

RAFI Beginning Farmer Stipend Example Application 2024

This example application is meant to help demonstrate the type of information and answer length we are looking for with a given question. This is not meant as an example of the ideal project or type of farm.

Eligibility:

Only applications submitted by eligible farmers will be reviewed.

Please confirm that you are eligible for this grant before spending time on an application. If you have questions about your eligibility, please contact Bianca Anthony: bianca@rafiusa.org

1. **Eligibility: Please check the following boxes to confirm you are eligible for this grant:**

xl am a historically underserved farmer or rancher.

xl have less than three years of farming experience as a principal operator.

xl am farming in AL, AR, DC, FL, GA, KY, LA, MD, MO, MS, NC, SC, TN, or

VA.

2. **Eligibility: Please check all the groups you belong to under the definition of Historically Underserved Farmer or Rancher, as defined by NRCS.** Check all that apply.

xBeginning

xSocially Disadvantaged

Veteran

Limited Resources

Farmer Contact Information:

1. **First Name** Farmer
2. **Last Name** Example
3. **Mobile Phone Number** 919-555-5555
4. **Alternate phone number**
5. **Email Address** farmer@example.com

**please ensure this is an email address that you check regularly; we will use it to communicate with you about your application.*

6. **Mailing Address:** 123 Main Street
7. **City:** Pittsboro

8. State: [NC](#)
9. Postal Code: [55555](#)
10. County: [Chatham](#)

Demographic Questions:

1. Race:

- [xBlack/African American](#)
Latinx
Native American
Asian
Multiracial/Biracial
White
Other (please describe)

2. Gender

- [xFemale](#)
Male
Non-Binary
Other

3. Birthdate [11/11/1990](#)

4. What year did you begin farming? [2022](#)

5. Please let us know if you prefer a language other than English? [n/a](#)

Grant Application Information:

1. Farm or Group Name [Happy Farmer](#)

If you do not have a farm name, please enter [Your Name] Farm.

2. What is your relationship to the farm?

- [xFarm owner](#)
Farm co-owner

3. Has anyone assisted you with the completion of this application? (For example, a staff member at a non-profit organization, a grant writer, ag extension agent, or someone else who is not directly involved with the project)

- Yes
[xNo](#)

4. If yes, please provide their contact information:

Name
Organization/role
Relationship to farm/group
Email Address
Phone Number

Farm Information:

1. Is your farm address the same as your mailing address?

If not, please enter it here:

Farm Street Address [123 Farm St.](#)
City [Pittsboro](#)
State [NC](#)
Country [USA](#)
Postal Code [55555](#)
County [Chatham](#)

2. Farm Website: www.happyfarmer.com

3. Farm instagram account: [@happyfarmer](#)

4. Farm facebook account: www.facebook.com/happyfarmer

5. Other farm web presence: Youtube: [Happy Farmer](#)

6. Do you file a Schedule F tax form for your farm?

[xYes](#)

No

7. Does your farm have an FSA ID?

[xYes](#)

No

8. Year current farming operation began: [2022](#)

9. Total acres currently in production: [5](#)

10. Acres leased: [0](#)

11. Acres owned: [5](#)

12. Farm Products/Enterprises: (check all that apply)

Agritourism
Aquaponics/Hydroponics
Bees
Cattle
Commodities

Eggs
Fiber
Fish / Seafood
Flowers
Forestry
Fruit
Goats
Hemp
Herbs
Hogs-Contract
Hogs-Independent
Horticulture
Nuts
Orchard
Poultry-Contract
Poultry-Independent
Sheep
Value Added
[xVegetable](#)
Vermiculture
Other

13. How do you market your products? Check all that apply.

[xRetail/Direct Sales](#)
Wholesale
Production/Marketing Contract
[xCSA](#)
Food Hub or Cooperative
U-Pick
Other - Describe below

14. Please select any current farm certifications below:

[xGAP Certified](#)
Certified Organic
Certified Naturally Grown
Certified Humane
Animal Welfare Approved
Food Justice Certified
B-Corp
Other

15. What percentage of income do you earn from farming?

0 - 25 %
26 - 50 %

x51 - 75%
76 - 99%
100 %

16. Number of non-family employees: 3

17. Number of family employees: 2

18. Were you previously certified and/or do you follow organic practices?

Previously certified

xFollow organic practices

19. Do you have a clear title to the land?

xYes

No

20. What is the land ownership status? Are there any heirs or property issues? We own and have paid off loans for the 3 acres. No heirs issues.

