



**Natural Disaster
Recovery (NDR) Program for Agriculture
Fiscal Year 2024
(July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024)**

Request for Response (RFR): RFR File: **AGR-NDR-FY24**

To provide financial assistance to aid agricultural operations with
demonstrated crop losses from the 2023 Natural Disaster
events to rebuild and recover.

Application Deadline: Friday, September 29, 2023 by 4:00 PM

Applications must be submitted as instructed
on page 5 or they will not be accepted.

Telephone: (774) 419-1808
E-Mail: mdargrants@mass.gov



Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

GRANT OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

<p>Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Rebecca Tepper, Secretary Grant Announcement RFR ID: RFR-NDR-FY24 Dated: September 5, 2023 Natural Disaster Recovery Program for Agriculture</p>	
Applications Sought For:	The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources ("Department" or "MDAR") seeks applications from agricultural operations that were impacted by one or more of the 2023 Natural Disaster events as defined herein ("Natural Disasters") and the impacts resulted in a crop loss of greater than 15% of their total planted acreage.
Overview & Goals:	The objective of the program is to provide financial assistance to aid agricultural operations with demonstrated crop losses from the 2023 Natural Disasters to mitigate costs to rebuild and recover, with the aim of supporting job security, building resilience, and enabling future production.
Eligible Responses:	Eligible responses include applications that demonstrate eligible crop losses from the Natural Disasters. The losses must have occurred during 2023 related to one of the defined Natural Disaster periods and must have directly affected eligible crops which include field crops, hay and forage crops, and produce crops, and resulted in a loss above 15% of the total planted acreage.
Eligible Applicants:	Applicants must be a Massachusetts-based agricultural operation engaged in Production Agriculture and who was principally financially responsible for the production of eligible crops that were impacted by one of the 2023 Natural Disasters.
Application Deadline:	Applications must be received by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, September 29, 2023. (See further detail on deadlines and grant program calendar in Sections 5 and 6).
Funding Availability:	Maximum funding per Applicant is up to \$350,000 based on calculated losses. (See further detail on Funding Availability in Section 2). All funding is subject to appropriation.
Match Requirement:	The Department will only administer payments that are equal to a percentage of loss as determined by the calculations listed in the Budget Requirements (Section 2C). There is no match requirement.
Duration of Contract:	Contract end date is June 30, 2024, with no extensions. (See further detail on anticipated duration of contracts in Section 3B).
Regulations, Statutes, or Authorization Governing this Grant Program:	Section 2A of Chapter 26 of the Acts of 2023 (1599-2302).
Contact Information:	mdargrants@mass.gov or (774) 419-1808.

1. APPLICANTS

1A. Eligible Applicants

Applicant must be an agricultural operation as defined by M.G.L. c. 128, Section 1A that is principally and substantially engaged in the business of production agriculture as defined in Section 5F ("Production Agriculture"), and the Applicant must have suffered a minimum 15% total planted acreage crop loss from one or more of the 2023 Natural Disasters listed below.

For the purposes of this RFR, the 2023 Natural Disasters are limited to the February 3-5, 2023 deep freeze that impacted a large amount of peach and stone fruit production, the May 17-18, 2023 frost that impacted a large amount of apple production and vineyards, and the July 9-16, 2023 rainfall and flooding that impacted a large amount of vegetable crops, field crops, and hay and forage crops as defined in Section 5F (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Natural Disasters").

The agricultural operation must have been established before 2023 and in operation prior to the Natural Disasters.

Crop losses must have occurred on property located within Massachusetts.

More information about funding, including necessary budget and expenditure information, is set forth in Section 2.

1B. Ineligible Applicants

Applicants applying for losses from home gardens, personal, or home use crops.

Applicants applying for losses to marijuana.

Applicants that are not in compliance with any state, local, or federal requirements.

Applications for the costs associated with livestock losses.

Applications for costs associated with infrastructure damages or other damages other than estimated crop losses.

