Last updated on 4/25/2025

This document includes responses to questions between 3/25/2025 at 9am and 4/11/2025 at 5pm. Please see Round 1 and 2.1 documents for answers to questions received before this time period. All questions received after 4/11 at 5pm will not be answered before the grant application deadline.

Some questions may be edited for context or to remove personal information. Some questions may also have been combined.

The following webpages and references are commonly made and do not have individual links every time:
- Farmland Action Plan Webpage, including the plan, implementation matrix and many other resources
- Farmland Partnership Program Webpage, including the RFR, webinar links, and other details

Advice to potential applicants
- Please make sure you have read and reviewed thoroughly the Farmland Partnership Program RFR, including the 4 file attachments, which outline the program, submission instructions, supporting document requirements, etc.
- Please consider reviewing the 3/11 and 3/31 webinar videos on the Farmland Partnership Webpage.
- Before reviewing this document, we recommend reviewing the answers to the Round 1 and 2.1 questions on the Farmland Partnership Webpage
- Questions and answers have an alpha-numeric number at the beginning of the question (eg L1, Y4, E9) to aid with referencing. The Q&A documents contain over 100 questions and answers, some of which are similar but not the same!
- TIP: Utilize the "CTRL+F" Function to search the document by specific keywords. This may help you navigate the document more quickly. Press the "CTRL" and "F" keys at the same time, then type the keyword into the search bar that will pop up.

Follow up questions
- Anticipating some applicants may wish to ask additional questions based on these answers, there was a second round of Q&A, as well as a second webinar. The deadline for all remaining questions related to this RFR was April 11th at 5pm. This document contains the answers to those questions.
- No further questions will be answered for this RFR before the May 19th deadline for submitting applications.

Comments
- MDAR will not address comments received as part of the procurement process. Comments have been collected for consideration in future efforts after the conclusion of procurement.

Contents

Logistics and contract admin details (L5- L9)

For L1 through L4, see Round 1 Q&A Document.

L5. I and several other farmers missed the first webinar because of the mislabeled email. Most folks are so busy generally and exponentially so now because of activities at the federal level that we don't open emails that don't seem relevant. I wonder after Monday's webinar if you could send a clearly titled fresh email out to folks making it very clear that there is an opportunity embedded within the information? As happens so often only larger (majority white) entities are figuring it out. I am hearing about several white led proposals being drafted but the process feels quite overwhelming for others.

- We appreciate that it is a very busy time.   We are sorry that you missed the first webinar. We have done our best to share information about this opportunity via several methods since it was released on February 19th, in addition to a long lead up time to engage with potential partners in the Summer and Fall so they could be ready for this opportunity. We also included a long time between RFR release and applications being due to give potential partners time to acquaint themselves with the program and prepare a strong application. The level of engagement is different from what we hope to achieve in normal processes related to the Farmland Action Plan due to limitations related to the procurement process. The procurement process was developed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to facilitate a fair, competitive and open process.

L6. I know that many at MDAR, including the Commissioner are deeply committed to increasing equity in the system. Many of us stand ready to support these efforts. We have to make access to information easier. I again suggest that you consider assembling an informal, inclusive group of advisers to support your outreach efforts? I know several folks within and outside the administration who would be happy to help you with outreach efforts if nothing else.

- We appreciate your recommendation regarding engagement. MDAR staff are in regular communication with others at MDAR about what strategies may be beneficial, as well as the limitations we face when in the procurement process.
- Regarding your recommendation to form a group of external advisors to support MDAR's outreach efforts. Please see L5 regarding outreach for the Farmland Partnership Program. For Farmland Action Plan implementation MDAR hosted and/or attended many meetings in a variety of formats in the Summer and Fall to solicit feedback from a wide variety of potential partners.

- Do you have some specific additional outreach or engagement tools or methods you would like us to use for future initiatives? Feel free to reach out via email, schedule a meeting or consider attending one of the Plan Drop-In Sessions which will be continuing in June (the first one was held in January, before procurement started). Those Plan Drop-In Sessions are an opportunity to raise questions and comments related to any part of implementation of the Plan. If scheduling a meeting, it would need to be after the 5/19 Farmland Partnership deadline so the procurement process does not limit what we can talk about.

L7. I understand this is the second webinar, is the first one available via recording for those of us who missed it and did not register?
- The webinar recordings of the presentation portion are available online at www.mass.gov/info-details/farmland-partnership-program#learn-more---webinars-
- The Q&A portion from the webinar is reflected in the Round 1 Q&A document also available on the Farmland Partnership webpage.

