



Agricultural Reinvestment Fund

*Exclusively funded by the
NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission*



Application Deadline: Friday, December 5, 2014

2015 Grant Program | Application for Collaborative Groups

The grant program assists farmers and rural communities to develop new sources of agricultural income through the provision of cost-share grants. The program awards grants of up to \$8,000 to individual farmers, or \$10,000 for collaborative farmer projects in North Carolina. ***Please read our eligibility requirements carefully as they have changed from previous years.***

Important Dates

Early bird deadline: November 20, 2014

Application deadline: December 5, 2014

Award notification: February 28, 2015

Early bird review: Applicants may request an advance review of their proposals for feedback by emailing the proposal **as soon as possible** but no later than by November 20, 2014. RAFI will contact applicants who have submitted by the early bird deadline with suggestions for improving their applications. ***Applicants are encouraged to apply early.***

For more information go to: www.rafiusa.org/grants

Contact: Jean Willoughby, Project Director, RAFI at 919-621-8453 or email: jean@rafiusa.org

Eligible North Carolina Counties

In 2015, RAFI will administer the grant program for farmers and collaborative farmer groups located in the following 15 counties: **Alamance, Bertie, Caswell, Chowan, Duplin, Franklin, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Johnston, Lenoir, Person, Northampton, Sampson, Wayne.**

Farmer Eligibility

- Farmers must earn at least 50% of their personal income from their farm operation.
- Past grantees who have received a grant from RAFI or the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission are not eligible to apply.
- *Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate a way to replace lost tobacco income.*
- *High priority will be given to innovative projects that show a new direction or opportunity for NC farmers.*

Collaborative Farmer Project Eligibility

A collaborative farmer project may be proposed by a group of farmers, farm co-ops, farmer associations, churches, local businesses, civic organizations or combinations of these. Proposed collaborative projects must include at least three eligible farmers who are active in the leadership of the project.

The program supports innovative, replicable on-farm enterprises. We fund projects that:

- demonstrate an ability to generate new farm income;
- establish new markets for local products and services;

For more info, go to: www.rafiusa.org/grants

- develop new uses for existing greenhouses, tobacco facilities and equipment;
- add value to existing farm products by processing, packaging or marketing in a special or innovative way;
- maintain or create quality employment opportunities, including self-employment or opportunities for home-based businesses; or
- make optimal use of on-farm and natural resources.

Suitable expenses are those associated with the production and marketing of diversified farm enterprises and agritourism endeavors. Examples include, but are not limited to: seeds, fertilizer, plants, amendments, livestock, trainings, advertisements, packaging, fences, signage, facilities, supplies, tools and specialized equipment. Funds should be used as stated in the applicant's proposal. Use of funds inconsistent with the proposal will result in grant forfeiture and repayment.

Application Information

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis. You must submit an application in order to be considered for a grant. Application materials are available online at: www.rafiusa.org/grants

You may download a copy of the application and complete the application on your computer, or you may print out a copy and fill it out by hand. Typed applications are strongly preferred. You may also contact Jean Willoughby at 919-621-8453 to request an application or further assistance.

Deadline

All applications are due in RAFI's office by Friday, December 5, 2014 by 5:00 pm. Applications that arrive after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

Application Submission Options

- **Print and mail** your application to: RAFI, PO Box 640, Pittsboro, NC 27312
- **Email** your application to jean@rafiusa.org with the subject line "Grant application 2015"
- **Fax** your application with a cover sheet including your name to: 919-542-0069
- **Print and deliver** your application to RAFI, 274 Pittsboro-Elementary School Rd, Pittsboro, NC

Grant funds can be used to offset costs for: specialized equipment; retrofitting and adaptation of existing equipment; supply needs; outreach expenses; new marketing, handling or processing operations; labor for contractors, employees.

Grant funds cannot be used for: purchase of livestock; new, general-use farm equipment.