1C. Environmental Justice Policy

For the purposes of this RFR, "Environmental Justice" is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

For more information, please review the [Environmental Justice Policy](#). We also encourage you to complete the Environmental Justice Questions form available on this website.

1D. Size of Operation

There is no minimum acreage requirement. Applicants must have suffered a minimum of 15% total planted acreage crop loss from one of the identified Natural Disasters in 2023.

1E. Locator Maps

Applications must include a map or aerial photo with the property boundaries drawn and the exact location of the losses being identified in the application.

1F. Leased Property

If the losses occurred on a property not owned by the Applicant, a lease agreement must demonstrate the Applicant's long-term, legal right to use the property for the purposes of Production Agriculture. This typically means a lease agreement for not less than three (3) years. Applicants must include a copy of the lease agreement with their application.

2. FUNDING AVAILABILITY, BUDGETING GUIDELINES, & ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES

2A. Maximum Funding

Each Applicant must submit an application requesting not more than \$350,000 in funding. The Department may adjust the amount of funding awarded for any Applicant based upon the eligibility criteria set forth in this RFR.

Awards are limited to one (1) per agricultural operation using a unique tax identification number.

The Department reserves the right to offer a different award amount than the calculated loss amount and may take into account other relief resources secured by the Applicant.

2B. Appropriation

MDAR intends to fund all eligible applicant losses up to \$350,000 and contingent on total available funding. If the sum of losses exceeds available funding or other circumstances require, payments to all eligible Applicants will be reduced on a pro rata basis.

All contracts shall be subject to available funding, whether through the appropriation and authorization of sufficient funds or the receipt of sufficient revenues. If available funding ceases for any reason, a contract shall be deemed under suspension and contract performance must halt. A contractor will not be entitled to compensation for any performance provided during the period of contract suspension. The Department may lift the suspension if available funding is received. In the absence of foreseeable available funding, the Department may terminate the contract.

2C. Budget Guidelines

Proposals must include an adequate budget and justification for the impacted acreage and crop loss and include additional information as set forth in the Application Form.

Payments may be calculated using an Average Market Price as determined by all reported amounts for listed crops in terms of total acreage and estimated total lost revenue. In the absence of adequate data to calculate the payments, the Department reserves the right to calculate the amounts and determine the Average Market Price. For more information on Average Market Price, see Section 5F.

3. TERMS

3A. Terms

The Department does not guarantee that any awards may result from this RFR or that any particular funding level will be awarded.

If awarded, all applicants will be required to execute and abide by the standard Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions and a contract scope as developed by the Department in accordance with this RFR.

An Applicant may withdraw an application at any point via email to mdargrants@mass.gov.

3B. Duration of Contracts

All payments must be completed by June 30, 2024, with no options for extensions.

4. DELIVERABLES, OWNERSHIP, AND CREDIT DUE

4A. Reporting

To evaluate the impact of the Program, upon request from the Department, participants must submit any information and financial data pertaining to their agricultural operation to the Department for up to five (5) years following the termination date specified on the contract.

4B. Invoicing

Disbursement of funds under this RFR will be distributed through an electronic funds transfer and will require that acceptable documentation be submitted to the Department prior to any payment.

4C. Public Records

All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR are subject to the Massachusetts Public Records Law, M.G.L. c. 66, Sec. 10, and M.G.L. c. 4, Sec. 7(26).

4D. Produce Farm Registration

All responses and information submitted in response to this RFR from Applicants engaged in Production Agriculture are subject to registration under Produce Safety & Market Access 330 CMR 34.03, regardless of whether the farm is a Covered Farm or a Non-Covered Farm as defined in the regulation. Registration will be included as a condition of funding in any contract. More information on MDAR's Produce Safety Program can be found here: www.mass.gov/produce-safety-program.

5. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

5A. Application Submission Instructions

All material submitted as part of this RFR, including the attached Application Form that must be completed in its entirety and the required documentation, must be submitted online through the following website:

www.mass.gov/how-to/natural-disaster-recovery-ndr-program-for-agriculture

Applications must be received by the Department by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, September 29, 2023.