L8. How were MDAR's stated goals about inclusion and equity thoughtfully considered when this RFR was developed. What was the process?
- The grant serves to implement the Farmland Action Plan which includes a clear focus on social justice for historically underserved populations in the agricultural sector. In particular, the planning process for the Farmland Action Plan included engagement opportunities focused on the experiences, challenges, and recommendations of BIPOC, immigrant, and Spanish-speaking stakeholders. The grant program reflects all the input provided by partners into the Farmland Action Plan and supports the implementation of the resulting tasks which are shown in the Implementation Matrix. As equity is embedded throughout the plan, there are many tasks that seek to enhance equity in Massachusetts agriculture and the food system. To more easily find tasks relating to equity, applicants are encouraged to search the Farmland Action Plan Implementation Matrix for related search terms (e.g. Historically Underserved Farmers).
- Advancing equity is embedded within MDAR's mission. MDAR's commitment is included within the 2024 Environmental Justice Strategy (pages 67 through 78) as well as the 2023 Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan. Both documents formed the foundation for the creation of the new Farmland Partnership Program.
- MDAR staff have worked together to consider inclusion and equity in this RFR. As an example, there are several items related to intentionally increasing meaningful engagement with Historically Underserved Farmers, as well as requiring participation of organizations that represent Historically Underserved Farmers. These items were included to address what MDAR staff has heard from constituents over the last few years, as well as reflect best practice from other programs and processes that also see to foster more equitable processes.
- Due to procurement rules external input on this RFR was not sought, because any external person who reviewed the RFR would be ineligible to apply. Instead MDAR staff intentionally reflected upon conversations with partners to incorporate their input.

L9. When is the next webinar, so that I can get all information needed from the beginning or should I email to know how to go about the documentation needed.
- Please review the RFR, webinar 1, the Q&A documents and all the other resources on the Farmland Partnership webpage.

Funding (F6- F9)

For F1 through F5, see Round 1 Q&A Document.

F6. Is the grant reimbursement based on will the award be granted on a schedule?
- As explained in Section 3A and 5B of the RFR, this grant is a reimbursement-based program.
- The schedule for reimbursement and other details are outlined in Section 5B of the RFR.

F7. To what extent, if at all, are these funds at risk of being frozen or withdrawn by the federal administration?
- These funds are not federal and so are not subject to being frozen or withdrawn by the federal administration.

F8. If there are too many applications to fund, will partial awards be given to allow more applications to receive funding?
- Possibly. Overall, it depends on the quality of the projects and the amount of available funding. Partial awards could be given.
- Also, please see Section 4C a relates to scoring and discretion relating to awards.

F9. From section 3A, can you please clarify? "For contracts that focus that have a single applicant, it is expected that requests do not exceed $300,000." That's copy and pasted from section 3A of the RFP, there appears to be a typo.
- This sentence should say: "For contracts that have a single applicant, it is expected that requests do not exceed $300,000."

Eligibility to apply (A3- A6)

For A1 through A2, see Round 1 Q&A Document.

A3. I understand statewide applications are prioritized and that the FPP task list is looking to statewide entities to be lead implementers. However, for the sake of this grant and doing regional work, regional [entities] would potentially serve as strong lead implementers at a regional level even though they would not be a lead implementer at a state level. As regional [entities] are never listed as lead implementers on the FPP task list, but could be a lead implementer in their region can they apply for funds (and be considered competitive) as a lead implementer on a task at a regional level? Otherwise regional [entities] would have any tasks that they could apply for funds for… what is the alternative?
- That is incorrect.
- In collating the Farmland Action Plan matrix we are looking to identify the best suited lead implementer. A regional entity could be a lead implementer for a statewide, multi-region, or regional effort.
- The "other potential implementers" listed in the matrix reflect a very wide diversity of partners who could be good to either lead or assist with a task.
- At this point in time there are many places where the lead implementer is "unassigned". At this time lead implementers are mostly MDAR teams, and a few other organizations who are already working on a particular task. This does not mean that there will not be a more diverse range of lead implementers listed in the matrix in the future. This Farmland Partnership program was, in part, created to help enable other partners to step up as lead and other implementers – many partners expressed an interest to get involved but needed funding to help support some of that work.

- Please review the "About the implementation matrix" document on the Farmland Action Plan webpage to understand additional details about how the matrix is was set up and how it is intended to function.
- Also see P10, P19 and P35, as well as other questions in the Partnering section.