Award Decisions: The Review Board reviews the applications and makes recommendations on projects to be funded. Review Board members include farmers with backgrounds in tobacco and/or income diversification, university researchers, marketing specialists, lending experts, and church and community leaders. Farmers who serve on the board are not eligible for grants. Applicants may be asked to attend a meeting with the Review Board to review their proposal. An evaluation worksheet is included below, which includes the criteria the reviewers will use to evaluate proposals. **Applicants will be notified of the status of their application by February 28, 2015.**

Payments and Reports: Contracts will be sent to the new grantees after the award announcement. A first payment of 75% of the grant award will be made after the contracts are signed. A second payment of 20% will be made, assuming adequate progress is made toward project goals. The final payment of 5% of the award amount will be made after all project activities have been completed. All projects should be at or near completion by December 15, 2015. **Grantees are required to submit two brief reports, an Interim Project Report (by July) and Final Report (by October).**

Cost-share Requirement: The cost-share is the farmer or community contribution to the project. A required minimum of 10% of the total grant amount should be contributed by the grantee toward the project in the form of cash expenditures. The cost-share amount must be shown in the budget. Personal funds used to buy items for the new enterprise count toward the cost-share amount. *Example: If the grant award amount is \$8,000, the grant recipient should contribute at least \$800 in cash expenditures toward the project.* If you have questions about calculating your proposed cost-share contribution, please contact Jean Willoughby at jean@rafiusa.org. In-kind contributions to the cost-share are also encouraged and may include labor, equipment, etc.

Outreach Requirement: Farmers and communities who are awarded grants are required to conduct outreach to educate others about their projects. This can be done by hosting farm tours or field days, having articles written about the project, or making presentations at a farm or community meeting. RAFI staff will help grant recipients with outreach upon request but it is the recipients responsibility to plan and schedule outreach events.

Collaborators: Collaborators are not required but increase the likelihood of success of your project. Collaborators may include other farmers, marketing, and production specialists, extension agents, crop consultants, non-profit organizations, business and other agricultural advisors. The best collaborators bring needed expertise to the project and have a clear role in helping the project succeed.

Note: All grant recipients will be required to complete a form stating that they have no overdue federal income taxes. Additionally, the grant funds are considered taxable income, and RAFI will file a 1099-Miscellaneous with the IRS in the name of the check recipient at the end of 2015. You will be required to fill out a W-9 form requesting an Employer Identification Number or a Social Security Number if you are awarded the grant.

2015 Agricultural Reinvestment Fund Grant Application (Collaborative Group)

****Please read the instructions and eligibility guidelines prior to completing this application.****

Project title: _____

Project Coordinator Information

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Business or Organization: _____

Mailing address: _____

Street address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Email: _____

Fax: _____ Website: _____

1. Have you received a past grant from RAFI or the Tobacco Trust Fund Commission?

_____ YES _____ NO (If yes, please do not submit an application.)

2. What are the locations of the farms in your group? List the county or counties:

3. Do at least 3 members of your group earn 50% or more of their personal income from farming?

_____ YES _____ NO

4. Do you or do members of your group carry liability insurance? _____ YES _____ NO

5. Will this project create an opportunity for a new generation of farmers in your community to be employed on a farm? _____ YES _____ NO

6. Do you or your farming operation carry liability insurance? _____ YES _____ NO

7. Will this project create an opportunity for a new generation of farmers in your family to be employed on the farm? _____ YES _____ NO

8. How much money are you requesting for your project (up to \$10,000)? \$ _____

9. What is the total estimated cost for your project? \$ _____

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Project Participants

List organizations and individuals involved in planning and carrying out the proposed project (including farmers):

Name	Farm, Agency, or Organization

List all farmer participants in the project (including the farmers listed above):

Name	Type of Farming	Tobacco Income (Yes or No)	Tobacco Quota Holder (Yes or No)	% of Household Income from Farming

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Please try to answer the questions in the space provided. Typed applications are preferred. Handwritten responses are acceptable.

