

Agricultural Climate Resiliency Competitive Grants Program

Request for Proposals 2024 (Revised January 15, 2024)

INTRODUCTION

In response to proactive efforts via the plant coalition and allied agriculture industry partners in Michigan, the State of Michigan appropriated funds in Fiscal Year 2024 for an Agricultural Climate Resiliency Competitive Grants Program. This new program, a partnership among Michigan agriculture industry partners, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD), MSU AgBioResearch and MSU Extension will fund three-year, integrated multi-disciplinary projects with the overall goal to enhance climate change adaptation and mitigation, and environmental sustainability, of Michigan agriculture through regenerative agriculture and other approaches. Michigan agriculture must be better prepared and better equipped to be part of the solution to address climate change mitigation, adaptation and environmental sustainability overall. Increasing resiliency is critical to ensuring availability of nutritious food and plants for Michiganders and a growing world population.

All proposals must outline multi-disciplinary approaches to address questions relevant to overall program goals and must ultimately be applicable at the on-farm level. Studies must include a significant extension/outreach and field-based component to ensure work remains grounded in industry relevance and ultimately application of information on farm. Funding for competitive grants to meet these goals is available during the current fiscal year (FY2024). Funded proposals should lead to significant future funding for continuation of work and plans for leveraging such funds must be articulated in successful proposals.

ELIGIBILITY

Principal Investigators (PIs) must be employed by Michigan State University (MSU). Co-PIs may be MSU employees, scientists from other Michigan academic institutions, or from the private sector, as needed to include important, relevant disciplines and expertise on project teams. **USDA-ARS scientists appointed as adjunct faculty at MSU are eligible to serve as Co-PIs.**

TIMELINE FOR FY24 PROJECTS

- **December 15, 2023** Call for proposals
- **February 1, 2024** Letter of Intent due
- **March 1, 2024** Proposals due
- **April 15, 2024** Notification of awards
- **May 1, 2024** Project funds available
- **June 30, 2027** **Final reports due**

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The goals of the Agricultural Climate Resiliency Program are aligned with the principles of soil health and regenerative agriculture, and the impacts of climate change. Specific goals include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Enhancing soil and plant health.
- Enhancing soil carbon sequestration.
- Efficient use of water.
- Protection of water resources.

All proposals must clearly state how the proposed activities will preserve and enhance the diverse plant agriculture industries in Michigan in a time of rapidly changing climate. Broad relevance of proposed studies to multiple commodities produced in Michigan is required.

FUNDING SCOPE

Proposals may request funding for up to three years total with year one funding for site establishment and baseline data collection. Multi-year funding is contingent on satisfactory progress. PIs will be required to submit annual progress reports and a final termination report.

Maximum funding for each grant is \$250,000 for year one and \$500,000 per year for years two and three. All three years will be funded from the Fiscal Year 2024 appropriation. Future RFPs will be contingent on appropriations in Fiscal Year 2025 and beyond.

Individuals may submit no more than one proposal as PI. There is no limit to the number of proposals for co-PIs, and PIs are encouraged to construct multi-disciplinary teams. It is expected that co-PIs will have a major role in the project. Collaborators should not be identified in the proposal.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

All proposals are subjected to scientific review and ranking by a panel composed of current and emeritus MSU faculty, academic staff, MSU Extension educators, MDARD employees and industry professionals. Each panel is selected by Agricultural Climate Resiliency Program leadership. The identity of panel members is confidential. Proposal PIs and co-PIs will not be eligible to serve on the review panel.

Reviewers will review the submitted proposal documents, including up to three external letters of support from stakeholders per proposal.

To be eligible for funding, proposals must be integrated and multi-disciplinary, with a major field-based component. An extension/outreach component is required.

The chair of the review panel will report the recommendations of the panel to the Directors' Action Team (DAT). The DAT consists of the Directors of MSU AgBioResearch, MSU Extension, and MDARD. The DAT will review the panel recommendations and make final decisions on funded proposals and appropriate allocations. The following criteria will be used by the review panel.

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Alignment with specific programmatic goals of the Agricultural Climate Resiliency Program (Required: integrated, multi-disciplinary, field-based component, extension/outreach component).	25
Scientific soundness; appropriateness of methodology; feasibility of completion.	25
Potential impact on Michigan plant agriculture (Required: broad relevance to multiple commodities). Letters of support from stakeholders.	15
Potential for external competitive funding	15
Mechanism to deliver information to Michigan plant agriculture industries.	10
Team composition and investigator qualifications aligned with project objectives.	10
Total	100

GENERAL FORMATTING GUIDELINES

Proposals must include the cover page, must be single-spaced with indented paragraphs, double-spaced between sections, in 12-point type with 1-inch margins and no more than 8 pages long. The page limit will be enforced.

PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

I. COVER PAGE (TEMPLATE ATTACHED)

Sections II – VII should be no more than 8 pages total.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

III. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

IV. SPECIFIC METHODS AND PROCEDURES

V. PROPOSAL IMPACTS

Project must demonstrate potential impacts on Michigan's plant agriculture. The proposal must outline how impact will be measured. Outreach and economic rationale must be included as well.

VI. PROJECT SCOPE

Describe how this project builds on or supports any similar projects submitted to OR funded by other sources.

VII. TIMELINE

A detailed timeline with target dates must be included for year one (initiation year) along with years two and three.

VIII. BUDGET PAGE

Multi-year projects must include budgets for all proposed years. You must provide budget justification.

IX. LITERATURE CITED

Literature that supports goals, objectives and methods of proposal.

X. TEAM QUALIFICATIONS

One-page vita for the PI and each Co-PI outlining his/her qualifications and accomplishments.

XI. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Up to three letters of support may be submitted. Letters of support should not be sent directly to the AgBioResearch office. They must be uploaded in the competitive database as part of your proposal upload. Letters of support must address your project specifically.