A4. I am with UMass Extension which is a amalgamation of Federal/State/County and in some instances is not considered a "State Agency." However, the Q&A answer and RFR are a bit ambiguous on this point. […] This ambiguity mostly revolves around the definition of "State Agency." Per the RFR section 1A, it seems like we are not excluded explicitly and we have entered into contracts with the Commonwealth. However, in the Q&A [A2] the context of "State Agencies" is introduced - and it seems more inclined towards ineligibility. I am still sorting through the varying thoughts on whether Extension can be presumed distinct from UMass as a State Agency and I am wondering where you all are landing on this distinction?

- The first part of the question asked in A2 asks whether state agencies are eligible. As explained in the answer, they are not listed as an eligible applicant in Section 1A of the RFR. The RFR only lists those who are eligible to apply. There is not a list of those who are not eligible to apply.
- The second part of the question asked in A2 asks whether UMass is eligible. That is a different question, hence the second part of the answer. The applicant needs to decide whether they believe they fit the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 1A. Institutions and other entities are listed as eligible. MDAR cannot provide advice to individual applicants about their potential eligibility during the procurement process. MDAR checks the eligibility of applicants and the scope of work during the grant application review phase.

A5. When dealing with multiple farms with multiple projects. Would each farm require a separate application?

- We are missing context to answer this question. However, the grant is different to other grant programs that MDAR operates which are targeted directly to farmers for capital improvements such as farm infrastructure and equipment. This grant is intended to provide funding to the entities and organizations that support the farming community. It is not intended to be a direct grant to farmers. Please review Sections 2 and 3 of the RFR to understand eligible projects, as well as Section 1A for eligible applicants. Answers in the Round 1 Q&A document will also be helpful, including A1 as well as several in the eligibility of proposals section (E1-E33).

A6. Are Possible Partners only in MA? [A tribal entity] only recently re-acquired land here in the Commonwealth, and are moving through phases of acquisition. […] Would they be considered eligible to be a Tribal Partner or Lead Implementer?

- Please see Section 1A of the RFR for a list of eligible applicants/ partners. The applicant needs to decide whether they believe they fit the eligibility criteria outlined in Section 1A. MDAR cannot provide advice to individual applicants about their potential eligibility during the procurement process. MDAR checks the eligibility of applicants and the scope of work during the grant application review phase.

Partnering, collaboration and limitations (P30- P44)

For P1 through P28, see Round 1 Q&A Document. For P29, see Round 2.1 Q&A Document.

Note: This section has a sub-section that specifically focuses on questions related to being included in more than one application, so sometimes question numbers are skipped.

P30. Does that note about multiple responses imply that collaborative projects aren't allowed?
- That is incorrect. You can collaborate, but need to be only included in a single proposal.
- Please see Section 3B, 5A and 4C in the RFR as well as webinar 1 for details about collaborative responses.
- Please see Section 3B in the RFR, webinar 1, webinar 2 as well P3, P10 and P11 for additional details about limitations.

P32. Do you have to have a partner with another organization? Or do you define organizations working toward MFAP as partners in and of themselves?
- There are a few tasks that can be achieved by one single organization on its own. The majority of tasks, however, will be best accomplished by a collaboration of more than one organization.
- As stated in Section 3B, "MDAR encourages collaborative applications that involve partnerships among multiple entities/individuals"
- The definition of a partner can be found on page 15 of the RFR – "Partner – Organization or entity requesting grant funding and any of the subcontractors who are funded as part of the application."
- Please see webinar 1 and the Round 1 Q&A Document for additional answers on this topic.

P35. I'm still confused about P19. Can partnering applicants be composed entirely of groups listed as the 'Potential Other Implementers' in the implementation matrix?
- Please see P19 and E10 first.
- If a specific lead implementer is already assigned you cannot include it in your application. See P37 below.
- If the Lead Implementer is "unassigned" or "collective effort" in the matrix, the answer is yes your application could be entirely groups listed as "potential other implementers". For items where the lead implementer is "unassigned" or "collective effort", these are tasks which do not yet have a leader – and so could be potentially funded through Farmland Partnership or other funding sources. The list of "Potential other implementers" includes several types of partners who could also step up to lead.
- In your application you will need to identify a single entity as the lead implementer, alongside the other implementers.
- Please also visit the "About the implementation matrix" document on the Farmland Action Plan document that explains more about how the matrix is set up, what it includes and intended to work.
- Also see P37 below.