1. Briefly describe your project.

2. Tell us about your group. Who are the group members? What skills do group members have that will be useful to the successful completion of the project? Who will be responsible for managing and carrying out project activities?

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3. What is new or innovative about your project? How is your project different than what others in your community are already doing? Are you aware of other farmers who are doing something similar? If so, where are they located and what are they doing?

4. Describe in detail your plan for completing your project. Tell us the specific tasks to be completed. Give dates by which you will complete them. If it is helpful, use the format below.

Task	Brief Description	Expected Completion Date
<i>Example: Purchase materials</i>	<i>Order parts from farm supply store</i>	<i>March 2015</i>

5. How will the new project fit into the farmers' existing farming operations? What are the labor requirements of the new project?

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6. What research have you done to determine if this project will work? Why do you believe that this project can be successful?

7. How have you determined that there is a market demand for the products? Briefly describe your marketing strategy.

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8. If your project is successful, what might other farmers learn from your experience? Is this an enterprise that could be duplicated by others without causing too much competition?

9. A requirement of receiving a grant is to conduct outreach to other growers about the results of your project. How will you let other farmers know about your experience with your project?

10. In what areas do you believe you will need assistance in order to successfully complete your project? Who have you identified to assist you in those areas? Are those individuals aware of your project and have they agreed to help you?

11. What is your goal for the project? If you are successful, how will the project contribute to keeping you or others sustainably employed on the farm?

For more info, go to: www.rafiusa.org/grants

12. How much income do you expect to generate from the project annually? Please describe your plans for continuing the project beyond the duration of grant funding. Where will you get the money to continue to support project activities?

12b. Are you leveraging funds from other sources aside from yourself? If yes, please note the sources and approximate amounts.

Budget Form

Use the following pages to estimate your budget. Please list all of your expected expenses in the appropriate categories and calculate a total on the last page. Your budget should clearly show how grant funds will be used on your project. Grant awards are up to \$10,000. Items that you list under the grant contribution heading are those for which you will use grant funds provided by the grant program. Items that you list under the cost-share heading are your contribution to the project.

1. Subcontractors and Other Off-farm Services

Grant Contribution

Item	Quantity	Cost per Unit	Total
<i>Example: Well Driller</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>N/A</i>	<i>\$\$\$\$\$</i>
Total grant contribution for Subcontractors and Other Off-farm Services:			

Cost-share Contribution

Item	Quantity	Cost per Unit	Total
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Total cost-share contribution for Analysis, Consultants, Subcontractors, and Other Off-farm Services:			

2. Personnel Compensation (Only labor directly related to the grant activities completed by contractors and employees over and above normal farm operations is eligible for funding. Family members are not eligible to be paid from grant funds.)

Grant Contribution

Employee	# of Hours	Hourly Wage	Total
Total grant contribution for Personnel Compensation:			

Cost-share Contribution

Employee	# of Hours	Hourly Wage	Total
Total cost-share contribution for Personnel Salaries:			

3. Use of Farm Equipment (for equipment rental)

Grant Contribution

Equipment Item	Acres in Project	Charge per Acre/Hour	Total
<i>Example: Auger</i>	<i>?? Acres</i>	<i>Rental rates</i>	<i>\$\$\$\$\$</i>

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Total grant contribution for Use of Farm Equipment:	
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Cost-share Contribution

Equipment Item	Acres in Project	Charge per Acre	Total
Total cost-share contribution for Use of Farm Equipment:			

4. Supplies, Materials and Equipment (We do not fund general use equipment)

Grant Contribution

Item	Quantity	Cost per Unit	Total
Total grant contribution for Supplies and Materials:			

Cost-share Contribution

Item	Quantity	Cost per Unit	Total

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Total cost-share contribution for Supplies and Materials:			

