



MAELC Education Grant Program

2025-2026 Request for Proposals

Applications are due before midnight (central) on November 15, 2025 and April 15, 2026.

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Grant Summary

Overview

The Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC) will award grants to support programming for agriculture, food and natural resources (AFNR) education at the K-12 and post-secondary levels. Priority will be given to school-based agricultural education and post-secondary AFNR programs, or for projects connected to school districts or colleges/universities.

The Minnesota Legislature provides this funding through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to be administered by MAELC.

Funding Availability

MAELC anticipates awarding \$250,000 over two grant award periods using a competitive review process.

Applicants may request between \$1,500-\$25,000 per project. The average award amount for the past three years is \$8,900. A cash match is not required. MAELC prefers not to sustain repeat projects.

Priorities

Projects should address at least one of the strategies within the following MAELC goal areas:

MAELC Goal # 1: Increase *STUDENT* access, awareness, and participation

- Implement new or expand current AFNR education programs that attract new and/or underserved groups
- Provide experiences that improve student engagement and broaden opportunities for applied learning in AFNR content, including middle school grades (5-8)
- Promote and offer AFNR career exploration programs that recruit and retain students for the future workforce

MAELC Goal # 2: Improve *PROGRAMMING* content, meeting facilities and equipment needs, and provide the best method of instruction to meet the needs of the AFNR industry

- Develop AFNR courses that provide opportunities for credit equivalency for high school graduation credit or concurrent enrollment for post-secondary credit
- Provide equipment and improve facilities to enhance student experience and instruction
- Develop and/or enhance AFNR curriculum and course delivery methods to provide students with opportunities to acquire leadership, career readiness and technical skills

MAELC Goal # 3: Recruit, retain, and support highly qualified *INSTRUCTORS*

- Implement recruitment strategies to encourage individuals to join the AFNR education profession
- Support career lifecycles of agricultural educators (e.g., pre-service, early, mid or late career), which can include programming for professional development, mentorship, and cohort opportunities
- Provide programming that retains and transitions instructors at the secondary, post-secondary and farm business management levels

How to Apply & Questions

Applications are due before midnight (central) on November 15, 2025 and April 15, 2026, and will be submitted online at www.mn.gov/maelc/grants.html. Late applications will not be considered. A copy of your completed application will be sent to the email listed on the application form.

For general grant questions or help with the online application system, contact maelc@umn.edu or call (612) 624-6256.

Application guidance:

- **Saving Application Progress:** Each time a page is switched in the application, answers are automatically saved. The application can be retrieved where you left off when clicking the “Apply” link again. This only works if returning to the application on the same internet browser and computer, and if browser “cookies” have not been cleared (the form utilizes “cookies” to track progress). Utilizing a public computer may cause issues with automatic saving.
- **Changes to Submitted Applications:** After the grant application has been submitted, the link will no longer re-open the application. Should you need to change or update the application, contact the MAELC office for a link to re-open your application (provided it is prior to the submission deadline).

Timeline and Deadlines

First round grant recipients will be notified of awards in December 2025, with funds available starting January 2026. The deadline for grants to be completed will be December 15, 2026.

Second round grant recipients will be notified of awards in June 2026, with funds available starting July 2026. The deadline for these grants to be completed will be June 15, 2027.

Grant Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

Entities interested in supporting and improving programming for AFNR education at the K-12 and post-secondary levels are eligible. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Public, charter or private schools
- Post-secondary institutions
- Nonprofit organizations
- Government agencies
- AFNR Education entities

Priority will be given to school-based agricultural education and post-secondary AFNR programs, or for projects connected to school districts or colleges/universities.

Collaboration

Higher priority will be given to those applications that show partnerships and other funding sources to assist in the completion of the project.

Eligible projects and expenses

All project expenses must directly support MAELC's goals around students, programming and/or instructors. Funds can cover personnel (salary/benefits), consultant services, transportation and lodging, food, instructional equipment and technology, and supplies and materials.

In addition, projects must:

- Not start until the grant contract is signed by all parties and has reached its start date
- Be completed by the contract deadline
- Be conducted in Minnesota (professional development exempt from this requirement)

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- Purchase of classroom equipment, technology and supplies
- Implementing a new AFNR program and FFA chapter
- Curriculum development
- Registration for professional development
- Transportation for hands-on experiences

Ineligible expenses

Expenses ineligible for reimbursement include, but are not limited to:

- Expenditures incurred prior to contract execution or after grant period
- Greenhouse structures (*consumables or other related greenhouse materials ARE considered eligible)
- Textbooks
- Student stipends
- Extended contracts

Application Review Policies

Review process

A review committee made up of MAELC board members evaluates all eligible applications based on the criteria in the Project Evaluation Profile. Reviewers may recommend whole or partial funding of a project. The full MAELC board reviews the committee's recommendations and makes the award decisions.

MAELC staff will notify applicants, both successful and unsuccessful, in writing. Applicants may request a summary of reviewer feedback.

Privacy notice and data classification

The information provided by an applicant will be used to assess the applicant's eligibility to receive a grant under this program. The decision to apply for this grant is voluntary, and applicants are not legally required to provide any of the requested information. However, only completed applications will be considered for a grant. All application information will be public data per Minnesota's statute on grants ([MINN. STAT. 13.599](#))

All persons, businesses, and individuals apply for grants in the state of Minnesota must comply with applicable laws.

Requirements for Grant Recipients

Grant award agreement

MAELC procedures require establishment of a contract with grant recipients to ensure clarity of expectations with regards to grant parameters. Funds not used in accordance with the grant contract must be returned.