P37. Follow up on P19 - if a "lead implementer" is already identified in the matrix, does that preclude us from including it in the application? I.e., can we only apply for tasks where the lead implementer is unassigned?
- Please see E10, P19, P26 and P35.
- If a specific lead implementer is already assigned you cannot include it in your application. All remaining tasks should have "unassigned" or "collective effort" – and you can apply to Farmland Partnership to work on these tasks.
- If you can see a different interpretation of a task that would have a different lead implementer from one listed, please make a suggestion via the matrix feedback portal to be considered in future edits to the matrix. It will likely involve discussion about the intent of the task, rather than just adding missing potential partner, hence not being able to resolve this task allocation while the RFR is open.

P41. MDAR is listed in the Matrix as a Lead Implementer or Possible Partner in multiple Tasks. When that is the case, what does that mean to us (the applying entity) when MDAR is the entity responsible for creating the Plan, sending out the RFR and selecting the applications? How should we interpret that as we go through our application process? Meaning, if we chose a Task for our application where MDAR is the Lead Implementer or one of its […] [teams] was a Possible Partner, should we communicate with […] [MDAR staff] in the same way as we are doing with other Possible Partners? If not, can you explain how we should think about and approach this?

- Please see P37 and other related questions.
- During the procurement phase MDAR staff cannot discuss potential proposals. After procurement, coordination with MDAR staff is integrated into the Farmland Partnership Program – particularly see Sections 5A-3 and 5A-4 in RFR.

P42. Can you please clarify your answer to P8 of the RFR Answers Round 1 document? Each Task needs a Lead Implementer (no more than one?)...under that Lead Implementer, can Partners be assigned more than one Task? And, how many Partners can collaborate together each doing their own Task(s)? How large can the network be within one application?

- Partners can be assigned to more than one task within a single application.
- No limit is given in the RFR as to how many partners can collaborate together in a single application.

P43. If MDAR FAPC is listed as the Lead Implementer, (an example is task XXXX) can other entities apply for the Task?

- Please see P37 and other related questions.

P44. We would like to know if we could include in our proposal activities or services that would be provided by a subcontractor that would be procured through an open procurement process. If that contractor may or may not be an eventual awardee. For example if we wanted to enlist the services of a non profit that would provide [services to farms], we would develop a [Request for Proposals] RFP and solicit responses. The selected subcontractor may or may not be an awardees who could provide those services, would they be able to respond.

- Please see answer to P14, P15 and P34.

Being included on more than one application

P31. Are you saying each applicant should not even be aware of what others are proposing, since that would be "collusion"? For example, [umbrella org] would hope our proposal would benefit the individual [regional entities]... but if we even name them in our proposal, or even let them know we're planning such a proposal, is that "collusion"? And would that in any way interfere with their ability to submit their own individual proposals on behalf of their [regional org]? This is a follow-up to P18 in the Q&A document.

- When you submit your application you say you are complying with all the requirements, which includes ethics.
- To be aware, at a high level, is one thing.
- Getting into more details is another, such as what you're intending to do, what you are requesting funding for, etc.
- Be careful about conversations with others
- Please see P9, P10, P11 and P22 for additional information.

P33. This is a comment rather than a question.

P34. Does the collusion rule prevent us, after receiving the funding, from working at all with organizations on the project itself if they applied with a separate proposal for a different project? Or is it just preventing us from working with them on our proposal?
- The application process is separate from what happens once applicants receive an award.
- The collusion rule applies during the application process, due to procurement procedures
- Working together with other organizations is strongly encouraged in the RFR in many places, including in the goal on page 2: "The goal of the Program is to build networks of Partners who work together collaboratively and in coordination to protect farmland, enhance farm viability, and ensure access to farmland. This will be achieved by providing funding to eligible Partners to work with farmers, farmland owners, agricultural service providers, municipalities and others to protect farmland, enhance farm viability, and ensure access to farmland, as well as coordinate and collaborate between partners as a cohort."

P36. It is very difficult to decide on partnerships without talking about the content of the work you would be working on, and what tasks you would be interested in supporting through the grant. Is this considered collusion when you are in the process of interviewing partners?
- As explained at the beginning of webinar 2, we understand the limitation. Once partners have been identified and you are intending to submit a proposal, any efforts to coordinate with other groups submitting proposals might be considered a form of collusion.
- Make your best efforts to comply with the requirements when you are determining who to work with.