The Department will not accept submission or re-submission of incomplete or delayed applications after the posted deadline. Submissions that do not contain a complete Application Form will also not be considered.

This RFR allows only for the submission of online applications. All applicants are advised to allow adequate time for submission of their proposal by considering potential online impediments like internet traffic, Internet connection speed, file size, and file volume. While no applications will be reviewed prior to the RFR deadline, the Department encourages Applicants to provide adequate time for transmittal of materials through the online system.

The Department is not responsible for delays encountered by Applicants, or for an Applicant's local hardware failures, such as computers or related networks, associated with application compilation or submission. An application submitted via email will be deemed received by the time indicated by MDAR's OUTLOOK system clock which is considered the official time of record, and which may be different than the time sent by the Applicant. Submissions received with a time after the deadline will be deemed ineligible for review and funding.

Please do not submit applications to the Department by any other means except those provided for in this RFR.

5B. Additional Required Application Documentation

Applicants must include a map or aerial photo with the property boundaries drawn and the exact location of the losses being identified in the application (see Section 1E).

Applicants must download, complete, and submit completed budget spreadsheet.

Applicants that are submitting losses for property that is leased must include a copy of the lease agreement (see Section 1F).

If an applicant has photos of the impacted acreage, the applicant should include a copy of the photos with their application.

Applicants who have received crop insurance or private relief payments must include documentation demonstrating the amount and source of the payment. These amounts may be considered by MDAR when determining award amounts.

Applicant may include a narrative report if additional justification is needed for the “Estimated Lost Revenue per Acre” column on the required budget spreadsheet. This may include information about additional years beyond those for which data is requested; information explaining any anomalies in weather, markets, or other variables that may have impacted crop yields in the reported years; or any other data or qualitative information to support the Estimated Lost Revenue per Acre. If the data in the table or narrative is not available, not submitted, or does not fully justify the reported Estimated Lost Revenue per Acre, MDAR may substitute revenue data based upon average claims for this program or related USDA data.

5C. Additional Contract Documentation

If selected, the Applicant will be required to submit the following forms to complete the contract:

- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form & Commonwealth Terms and Conditions completed and signed by the Applicant;
- Scope and Budget Form
- Commonwealth W-9 tax information form filled out and signed by the Respondent
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signature Verification Form
- Completed Electronic Funds Transfer Form

These forms do not need to be completed as part of the Application. Assistance to complete these forms will be provided to Applicants selected to receive funding. These forms are available for review at www.mass.gov/osd or by request.

5D. Evaluation Criteria

This is a non-competitive grant; all eligible applications will receive funding, subject to availability. Eligible applications are those that include a completed Application Form, all supporting documentation as listed in Section 5B, a budget and justification, and are otherwise in compliance with the submission requirements and format required by this RFR.

MDAR reserves the right to ask clarifying questions on applications and to gather information during a site visit, if necessary, to the extent such information is necessary to verify what was submitted in the application under this RFR. All applications being considered for funding may require a site visit. Information gathered during the site visit can be used as additional verification for funding. MDAR reserves the right to modify an Applicant’s request and the amount to be awarded.

The Department intends to fund all eligible Applicants, subject to appropriation, that provide the necessary and completed information for the review process. Acceptance shall be conditional upon verification of information in the submission, including the Application Form, and funding availability.

5E. Review Process

The Department cannot assist in the preparation of applications. In order to maintain integrity of the process, the Department is unable to advise or provide individuals with any information regarding specific applications during the solicitation process. There will be an information session as set forth in Section 6.

There will be two (2) steps of review following the grant application period.

Step I: An initial review to evaluate eligibility and completeness to determine if all required information is provided.

Step II: Applicants that are favorably reviewed in Step I may require a field visit prior to final award determinations being made. A favorable initial review and field visit DOES NOT guarantee funding. The purposes of the field visit are as follows:

Verify that the operation is engaged in Production Agriculture; and

Determine the accuracy of the applicant's request based on listed impacted acreage.