Upon approval of an application and before beginning work on the grant project and receiving reimbursements, the applicant must:

- Sign a grant contract agreement showing their intention to complete the proposed tasks. This agreement must be signed within the timeline presented in the award letter.
- Complete a statement of assurance
- Complete an IRS W-9 form or confirm that the information in the University of Minnesota's accounting system is still correct.

Political subdivisions

Political subdivisions, including counties, towns, cities, school districts, and other municipal corporations or political subdivisions of the state authorized to enter into contracts will need to certify that none of its current public officials, board members, or staff with authority to access grant funds have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

Reporting

Grantees will be required to submit a final report at the completion of the project. Grant payments shall not be made on grants with past due reports unless MAELC has given the grantee a written extension.

Payments

Eligible expenses may only be incurred after the grant contract agreement has been signed by all parties.

Grant funds are dispersed on a one-time reimbursement basis at the completion of the grant project. All grantee requests for reimbursement must correspond to the approved grant budget and be verified through receipts, invoices, or proof that vendors have been paid.

Grantees can request an advanced payment of up to 50% of their total award amount by contacting MAELC staff at the time of the award notice. MAELC reserves the right to not honor requests for initial advanced payments. Any cash advance that violates the terms of the grant agreement or does not adequately support the approved project must be repaid.

Bidding requirements

All funded applicants must abide by the state's [bidding requirements](#) for larger purchases.

Publicity

All funded applicants must publicly credit MAELC as a sponsor of the project, including on the grantee's website when practical.

Audits of project

The grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other parties that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by MAELC, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate ([MINN. STAT. 16B.98, SUBD. 8](#)).

The grantee is responsible for the retention of documents and records relevant to the grant. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

MAELC Background

MAELC is a 16-member legislative council that provides leadership to promote and expand agricultural education in Minnesota. The state legislature, agricultural educators, and agriculture industry leaders are all represented on the council.

Project Evaluation Profile

Applicants and their grant proposals will be evaluated based on long-term sustainability, including their ability to support the project after the expiration of grant funding.

MAELC grant committee members will utilize a ranking system to determine how well projects meet the MAELC Education Grant goals. Please use the guidelines and criteria below to guide your application submission.

Evaluation Criteria

Purpose	• Project fulfills at least one of the strategies within the MAELC goal areas around students, programming and/or instructors • Application describes how the project will increase opportunities for accessing or improving AFNR education • Application clearly explains the need for funding, and how the purpose of the project meets that need
Measurable Objectives	• Application lists at least three objectives that are measurable
Activities & Timeline	• Application clearly describes the activities of the project • Activities directly and effectively support the purpose of the project • Proposal includes a realistic timeline for implementation (within 12 months)
Project Impact	• Proposal describes how grant-funded activities will have a positive and lasting impact on multiple individuals • Application identifies the populations served and anticipated number of individuals reached
Partnerships	• Proposal demonstrates meaningful collaboration with partners • Partnership roles and contributions are clearly defined • Application shows strong support for the project from school district / university
Criteria for Success; Project Sustainability	• Proposal clearly describes criteria for success • Application includes an adequate plan for how to sustain the project once MAELC funding is no longer available • Project does not repeat grant projects previously awarded through MAELC
Budget	• Budget clearly identifies all project costs • Budget narrative thoroughly justifies expenses • Budget includes other funding sources beyond MAELC

Application Questions

Applicant Information

Organization & Contact Information

- Name of organization
- Mailing address of applicant organization
- Name of contact person
- Contact person's title
- Contact person's phone
- Contact person's email

Type of Applicant

- K-12 educational institution
- Post-secondary educational institution
- Nonprofit organization
- Government agency
- Other

Fiscal Agent Information (if different than above)

- Name of fiscal agent organization
- Name of contact person
- Contact person's title
- Mailing address of fiscal agent
- Fiscal agent's phone
- Fiscal agent's email

Proposal Information

Grant Request

- Project Title
- Summary of Project (2-3 sentences)
- Grant amount requested
- Total project budget

Project Narrative

1. Briefly describe the purpose of your project and how it fulfills at least one of the strategies within the MAELC goal areas (found on page 3).
2. List three measurable objectives for your project (this will also be assessed in the final report).
3. Describe the activities of the project, including a general timeline for implementation.
4. What is the anticipated impact of the project? Include the population served and the anticipated number of individuals reached.
5. Who are the partners in this effort? How does each partner contribute to the project?
6. Describe your criteria for success. How will this project be sustainable in the future?

Budget Summary

Complete a budget table, providing an overview of how grant funds will be spent. Ensure the amounts listed match the budget narrative (below) and the amount requested on the first page of the online grant application.

Expense Categories	Amount requested from MAELC	Your Organization/ School's Contribution (In-kind)	Other (Identify Source)	Total Budget
Administrative*				
Salary/Benefits				
Consultant Services				
Transportation & Lodging				
Food				
Instructional Equipment & Technology				
Supplies & Materials				
Other (please specify)				
Project Total	\$	\$	\$	\$

*MAELC funding restricts administrative costs to 5%. This includes indirect costs but excludes support staff hired directly for the proposed program.

Budget Narrative

Detail how the funds will be used and justify each expense of the project.

- Describe the purpose of each expense.
- Identify any specific vendors, contractors, or consultants for the project and why they were chosen.
- Attach any quotes or estimates used to develop your budget.
- Applicants are not required to provide a funding match. If the project requires funds in addition to the grant request, please identify the sources of the other funding.

Additional or Supporting Materials

These are not required; however, supplement application materials can be uploaded.

Applicant Signature

If you agree with the following, you will type your name in the box: "I certify that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I have read MAELC's RFP and will comply with all requirements."