P38. Is discussing an application with partners considered collusion?
- Clearly is it necessary to discuss your proposal with your project partners. However, coordinating with other groups – who are not project partners – in order to strategize around competing proposals could be considered collusion.
- Please see answers to P3, P10, P11 and P31.

P39. Can you clarify the relationship of the potential partners applying for a grant? Specifically, is it the goal for partners to complement each other by taking on different actions and tasks or to be teaming up to work on the same task? OR to be collaborating on the ACTION, but taking on different tasks?
- The question is unclear so it is hard to provide a specific answer.
- The following may help you to understand how partners should be working together
  - Program Goal (Page 2) of the RFR - The goal of the Program is to build networks of Partners who work together collaboratively and in coordination to protect farmland, enhance farm viability, and ensure access to farmland. This will be achieved by providing funding to eligible Partners to work with farmers, farmland owners, agricultural service providers, municipalities and others to protect farmland, enhance farm viability, and ensure access to farmland, as well as coordinate and collaborate between partners as a cohort.
  - Section 3B of the RFR - MDAR encourages collaborative applications that involve partnerships among multiple entities/individuals.
  - Section 5A-3 of the RFR - If possible, partners who intend to work on the same tasks in different parts of the state are strongly encouraged to submit one combined application.
  - You may find other answers in the Partnering sections (P1 onwards) of the Round 1 and 2.1 Q&A documents helpful to understand the intent.
- In addition, as relates to how to understand what is an action, task, sub-activity, etc.
  - Section 2 - All proposed activities, including deliverables and services, must be clearly tied to a specific task(s) in the MFAP. [...] A specific process should be outlined to address each task

individually. The proposed activity cannot just be inspired by a strategy or action – it must be aligned with a specific task, which includes following the intent of the specific action and strategy under which the task is listed.

- o Also see question S2.

P40. Can [we] be part of more than one application as long as we are only requesting funding in one application? In other words, if we are a partner for one application but not requesting funding (so that our contribution is in-kind or match), can we also be a partner in a second application where we do request funding? Another way to ask this question is, can we be part of more than one application if we are not seeking funding through more than one application?

- Please see P9 and other related questions in the Round 1 Q&A document
- No, you may only be named in a single application, even if you are only requesting funding in one application.
- In-kind match is not eligible for this grant program.

Time commitment (None submitted)

For T1 through T2, see Round 1 Q&A Document.

No questions were submitted on this topic in Round 2.2.

What to submit in the application (S2)

For S1, see Round 1 Q&A Document.

S2. Are the "tasks" listed in the matrix the same as the "sub-activities" listed in the budget spreadsheet?

- They should align. But they are not the exactly the same.
- As explained in the "Important Info" tab in the Budget Template of the RFR, "These "sub-activities" within the budget should directly align with one specific task of the Farmland Action Plan."
- For Activities 1,2, 3 and 4 there should be a 1:1 (one-to-one) assignment – i.e. one task for one sub-activity number. So you could have Sub-activity 1.1 for Task 6784, Sub-activity 1.2 for Task 7581 and Sub-activity 2.1 for Task 9562. In a different application, Sub-activity 1.1 will likely be assigned to a different task number.
- For Activity 5 this covers administrative costs that may come from any of the other 4 activities. Sub-activity numbers have been defined in this category so that all applicants allocate these costs in the same way.

Budget and Match (B12- B16)

For B1 through B7, see Round 1 Q&A Document. For B8 through B11, see Round 2.1 Q&A Document.

B12. If you underspend in a category in your budget, can you move funds to another category?

- You can move funds to another category, but any changes would need to be approved by the MDAR project manager prior to using those funds and the changes would need to fit within the negotiated scope that is in the contract.
- Please see Section 5B and 5C for more details

B13. If cash match can NOT be used for staff time, what is cash match expected to be used for?
- As stated in Section 3F of the RFR: "Any and all match funds must be directly related to the proposed project and tasks and documentation will be necessary to substantiate this. […]Cash contributions are those funds that will be used to purchase goods or services associated with the project. In-kind match will not be considered to reach Match requirements."
- We have additional clarification that adds to our responses to Round 1 and 2.1 Questions:
    o Our invoicing template and guidance will require you to list all costs and expenses that contribute to your total cost, and then break out your match, in the similar way as you do in Tables 1 – 4 in the Budget Template for this RFR. Your invoice will be accompanied by a narrative that explains all those costs.
    o In your invoice you will detail all costs and expenses by each type – staff hours, consultant costs, direct expenses and all other components you find in Table 3 of the RFR Budget. As an example, this could total $5,000. You then put this $5,000 into the final summary for your invoice (like in Table 1 in the budget) where 5% of the total cost as cash match is set aside. You then request $4,750 of the cost to be reimbursed by MDAR, and you cover the last $250 with your own funds (cash match).