Application Questions:

Your answers to these questions are important to our funding decision. We recommend you write and save your answers ahead of time in a separate document, and then paste them into this form when you are ready to submit the application.

1. Why do you want to be a farmer? How did you get interested in agriculture? What have you done to prepare yourself for success: training, work experience, etc? (200 word limit)

The global pandemic inspired me to start growing my own food. Last year, we purchased a 3 acre farmhouse and began growing our own vegetables on a larger scale. I grew up working on my uncle's cattle farm during the Summer, so I had a little experience from there. In January, I began a farm fellowship to learn about selling at markets, and also found a great farm mentor to help me along my journey. I want to be self-sustaining and make a profit from growing organic vegetables and also offer educational workshops to help others learn how to grow their own food.

2. Tell us about your farm and your goals for it in 2024. How did the operation get started? What do you produce and where do you sell your products? Do you envision working full or part-time on your farm? What have you done already to work toward that goal, and what do you hope to do next? What else can you tell us to help us understand your farm? (350 word limit)

My goal for 2024 is to expand from our small backyard garden into a profitable farming operation. We have already prepared a half acre for planting and cover cropped the other two acres. We have mapped out our garden, and purchased seed, equipment and books to bring

our vision to life. We are focused on peppers, tomatoes, squash and zucchini for the 2024 growing season. We have a booth at our local farmers market and will also vend at three additional events over the Summer. We joined a co-op and are planning to experiment with selling directly to stores as well. I will be working full time on the farm, and my husband will be part time. I also have two more people that will regularly work as farm hands and host weekly volunteer days to get extra help and provide workshops with the community. In early April, we began planting vegetable starts and developing our processing area. Our immediate goal is to purchase a Coolbot so our vegetables can stay fresh from harvest to market day, and we can produce our vegetables on a larger scale.

3. **What is your future vision for your farm?** What customers, production practices, scale, income, assets, and community relationships do you envision? (250 word limit)

We provide fresh, local organic produce to my rural community. My local farmers market has farmers offering produce, but none that focus on organic and sustainable practices. There are also not many BIPOC farmers there, and I aim to fill that need for representation. I will seek organic certification, but for now we use organic practices to the best of our ability. We have a half acre in production right now, and this project will help us get an additional acre in production as well. I will be working full time and my income will solely be based on the sale of produce. I envision strengthening my relationship with local farmers and community members who shop at the market and will attend workshops at my farm.

4. **What barriers have you faced as a farmer?** Have you had trouble accessing resources like capital, land, labor, training and education, infrastructure, or markets? Are you struggling with start-up costs, housing, debt, childcare, discrimination, or other challenges? (200 word limit)

I have not been approved for any loans, but have been able to receive a mini grant in 2023. We were able to acquire the land, but did not have a lot of money left to get the farm up and running. We are planning to slowly and steadily increase the amount of acres in production. I am also trying to pay off student loan debt and have to pay for childcare for my young son. Finances are definitely a barrier and I'm hoping this stipend could lessen the burden.

5. **What will this funding help you do?** Describe your plans in detail: What will you do and when? How will this help address the barriers identified above? (250 word limit)

This funding will help us purchase a Coolbot so we can keep our produce fresh between harvest and market day. As soon as we get the funds we will purchase the Coolbot, because when the Summer months arise the heat will take a toll on our produce and cause it to wither or spoil more quickly.

6. **Have you sought additional funding for this opportunity?** List previous loans, grants, credit you've sought and if you've received any. (200 word limit)

I received a mini grant of 2,000 previously but it has already been spent. I also tried to get a loan for this project, but it was denied. I applied for another grant last month, but have not heard back whether I will receive it or not. My credit score is a barrier, and I am working to raise it.