After reviewing an application and conducting a site visit, if such a visit is deemed necessary, the Department may modify the Applicant's request and the amount to be awarded under any contract.

5F. Definitions

Average Market Price: The price or dollar equivalent per bushel, ton, etc., for an eligible crop or commodity as averaged based on reported applications.

Disaster Affected Acreage: The Total Acreage that was lost from one of the defined Natural Disasters.

Natural Disaster: Damaging weather, an adverse natural occurrence, or related condition. For the purposes of this RFR this includes the 2023 Natural Disasters, which are limited to the February 3-5, 2023, deep freeze, the May 17-18, 2023, frost, and the July 9-16, 2023, rainfall and flooding.

Percentage of Total Acreage Lost: The Total Acreage for the agricultural operation divided by the Disaster Affected Acreage.

Production Agriculture: Farming that focuses on producing agricultural products for the sale in the market rather than solely for subsistence purposes.

Total Acreage: The total land acreage which seed, plants, or trees have been placed, appropriate for the covered crop/commodity and planting method, at the correct depth, into a seedbed that has been properly prepared for the planting method and production practice.

Total Loss Payment: The average of the total reported estimated loss value per acre for eligible crop or commodity.

6. DEADLINES & PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

Release of RFR	Tuesday, September 5, 2023
Information Session	<p>Applicants may submit questions regarding this RFR and application process. Questions must be submitted by email to MDARGrants@mass.gov. The deadline for questions is 4 PM on Friday, September 8, 2023. All questions and answers will be posted at www.mass.gov/how-to/natural-disaster-recovery-ndr-program-for-agriculture so that all applicants can review.</p> <p>An informational webinar will be held for interested applicants on the date listed below. To access the webinar, register at www.mass.gov/how-to/natural-disaster-recovery-ndr-program-for-agriculture. This webinar will be recorded and made publicly available on this website prior to the application deadline so that all potential applicants who are unable to attend the webinar live or who wish to further review the content may do so before submitting an application.</p> <p>Friday, September 8, 2023 at 9:00 AM.</p>
Application Due Date	4:00 p.m. on Friday, September 29, 2023
Estimated Award Date	November 2023.
Estimated Contract Start Date	<p>November 2023. Notwithstanding any verbal representations by the parties, or an earlier start date listed in the Standard Contract Form, and only after an award is issued and a final scope of services has been negotiated, the effective start date of a contract shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form..</p>

7. MISCELLANEOUS

Type of Procurement	Grant
Use of This Procurement by Single or Multiple Departments	This RFR is a single department procurement. All contracts awarded under this RFR will be utilized by the Department.
Request for Single or Multiple Contractors	Multiple
RFR Distribution Method	<p>This RFR has been distributed by the Department's Farm and Market Newsletter, posted to the program's website at www.mass.gov/agr, and by a distribution list of requested applicants.</p> <p>This RFR has been distributed electronically via COMMBUYS. It is the responsibility of every Applicant to check COMMBUYS for any addenda or modifications to an RFR to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to Applicants who fail to check for amended RFRs and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential Respondents are advised to check the "last change" field on the summary page of RFRs for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent RFR files.</p> <p>Respondents may not alter RFR language or any RFR component files. Those submitting a proposal must respond in accordance to the RFR directions and complete only those sections that prompt a Respondent for a response. Modifications to the body of this RFR, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this RFR are prohibited. Any unauthorized alterations will disqualify response.</p>
List of Attachments	<p>A. Application Form</p> <p>B. Environmental Justice Policy & Questions</p>

AGRICULTURAL NATURAL DISASTER RECOVERY PROGRAM APPLICATION FORM (FY 2024-1)

1. Agricultural Operation Information

Primary Contact: First Name Last Name

Operation Name:

Legal Structure: ☐ Sole Proprietor ☐ Corporation ☐ Partnership ☐ LLC ☐ Non-Profit ☐ Other

Mailing Address:

City, State, Zip:

County:

Home Phone: **Mobile Phone:**

E-Mail:

Website:

☐ Site Address of impacted acreage is the same as above

Site Address

Site City, State, Zip

Is it possible that the loss reported for this operation could also be reported by another operation? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Operation Name:

Address:

City, State, Zip:

I am a farmer as identified in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 128. Sec. 1A: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Date the current business was established:

Is the majority of the farm's total gross income from the sales of the farm's agricultural products? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is this property leased? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you have the lease in writing? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What year does the lease end?