B14. Can you provide more clarification on cash vs. in-kind match? I understood your comments to say it cannot be used towards staff time? Can it be used towards printing, educational event costs, meeting travel expenses? The matching funds we provide will be used for a specific, grant-related purpose, such as travel, staff time, consulting, interpretation, copying, etc. Why is it ok to spend our matching funds on, say, travel, but not on staff time, assuming both are directly related to activities in this grant? I assume you will not change your requirement that staff time is not an eligible use of matching funds, but I'd like to understand the reasoning.
- See B13

B15. How does cash match work with multiple organizations on a project?
- The RFR does not specify this. There simply needs to be a cash match for the grant. This could come from any or all of the partners.
- Please see Section 3F of the RFR for all advice related to match.

B16. Under section 5B of the RFR, it says reimbursement invoices should be broken down according to Activity (1-5). Can you confirm that we will not need to invoice hours and expenses for each Task/Sub-Activity, but rather by Activity (Protection, Access, Viability, All, Admin)?
- Section 5B of the RFR states the following: "Invoices shall show the breakdown of labor and expenses by Activity (1-5), per the budget breakdown (see Section 3E and Attachment B). Information to be included on invoices will be detailed in the Contract's Scope of Work."
- Any additional clarification regarding invoicing will be included in the contract.
- Please be aware that all expenses submitted are subject to additional questions as needed during invoice review.

Deliverables and expectations (None submitted)

For D1 through D3, see Round 1 Q&A Document. For D4 through D6, see Round 2.1 Q&A Document.

No questions were submitted on this topic in Round 2.2.

Calendar/ Timeline (C2- C4)

For C1, see Round 1 Q&A Document.

C2. Would you consider extending the deadline for questions?
- We will not extend the deadline. The timeline is intended to allow enough time for MDAR staff to fully respond to each question and then to allow applicants enough time after they see the responses to adjust their applications as necessary before the deadline.

C3. So no more questions are allowed as we write the grant?
- All remaining questions must be emailed to Katharine.s.otto@mass.gov and received by Friday, April 11 at 5pm. Any questions received after the deadline will not receive responses.

C4. Will the deadline for applications be extended?
- The deadline for applications will not be extended.
- As stated in the RFR, the deadline for applications is 5pm on Monday, May 19, 2025.

Priorities/ Scoring/ Evaluation Criteria (Y10- Y12)

For Y1 through Y8, see Round 1 Q&A Document. For Y9, see Round 2.1 Q&A Document.

Y10. Many tasks seem to be closely related to each other. Will applications be evaluated differently if they include multiple related (or unrelated) tasks versus focusing on a smaller number of individual tasks?
- There is nothing in the Evaluation Criteria in Section 3C of the RFR that ranks applications by the number of tasks they are accomplishing.

Y11. In future grant rounds, do you see MDAR as prioritizing regional applications? Or will FPP grants always prioritize only statewide initiatives? How will regional initiatives and regional [entities] who work directly with municipalities be supported by the FPP and MDAR?
- Please see F4.
- We are focused on the launch of this new grant for now and are not ready to comment about any potential future rounds. The responses to this grant will help inform any decision making around any future rounds. Please bear in mind that this RFR is shaped by input on Farmland Action Plan implementation, state processes and rules, the administrations priorities and many other factors.

Y12. To that regional question, follow up. I believe the question is asking if a compelling regional application will ever be considered competitive. I believe that there are some tasks that really can only be addressed at a regional level. There are some cases that regional organizations don't have a state level group that makes sense.
- Please review the evaluation criteria which address impact, feasibility, communication, sustainability, and formatting. So, regional proposals could be competitive. There are several tasks appropriate for a regional approach. Look at the evaluation criteria in Section 4C of the RFR to understand how strong your proposal would be – there are many criteria that will be considered by the review committee, beyond the geographic coverage.

Eligibility of proposals and allowable expenses (E34- E52)

For E1 through E33, see Round 1 Q&A Document. For E34 through E37, see Round 2.1 Q&A Document.