5. Travel Grant Contribution

From/To	Miles per Trip	Cost per Mile	Total
<i>Example: Attending an educational workshop specifically related to your project</i>			
Total grant contribution for Travel:			

Cost-share Contribution

From/To	Miles per Trip	Cost per Mile	Total
Total cost-share contribution for Travel:			

6. Marketing Grant Contribution

Item	# of Units	Cost per Unit	Total
<i>Example: Printed flyers, signage, or postcards</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>0.05</i>	
Total grant contribution for Communication:			

Cost-share Contribution

Item	# of Units	Cost per Unit	Total

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Total cost-share contribution for Communication:			

7. Outreach and Educational Events (For example: Cost related to hosting a farm tour)

Grant Contribution

Item	# of Units	Cost per Unit	Total
Total grant contribution for Outreach:			

Cost-share Contribution

Item	# of Units	Cost per Unit	Total
Total cost-share contribution for Outreach:			

Budget Summary Form | Use this worksheet to summarize information from previous pages.

Grant Contribution by line item:

Line Item	Grant Contribution	Cost-share Contribution
1. Subcontractors and Other Off- farm Services		
2. Personnel Compensation for contractors and employees		
3. Use of Farm Equipment		
4. Supplies and Materials		
5. Travel		
6. Marketing		

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7. Outreach and Education		
TOTAL CONTRIBUTION:		

Please transfer the total amount of grant contribution to the Amount Requested line on the cover sheet of the application packet. If applicable, please list other sources of funding for the project:

SIGNATURES

Thank you for your effort in completing the application form. Please sign the proposal below.

Signature (Project Coordinator)

Date

Signatures of other project organizers:

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

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Requirements of 2015 Agricultural Reinvestment Fund Grant Recipients

1. Grant recipients must keep accurate production and financial records on the project and supply a copy of those records at the completion of the project. Copies of receipts for project expenditures will be required.
2. Grant recipients must be available via mail and/or phone calls throughout the year. Email access is helpful.
3. A RAFI staff member will visit each of the recipients' farms at least once to discuss progress on the projects.
4. Grant recipients must complete final income and expense reports of project results, plus a survey that provides feedback about the program and results of their project by November 15, 2015 to receive the final grant allotment.
5. RAFI will include the grant recipients' projects in public relations, outreach, demonstration and education in 2015 or future years.

Application Evaluation Worksheet (Used by the Review Committee)

This is a copy of the evaluation worksheet the review committee will be using to score the grant applications.

Point Scale:

1-2 is a low score that reflects a low percentage or low quality or small outcome.

3-4 is a moderate score that reflects 50% or average quality or moderate outcome.

6-7 reflects a high percentage or excellent quality, big outcome or return.

Does the project benefit farmers who earned a significant percentage of income from tobacco at the time of the Master Settlement Agreement (1998)? (7 points)	
Will this project create an opportunity for the next generation to be employed on the farm? (7 points)	
If successful, will the project contribute a significant amount of income to farmer participants? (7 points)	
If successful, will the project help to maintain existing farm employment or create new farm employment opportunities? (7 points)	
Has the applicant adequately researched the production and processing requirements of the product? (6 points)	
Has the applicant evaluated the market potential for the product? Does the applicant have a sufficient market? (6 points)	
Does the applicant have the appropriate skills to carry out the project? Has the applicant identified cooperators to supplement gaps in the applicant's skills and abilities? (6 points)	
Is it clear who will lead and carry out project activities? (6 points)	
Is the budget realistic? (6 points)	
Is the project innovative? Does the project represent a new direction or opportunity for farmers? (7 points)	
If successful, will the experiences of the project be useful to other groups of farmers in developing new income sources? Can the project be expanded to include additional farm families (7 points)	
Has the applicant developed an appropriate outreach plan for the project? (7 points)	
Will cost-share support from RAFI enable the project to become financially self-supporting within a reasonable amount of time? (6 points)	
TOTAL:	