Who is the owner of the property?

2. Marketing

Annual sales averaged over the previous 3 years: ☐ \$0 - \$24,999 ☐ \$25,000 - \$249,999
☐ \$250,000 - \$499,999 ☐ \$500,000 +

How are your crops marketed? ☐ Wholesale ☐ Direct Market ☐ Both

Is your operation a vendor for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP)? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does your operation provide produce to food banks within Massachusetts? ☐ Yes ☐ No

3. Insurance and Other Relief

Do you have any type of insurance for the impacted acreage? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, who are you insured with:

Have you received or do you anticipate receiving any funding, such as insurance payments, funds from private fundraisers, or charitable relief payments for the impacted acreage? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, who will you receive funding from? In what amount?

4. Agricultural Operation Loss Details:

What disaster event(s) caused loss? ☐ February Freeze ☐ May Frost ☐ July Rainfall & Flooding

Beginning date of disaster: End Date:

Did you purchase or arrange for and apply herbicide, pesticide, or fertilizer on destroyed crops? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did you perform land preparation measures on destroyed crops? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are the total acres planted consistent with prior year's history for the farm? ☐ Yes ☐ No

What cultivation practices have and will be employed on damaged crop acreage?

Has any of the disaster affected planted crop acreage been destroyed, replanted or put to another use? If "yes", provide details: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Provide any additional information regarding the agricultural operation, the applicant's losses, potential long-term impacts, etc. that you think are relevant to this application.

4B. Agricultural Operation Loss Details & Budget:

Please complete the following tables with crops that were lost during the listed 2023 natural disasters.

Produce Crops – Vegetables, Potatoes, Sweet Corn, Melons, Fruit, Nuts, Berries, etc.

Crop Name	Planting Period	Loss Dates	Total Planted Acreage	Disaster Affected Acreage	Percentage of Farm's Total Acreage Lost
Select Crops	List Dates or N/A	Select Dates	Enter Acreage	Enter Acreage	Percentage
Mixed vegetable production					
Apples					
Berries					
Cranberries					
Grapes					
Herbs					
Leafy Greens					
Other tree fruit					
Peaches					
Potatoes					
Sweet Corn					
Tomatoes					
Winter Squash					

Crop Name	2021 Acres Planted	2021 Revenue per Acre	2022 Acres Planted	2022 Revenue per Acre	Total Lost Acreage	Estimated Lost Revenue per Acre	Total Estimated Lost Revenue
From Table Above	List Acres	List Amount	List Acres	List Amount	Acreage from Above	List Dollar Amount	Total Amount
Mixed vegetable production							
Apples							
Berries							
Cranberries							
Grapes							
Herbs							
Leafy Greens							
Other tree fruit							
Peaches							
Potatoes							
Sweet Corn							
Tomatoes							
Winter Squash							
						Totals	

Field Crops – Corn, Soybeans, Tobacco, etc.

Crop Name	Planting Period	Loss Dates	Total Planted Acreage	Disaster Affected Acreage	Percentage of Farm's Total Acreage Lost
Select Crops	List Dates or N/A	Select Dates	Enter Acreage	Enter Acreage	Percentage
Corn for silage or greenchop					
Hemp					
Tobacco					
Other					

Crop Name	2021 Acres Planted	2021 Revenue per Acre	2022 Acres Planted	2022 Revenue per Acre	Total Lost Acreage	Estimated Lost Revenue per Acre	Total Estimated Lost Revenue
From Table Above	List Acres	List Amount	List Acres	List Amount	Acreage from Above	List Dollar Amount	Total Amount
Corn for silage or greenchop							
Hemp							
Tobacco							
Other							
						Totals	

Hay & Forage Crops – Dry Hay, Haylage, Grass Silage, etc.