E38. Does the non-allowable expenditure on "lobbying activities" also include policy research, consultations with MDAR on policy topics, etc.?
- Use your best judgement on including eligible expenses in your proposal. If you are not sure, include it in your application - any ineligible expenses would be removed if the application is awarded. Be as descriptive as possible. MDAR will determine eligibility at the review and award stages.

E39. Related to E11 (hiring land protection staff). Can you hire new staff with funds to do the new tasks? It says staff can't be hired using FP funds...but that "staff needed to complete these activities may be existing or new". So can the FP funds go toward new staff or not?
- You cannot use Farmland Partnership funds to hire new staff and pay for all costs associated with their hiring, onboarding, salary and similar activities. Farmland Partnership is a reimbursement program just for the time spent on eligible work – and this work can be completed by existing or new staff.

E40. Related to E11 and E39. If the task is so big that a new staff person is needed, can the fund be used for that person? Can the personnel costs of new staff be included in the project budget? e.g. we can't just take on new work without additional staff.
- Please see E39
- Farmland Partnership is a reimbursement program just for the time spent on eligible work – which must be directly tied to a specific task in the matrix and also an allowable expenditure (See Sections 2 and 3 of the RFR for more details).

E41. Can these funds be used to do zoning reviews and recommendations for municipalities? I see listed as an ineligible expense in the RFR: "Cost directly associated with the drafting of any regulation, bylaw, ordinance, or other similar activities." However, there are FPP tasks that address zoning or municipal policy changes
- This question is too specific to a specific scope so we cannot answer fully.
- We have given guidance on what is allowable and non-allowable. If you are unsure if it is eligible, you can include a proposal for that work within your application, and MDAR would remove it from the award if it is determined to be ineligible.
- Please be aware this grant program cannot fund everything.
- Please see E50 which is related.

E42. Recognizing the staff person may not be hired as of yet, but that new staff person is allowed to take on new work, we may decide to delay hiring of a new person to assess whether some of these funds can cover their potential workplan. In that case is it alright to indicate a staff person is "TBH/to be hired" on the budget, or will that cause a flag? (We recognize hiring and HR costs are unallowable [E11 and E39]).
- Yes, you can include staff that has yet to be hired in your application.   You should explain why. Please see the Project Narrative Section 2F requirements for additional guidance. Please also see other parts of the RFR to consider how this might affect application review, including Section 4C.

E43. E11 is still not clear. I understand you can't pay for HR toward hiring expenses, but can you actually pay for the staff time of a new person hired to do the new work in the proposal. E.g., John Joe is hired to assist with 3 new deliverables of the grant. The partner who hired John Joe pays for his staff time, and then MDAR reimburses the partner for that staff time.

- No, you cannot pay for the staff time on any work that is not directly related to the specific scope of work that is in your contract. The scope of work for Farmland Partnership funds does not allow any expenses that are not directly related to specific tasks within the Farmland Action Plan matrix. These funds cannot cover any general operational expenses.

E44. Is there any other resource that can help identify the appropriateness of a project for this grant? I know MDAR cannot provide this guidance.
- There are no additional resources than can be used.
- MDAR cannot provide additional resources or guidance during the open RFR period.
- There are many resources available on the Farmland Action Plan website that would be helpful in addition to those found on the Farmland Partnership webpage.

E45. I think I understand? So you can hire new staff but cannot get reimbursed for the cost of hiring. You can hire staff that is working on the task but most likely this person will not be working 100% of their time on the tasks.
- You cannot pay for the recruitment and hiring of new staff. However, new staff that have been hired using your own resources could work on and be paid for tasks related to this grant. It is up to the organization/ entity that hires any individual to decide how any staff person's hours are assigned to Farmland Partnership related activities versus other programs the organization has, whether they are new or existing staff. Please see E11 and E39 for additional details.

E46. If an application includes some non-allowable expenditures, is the entire application ineligible, or would it be considered for a partial award?
- If you do not include all the required elements outlined in the RFR your application will be ineligible (See Section 6A and others in the RFR).
- If you have all the required elements, but some of the proposed sub-activities are ineligible, they would be removed from the scope prior to finalizing the scope and awarding the contract.

E47. Might be helpful to uplift the response where you clarified that land protection project management IS ALLOWED up to the point of due diligence. That was helpful clarification.
- As explained in Section 3C, several existing Q&A and the previous webinar, project management is a non-allowable expense. We clarified in E34 where you are getting into too much detail and it is considered project management.

