
Agrivoltaics Research and Demonstration Grant Program

Colorado Department of Agriculture
Fiscal Year 2025

Grant Guidelines

Background

In 2023, the Colorado State Legislature passed SB 23-092, granting \$500,000 to Colorado Department of Agriculture (CDA) for the purpose for “new or ongoing demonstration or research project as a means to study the potential, benefits, and tradeoffs of agrivoltaics in the state”. (C.R.S 35-1-114.2.II). CDA convened a Steering Committee of industry and agricultural experts to advise on the purpose and design of this grant program.

In 2024, a second round of \$500,000 was allocated to the continuation of this program through the Long Appropriations Bill. These Grant Guidelines describe the purpose and objectives of the grant program, as well as the responsibilities of the grantees.

Purpose of the Grant

The Agrivoltaics Research and Development (R&D) Grant Program supports innovation and research in the agrivoltaics industry to support agricultural producers and further Colorado’s renewable energy transition.

Definitions

Agrivoltaics means one or more solar energy generation facilities directly integrated with agricultural activities, including crop production, grazing, animal husbandry, apiaries, cover cropping to improve soil health or insect habitat benefits or carbon sequestration, or production of agricultural commodities for sale in the retail or wholesale market.¹

Agrivoltaics Steering Committee is a group of industry and agricultural experts who advised in the design of the Agrivoltaics Research and Demonstration Grant Program.

Colorado Agricultural Commission is a group of nine agricultural leaders appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. They are responsible for final approval of grant awards under the Agrivoltaics Research and Demonstration Grant Program.

Grant Evaluation Committee is a subgroup of the Agrivoltaics Steering Committee who will review the grant applications based on the Review Criteria, and recommend awardees to the Colorado Agricultural Commission.

Grantee means the Entity (organization or individual) who is awarded an Agrivoltaics R&D Grant from CDA.

¹ Colorado Revised Statutes. §35-1-114.4(a)(2023)

Eligibility Information

Eligible Entities

- Tribal or local government;
- Colleges, universities, or other institutions of higher education;
- Other research organizations;
- Energy providers, including electric cooperatives, utilities;
- 501(c)3s;
- For-profit entities;
- Farmers, Ranchers, other Individuals.

Eligible Activities & Expenses

This grant encourages innovative projects, including demonstrations of agrivoltaics, research projects, and outreach campaigns to further agrivoltaics and Colorado's agricultural economy.

Eligible Project Types

Eligible project types include:

- Construction of agrivoltaics systems and agrivoltaics demonstration projects,
- Expansion of existing demonstration projects of agrivoltaic systems
- Research projects that focus on understanding the benefits, incremental costs, and tradeoffs of agrivoltaics systems,
- Outreach and communication projects focused on agrivoltaics benefits and/or obstacles,
- Other projects that further the research and demonstration of agrivoltaics projects.

Eligible Expenses

All expenses must be directly related to the goals and outcomes in the grantee application.

Eligible expenses include but are not limited to:

- Salaries
- Travel expenses (aligned with the rates defined by the [US General Services Administration](#))
- Direct costs including but not limited to:
 - o Construction costs, including materials and labor
 - o Research supplies
 - o Payment or lease of needed equipment
 - o Marketing or outreach materials
- Permitting
- Project Assessments and feasibility studies
- Contractor payments
- Indirect costs (maximum 5% of grant award)

Grant Timeline

This Timeline is for information and planning purposes only. The Schedule of Activities listed are “Estimated” and may be subject to change depending on the needs of the State.

Schedule of Activities	
Activity	Date
Grant Application Period Opens	May 10, 2024
Grant Guidelines Webinar. Register in advance	May 23, 2024
Grant Guidelines Webinar. Register in advance	June 18, 2024
Grant Deadline Applications Due to rosie.skovron@state.co.us	July 21, 2024
Final Grant Selection by the Colorado Commission of Agriculture	August 21, 2024
Grant Contracts to Awardees	September 2024
End of Grant Period	June 30, 2025
Final Grant Report Due	August 25, 2025

Any work performed prior to the full execution of an agreement is not eligible for reimbursement.

Grants are paid on a reimbursement basis.

Advance Payments of up to 10% of the total grant award may be requested. CDA has the discretion to approve or deny an Advance Payment request.

The grant period ends June 30th, 2025, the end of the State’s fiscal year. All funds must be invoiced for by June 30th, 2025. In special circumstances, extensions *may* be allowed with prior written approval by CDA.

Grant Funding

A grant award shall not exceed \$249,000 to a single project application. After application submissions, CDA may work with applicants to refine budget requests as the Department deems fit.

Grant Application Application Process

Interested applicants must submit a grant application to be considered. Total grant application must not exceed 10 pages, excluding budget tables and supporting documents. Full application must be submitted to Rosie Skovron via email (rosie.skovron@state.co.us) by midnight, July 21, 2024.

Review Process

Applications will be reviewed by an Evaluation Committee of industry experts and state staff using the Grant Rubric (attached). The Committee will make recommendations for awards to the Colorado Agricultural Commission for final review and approval.

Invoicing & Reporting Requirements

Grantees must submit invoices no more frequently than monthly and at least quarterly (between 1-3 months). Grantees must also submit a Grant Progress Report each quarter. Grant Progress Reports must include:

1. A short narrative on progress towards grant deliverables, any obstacles encountered, and how those obstacles will be resolved.
2. Budget expended to date.
3. Budget remaining.
4. Contract or agreement number.
5. Any public printed/electronic materials developed with grant funding
6. Additional supporting information as necessary.

Grantees will be required to submit a Final Report no later than 8 weeks after the end of the grant agreement. CDA will share a Final Report template, but the grantee will be expected to report on:

1. Final deliverables
2. Final metrics
3. Success stories and lesson learned
4. Findings on the additional costs, revenue, and/or benefits of the use of agrivoltaics as compared to traditional photovoltaics. The additional costs must be quantified on both a dollar-per-megawatt and a dollar-per-megawatt-hour basis. The Colorado Department of Agriculture will provide guidance on these metrics. If no additional cost analyses are involved with the research, stating the basis for this determination is sufficient.
5. Additional supporting information as necessary

Grant Evaluation Rubric

Review Criteria

Each application will be evaluated using the following rubric.

Category	Description and Considerations	Points
Approach	<p>The methodology, outreach plan, research questions and/or construction plan and feasibility analyses are thorough and make it clear the stated objectives can be met given the proposed budget and timeline. The project team is robust and includes necessary stakeholders.</p> <p>The proposed timeline and deliverables are realistic. The grant deliverables will be completed by June 30th, 2025.</p>	25

Impact	The long-term effect the project and its results will have on the agrivoltaics industry in Colorado, agricultural communities, and working farms and ranches.	20
Innovation	The showcasing of new technology (either solar-related or agriculture-related) and/or novel use of space in solar arrays for agrivoltaic purposes not yet at scale in Colorado.	15
Producer Benefits	The benefits or information created for Colorado’s farmers, ranchers, and agricultural communities.	15
Budget	The Application budget is thorough and well-considered. Proposal includes any relevant quotes from contractors.	10
Experience	The experience the applicant has on related projects, grant management, and working with agricultural producers and energy developers.	5
Project Diversity (Committee Discretion)	The Committee will prioritize projects in diverse geographies around Colorado, different types of projects, projects with differing outcomes.	10
Total		100