- 7. How will your plans be affected if you are not awarded the stipend? Will you be able to start your project without the grant? (200 word limit)**

Without stipend funding from RAFI or the other program I applied for, I will not be able to purchase the Coolbot. I simply do not have the budget to make such a large purchase right now. I will continue to save what I can, but I won't be able to purchase one this year, and will need to rethink putting an additional acre in production.

- 8. If you did receive funding, how will you deal with unexpected challenges and how are you going to make this project happen if you face challenges? If you do not receive funding from this program, what will your farming season look like in 2024? (200 word limit)**

If I receive funding I will do my best to stick to the plan, but if the unexpected happens, I will pivot. I am resilient and work well under pressure, so if we need to make adjustments I will. We will continue farming our half acre and crowdfund to raise money for the Coolbot and continue applying to grants and stipends.

- 9. Priority Ranking: Do you currently use agroecological/ancestral practices, and if so, which practices? If you don't use any practices yet, do you hope to integrate them in the future? Do you employ any ancestral knowledge from your background as part of operational practices? (200 word limit)**

I do use ancestral practices handed down from my grandfather who was a sharecropper in North Carolina. He worked with the Earth and paid attention to the natural flow of water on his property to determine the best places to make his fields. He utilized swales to direct the water flow and help keep his crop watered. I use a lot of his methods and honor him in all of the work that I do on the farm.

- 10. Priority Ranking: Will the outcome of your project create a broader community benefit or social good? Please explain. (200 word limit)**

Yes, having access to a Coolbot will allow us to put an additional acre in production and make a significantly larger amount of money from farming. The community will benefit because once we are making more money from selling vegetables, I will be able to focus more on educational workshops in which I will volunteer my time to help teach community members how to grow their own food.

Budget & Timeline:

- 1. Timeline: Provide a detailed timeline for your project.** Your project should be complete by December 31, 2024. If granted, you can anticipate receiving a check in April-May 2022, upon submission of all documents.

Date	Task
------	------

June 2024	Purchase irrigation system components
July 2024	Rent tractor, prep field, lay plastic mulch and drip tape
Late July 2024	Transplant vegetable starts
August 2024	Trellising
September 2024	Crop care and maintenance, including irrigation
October 2024	Set up field wash station, purchase boxes
November 2024	First wholesale delivery

Project Timeline: Date and Tasks

2. **Expenses:** Provide a detailed list of expenses for your project.

Example:

Irrigation hoses, lines, fittings and filter	\$1200
Tractor work - field prep	\$150
Plastic layer rental	\$200
Field stakes and trellising twine	\$1250
Sink, fixtures and plumbing components	\$850
Lumber, hardware cloth and fasteners for wash station	\$650
Total	\$5000

Project Expenses: Items and Costs

3. **Total Cost of project:** \$5,000
4. **Grant Requested Amount:** \$5,000

You may request up to \$5,000. If your project costs less than this amount, you can request less. You cannot request more.

5. **If the total cost of the project is greater than the grant amount, please describe how you will cover the balance.** [If we are awarded this grant and need more to complete the project, we will start a crowdfunding campaign to raise the remainder of the funds.](#)

Supplemental Documentation:

1. **Reference Letter:**

Please attach one (or more) reference letters from someone who can speak to your work or potential as a farmer. This can include (but not limited to) farmer mentors, ag extension agents, markets and purchasers you have worked with, faith or community leaders, local businesses, etc.

The letter should speak to their relationship with you, your experience as a farm, and/or your ability to carry out this project.

[Click here for an example of a reference letter.](#)

[Reference Letter\(s\): x](#)

2. **Quote:**

Please provide a quote or estimate for at least one item in your project.

For example, if you need electrical work, attach a quote from an electrician. If you are purchasing a walk-in cooler, farm equipment, or construction materials, attach information about the costs from a reputable source.

[Quote: field prep tractor work \\$150](#)

3. **Additional Information:** Please attach any additional information, photos, or documents (optional)

[Additional Documents: x](#)

[Additional Documents: x](#)

Additional Documents:

4. **How did you hear about RAFI-USA and the Farmers of Color Network?**

RAFI-USA Website

[xSocial Media](#)

Another Farmer

Other