Crop Name	Planting Period	Loss Dates	Total Planted Acreage	Disaster Affected Acreage	Percentage of Farm's Total Acreage Lost
Select Crops	List Dates or N/A	Select Dates	Enter Acreage	Enter Acreage	Percentage
Alfalfa					
Haylage					
Other Dry Hay					
All other Haylage					

Crop Name	2021 Acres Planted	2021 Revenue per Acre	2022 Acres Planted	2022 Revenue per Acre	Total Lost Acreage	Estimated Lost Revenue per Acre	Total Estimated Lost Revenue
From Table Above	List Acres	List Amount	List Acres	List Amount	Acreage from Above	List Dollar Amount	Total Amount
Alfalfa							
Haylage							
Other Dry Hay							
All other Haylage							
						Totals	

Totals

	Totals	Amounts
	Grand Total of Estimated Lost Revenue	
	Total Requested from MDAR (up to a max of \$350,000)	
	Other Funding: <i>List any insurance, private fundraising proceeds, payments from charitable relief funds, or other relief payments. These amounts may be considered by MDAR when determining award amounts.</i>	
	Crop Loss Insurance:	
	Private Fundraising (such as GoFundMe):	
	Charitable Relief Funds:	
	Other:	
	Total Other Funding:	

5. Budget Justification

If additional justification is needed for the "Estimated Lost Revenue per Acre" column on the required budget spreadsheet, please include it here. This may include information about additional years beyond those for which data is requested; information explaining any anomalies in weather, markets, or other variables that may have impacted crop yields in the reported years; or any other data or qualitative information to support the Estimated Lost Revenue per Acre.

6. Amount Requested:

Total Requested for Payment: (maximum of \$350,000)

\$

☐ I understand that MDAR will be adjusting requested payments based on the overall response to the Program as a pro-rated share and may be adjusting requests based on the average of the total reported estimated lost revenue per acre per crop to determine an Average Market Price for payments. I also understand that MDAR may adjust the amount requested as it determines in accordance with this RFR.

7. Attestation:

By signing this application, you attest all statements herein are accurate and true. By signing this application, you give permission to have a site visit by MDAR staff which may be necessary before a funding decision is made. All site visits will be arranged with you in advance.

Signature

Date

- ☐ I have the authority to request payment from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
- ☐ Applicant must repay the award or portion of the award to the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources if any funds received were issued in error; are based on incorrect representations made to the Department; or if any costs forming the basis of an award under this program are covered by other federal, state, non-profit grant awards and/or any funds received by insurance claims. The applicant agrees that the final determination of whether there has been a duplication of benefits and the amount to be repaid, if any, will be made by the Department.
- ☐ The Applicant authorizes the Department to share data relevant to this award with federal and state agencies and as otherwise required under the public records law, M.G.L. c. 66, Sec. 6A, and M.G.L. c. 4, Sec. 7(26). The Applicant understands that any amounts awarded may be considered taxable income and may result in the issuance of a 1099-G and that any questions about tax or other liability should be directed to the appropriate tax or legal professional.
- ☐ The applicant authorizes my/our insurance company, bank, financial institution, or other related party to release to the Department all records and information necessary to process the application.

By executing this document, the Bidder certifies, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that it has submitted a Response to this RFR that is the Bidder's Offer as evidenced by the execution of its authorized signatory, and that the Bidder's Response may be subject to negotiation by the SSST. Also, the terms of the RFR, the Bidder's Response, and any negotiated terms shall be deemed accepted by the Department and included as part of the Contract upon execution of this document by the State Purchasing Agent or his designee.