E48. Listed on pages 4 and 5 are the eligible Activities that correspond to the Mass Farmland Action Plan Goals. Under each Activity it says, "The following tasks are encouraged…" and is then followed by a list of bullet points. My question is, where are those bullet points and their text being taken from? I cannot find corresponding text in the Master Plan or the Matrix. For example, I couldn't locate "Facilitating the designation of Farmland of Local Importance (FLI) soils in Massachusetts communities" under Farmland Protection in the RFR as a Goal, Action or Task in the Matrix or the Master Plan. Are these bullets exclusive to the RFR and were written as a kind of guidance goals/actions for applicants?
- The text in the bullet points are specific to the RFR and are general in nature. They are not pre-packaged "sub-activities" you can use in your application.
- After the general guidance the bullets then reference some of the specific tasks from the matrix that could be relevant to this type of work.
- These bullets were written as a form of guidance for applicants to understand what kind of work is being encouraged. As indicated in Section 2 and other places in the RFR, you need to go to the matrix to get

the specific language and reference ID for a specific task to then create your sub-activity for your scope of work and budget (and repeat if you want to address more than one task).

E49 I am writing to follow up on the farmland settlement program that I recently inquired about. I am eager to learn more about the process and would appreciate your guidance on how to move forward as a beginner farmer […]. Could you […]provide [me] the specific requirements and eligibility criteria for new farmers to be considered for farmland settlement, the steps involved in applying for farmland, including any necessary documentation or forms. Any training, resources, or support systems available for first-time farmers in Farming.

- All information about this grant program is available online at https://www.mass.gov/info-details/farmland-partnership-program. That has a link to the "Request for Responses" (RFR) document that contains information about requirements and eligibility. It also has other resources that will be helpful to potential applicants, including webinar videos (two different presentations) and documents that answer questions from potential applications (Questions and Answers/ Q&A Documents).
- See answers to A1 and E7.
- As stated on page 2 of the RFR, the Farmland Partnership Program is a grant program to help implement the Massachusetts Farmland Action Plan at the local, regional or statewide level. The goal of the Program is to build networks of Partners who work together collaboratively and in coordination to protect farmland, enhance farm viability, and ensure access to farmland.
- MDAR has another program that you may find helpful – the State Land Licensing program – www.mass.gov/farmlandlicensing

E50. I'm sending questions regarding the Farmland Partnership Program RFR section 3C "Non-allowable Expenditures". The example "Cost directly associated with the drafting of any regulation, bylaw, ordinance, or other similar activity" seems to exclude Farmland Action Plan implementation activities that pertain to the creation of local regulations, such as 1185 "Create preferential zoning and ordinances to support urban agriculture."

- *A. Would the promotion of model bylaws/ordinances be considered "similar activities", even if there was no direct work related to drafting or revising local bylaws/ordinances?*
- *B. Does this example of non-allowable expenditures mean Farmland Action Plan implementation activities that advance zoning/regulatory reforms, including but not limited to 1185, are not eligible components of proposals?*
- *C. Alternatively, is the dissemination and promotion of model regulations (Right-to-Farm, Urban Agriculture, backyard poultry, etc.) acceptable expenditures granted that no work is conducted to revise those model regulations to align with local preferences?*

- Please see E41.
- In addition, for questions A and C, promotion, education and outreach are not the same as drafting. As such they could be eligible. You cannot adapt model regulations to align with local preferences.
- For question B, 1185 is an action and so would not be eligible to implement through Farmland Partnership. The tasks listed under that action – 1186 and 1187 – could be eligible.

E51. What does "Potential Timeframe for Implementation" mean in regard to this first round of MFPP funding? Can Medium and Long Term Tasks be applied for now and possibly selected in this first round? Tasks XXYX and XYXX seem to indicate that an applicant could apply for both Tasks in the same application, using the first two years to explore […] and the next 3-5 years establishing what was explored. Is this accurate thinking?

- All work outlined in the scope of work in your application must be completed within the two year time frame of this grant. Please see Section 5C for more information.

- Please refer to the "About the implementation matrix" document on the Farmland Action Plan webpage for more information about the terms used in the matrix.

E52. What does the "Federal Funding" mean in the Action Text of the Matrix? How does "Federal Funding" nest into other Actions?
- Please refer to the "About the implementation matrix" document on the Farmland Action Plan webpage for more information about the terms used in the matrix.