submit their completed application using email to njdadeerfence@ag.nj.gov. If an application is incomplete or missing any required documentation, the remaining WFCS Grant funds may be depleted by the time the applicant submits the required information. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to ensure that their application is complete.

Applications will be scored for ranking purposes only if, and when, total funds available are nearly depleted and two or more applications are being considered at the same time for those remaining grant funds. Once all available funds have been awarded, the Department will close the application period and post notice of that on its website. The Department will also notify all applicants whose applications are still pending at that time that their applications will not be acted

upon and will be closed. If funding again becomes available, the Department will post notice of that on its website and new applications will be accepted at that time.

h. The date by which applicants shall be notified whether they will receive funds pursuant to the grant program: Applicants will be notified as soon as possible after their submission of a completed application.