Attachment B

Environmental Justice Policy

For the purposes of this RFR, “Environmental Justice” is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens.

While encouraged, the following questions are voluntary and will not impact eligibility. Answers to these questions help MDAR track progress towards the goals set forth in the [2021 Environmental Justice Policy](#), and the [2022 Environmental Justice Strategy](#), which require MDAR to a) report the amount of public funds used in Environmental Justice Communities, and b) track the number of new applicants for grant programs from Environmental Justice Communities and BIPOC Farmers. More information can be found in below. MDAR encourages stakeholders to provide feedback on the Environmental Justice Policy and Strategy, by visiting mass.gov/environmental-justice.

Environmental Justice Questions

1. Has the applicant applied for MDAR funding programs before this current application? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know
2. Has the applicant received funding from any MDAR funding programs? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I don't know
3. Select one or more of the racial categories below:
Answers to the following questions are optional. This information will not in any way affect your eligibility for MDAR programs and is used for statistical purposes only.

<input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native/Indigenous	<input type="checkbox"/> Middle Eastern or North African
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian/South Asian	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
<input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American	<input type="checkbox"/> White
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: <i>Please state with the understanding that the races above may not be reflective of everyone.</i>	
4. Select one or more of the ethnic categories below:
Answers to the following questions are optional. This information will not in any way affect your eligibility for MDAR programs and is used for statistical purposes only.

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Hispanic or Latino	<input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic or Latino
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: <i>Please state with the understanding that the races above may not be reflective of everyone.</i>	
5. Are any applicants a Historically Underserved Farmer?
Please check any of the following categories that apply based on these USDA definitions:
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/getting-assistance/underserved-farmers-ranchers>

<input type="checkbox"/> Limited Resource Farmer	<input type="checkbox"/> Socially Disadvantaged Farmer
<input type="checkbox"/> Beginning Farmer	<input type="checkbox"/> Veteran Farmer
6. If you feel that this application did not allow you to fully explain the diversity of the applicant for this grant (whether you are applying as an individual or on behalf of an entity), please explain here:

RFR - Further Information on MDAR's Environmental Justice Goals

Revision Date: January 15, 2023

MDAR strives to promote and integrate EJ considerations across their programs, policies, and activities to ensure the equal access and meaningful involvement of all people residing in the Commonwealth with respect to agricultural economic and environmental sustainability and the equitable development, implementation, and accessibility to information and resources.

Among the priorities and goals outlined in the [2021 Environmental Justice Policy](#), and the [2022 Environmental Justice Strategy](#), EEA agencies are tasked with ensuring that Environmental Justice neighborhoods benefit from positive impacts of environmental programs, grants and investments.

A. Environmental Justice Populations

EJ populations are those segments of the population that EEA has determined to be most at risk of being unaware of or unable to participate in environmental decision-making or to gain access to state environmental resources, or are especially vulnerable.

"Environmental Justice Population" is defined by the Environmental Justice Policy, issued by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs in 2017, and updated in June, 2021, as

- A. a neighborhood that meets 1 or more of the following criteria:
 - i) the annual median household income is not more than 65 per cent of the statewide annual median household income;
 - ii) minorities comprise 40 per cent or more of the population;
 - iii) 25 per cent or more of households lack English language proficiency; or
 - iv) minorities comprise 25 per cent or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150 per cent of the statewide annual median household income; or
- B. a geographic portion of a neighborhood designated by the Secretary as an environmental justice population in accordance with law.

B. MA Environmental Justice Map Viewer

The [MA Environmental Justice Map Viewer](#) was designed to map Environmental Justice populations as census block groups in Massachusetts.

Please note - The data submitted in your application will be used to determine whether your project falls within an Environmental Justice block group, and will be used to design a map, available on the MDAR website, to show the positive impact of its grant awards, demonstrating the reach of its programs in EJ communities.

For more information on MDAR's Environmental Justice Program, or to provide feedback, please visit <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/mdars-environmental-justice-program>.

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