



# CLIMATE-SMART COMMODITIES GRANT

## ***Financial, Technical, and Marketing Assistance for County Growers!***

***The Climate-Smart Commodities Grant was awarded to the Prince George's County Dept. of Environment (DoE) in partnership with Prince George's Soil Conservation District, University of Maryland Extension, Bowie State University, and the Prince George's County Food Equity Council.***

Funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), this grant will provide direct financial, technical, and marketing support to County growers for implementing climate-smart agricultural or forestry (CSAF) practices over a three-year period and prioritizes historically underserved producers. There is no minimum farm size requirement.

### **Preliminary Intention-to-Apply Info will be accepted Nov. 15, 2024 - Jan. 15, 2025;**

with optional **stipends up to \$5000** and **technical assistance** for:

- Collecting and sharing data to help us understand and quantify the effects of CSAF practices.
- Obtaining a Farm Service Agency Farm/Tract # for your operation (if applicable).
- Completing University of Maryland Extension training and/or developing a viable agronomic business plan for start-up success.
- Completing training and/or developing a new farm plan including at least one approved CSAF practice (see list, next page).
- Designing innovative/new/farm-specific CSAF practices with grant partners (e.g. agrivoltaics, agroforestry, aquaponics, circular nutrient management, others).
- Preparing your full application for incentives (see below).

Full applications for incentive payments will be accepted Jan. 15 - Feb. 15, 2025, from any growers/prospective growers (activities and stipends above are not required). Selected growers who agree to make a good-faith commitment to grow and market their products and share data with the County for three years will be eligible for:

- **Beginning/new producers<sup>1</sup>:** up to \$100K
- **Established Producers:** up to \$50K

to establish or expand their climate-smart operations, with 75% awarded up-front.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Underserved producers,' described at [www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/farmersgov-historically-underserved-factsheet-07-20-2022.pdf](https://www.farmers.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/farmersgov-historically-underserved-factsheet-07-20-2022.pdf), include beginning farmers (less than 10 consecutive years of operation), socially disadvantaged farmers, (military) veteran farmers, limited resource farmers, women farmers and producers growing specialty crops. Specialty crops include the items listed at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/grants/scbgp/specialty-crop> along with horticultural plants, plugs, bare-roots, saplings and/or seed of approved Maryland-native plant and tree species.

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## PARTNERSHIPS FOR CLIMATE-SMART COMMODITIES GRANT

Because this is a pilot project, DoE reserves the right to select the practices and operations most likely to succeed based on expert opinion. During the preliminary application period, technical and professional support will be available to help you design for success and impact.

### **Program Benefits:**

- ▶ Financial, technical, administrative, and marketing support to implement eligible climate-smart practices for County producers and small farmers.
- ▶ Implementation of the County's Climate Action Plan through:
  - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agricultural activities.
  - Improving food security for County residents.
  - Building food system resilience.
  - Providing fresher and more nutritious food for residents.
  - Collecting data/metrics to further strengthen local climate-smart agriculture.

We will also be documenting multiple co-benefits of the program's approved CSAF practices such as:

- Reductions in food waste, via fresher/faster harvest-to-consumer times, flexible marketing quantities, improved product delivery, and other.
- Reduction in agricultural greenhouse gas emissions via reduced transport and storage energy.
- Verifiable improvements in water management, e.g. increased capture and use of surface/storm water, decreased reliance on groundwater, and improved water efficiency.
- Strategies to improve food and economic security in the county (e.g. job creation, improved access, and other).

### **Implemented Practices must include at least one of the following NRCS Practices:**

Cover crops, conservation cover or crop rotation, no-tillage or reduced-tillage, combustion system improvements, energy efficient operations, forest farming, silvopasture, riparian forest buffers, filter strips, grassed waterways, wildlife/upland wildlife habitat planting, hedgerow planting, mulching, prescribed grazing, strip-cropping, nutrient management, vegetative barriers, tree/shrub establishment, forest stand improvement, energy efficient lighting and/or building envelope. Some of these practices, along with innovative practices such as agrivoltaics and aquaculture, will require additional technical support and environmental evaluation during the application process.

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