



# **New Jersey Agritourism Grant Program (NJATP)**

## ***Request for Proposals (RFP)***

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## I. Introduction

Pursuant to L. 2023, c. 87, the Division of Travel and Tourism within the Department of State (“NJTT”) has established a grant program sourced from an annual appropriation known as the “Agritourism Fund”. As a result, the **New Jersey Agritourism Grant Program (“NJATP”)** was created by NJTT in consultation with the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (“NJDA”) to support New Jersey Agritourism businesses in their efforts to attract, entertain, and educate visitors.

## II. Definitions

**Agricultural Products:** agricultural, horticultural, viticultural, and dairy products, livestock and the products thereof, the products of poultry and bee raising, the edible products of forestry, and any and all products raised or produced on farms and processed or manufactured products thereof.

**Agricultural Business:** Any entity which produces or sources New Jersey agricultural products of \$1,000 or more in value.

**Agritourism:** A form of commercial enterprise that links agricultural production or agricultural processing with tourism to attract visitors onto a farm, ranch, winery, brewery, or other agricultural business for the purpose of entertaining or educating the visitors and generating income for the farm, ranch, winery, brewery, or agricultural business owner.

**Authorized Organization Representative (AOR):** An individual certified to act responsibly on behalf of an applicant or beneficiary, responsible for the receipt and administration of state grant funding and execution of approved grant activities.

**On-Farm Brewery:** A farm or agricultural business which possesses either a plenary, limited, or restricted brewery license to sell malt alcoholic beverages in New Jersey.

**On-Farm Distillery:** A farm or agricultural business which possesses either a craft distillery or plenary distillery license to sell distilled alcoholic beverages in New Jersey.

**Equipment:** Tangible nonexpendable personal property that is charged directly to the award having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

**Farm:** Any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the year.

**Grantee:** An eligible organization that applies for and is awarded a grant through NJATP.

**Ranch:** A farm or area devoted to raising horses, cattle, sheep, or other livestock.

**Supplies:** Tangible expendable personal property that is charged directly to the award having a useful life of less than one year and an acquisition cost of less than \$5,000 per unit.

**On-Farm Winery:** A farm or agricultural business which possesses either a plenary or farm license to sell wine, hard cider and/or mead in New Jersey.

### III. Eligible Applicants

Agricultural entities operating in the State of New Jersey are eligible to apply for NJATP. Eligible entities include:

- Farms
- Ranches
- On-Farm Wineries
- On-Farm Breweries
- On-Farm Distilleries
- Non-Farm Brewery/Distillery/Wineries
- Other Agricultural Businesses that pursue funding to support eligible activities, as outlined in [Section IV. Eligible Activities](#).

The applicant's operation must be physically located in New Jersey. Applicants with physical locations in multiple states must provide adequate documentation that project activities will occur solely in New Jersey.

Priority will be given to New Jersey Agritourism businesses whose agricultural products are either primarily sourced from or produced in the State of New Jersey. More information can be found in [Section VIII, Review Criteria](#).

**Bonding and Insurance:** Applicants are expected to have all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage, including but not limited to general liability, property, and participant injury coverage, in compliance with applicable state and local regulations, at the time of application. Proof of insurance must be provided prior to award and maintained for the duration of the grant period, should the organization receive a grant award.

### IV. Eligible Activities

To be considered for NJATP funding, eligible agricultural businesses must submit projects that align with one or more of the following activity categories:

- Agricultural Education
- Agricultural Entertainment
- Agritourism Event
- Agritourism Marketing Campaign

**Requests for program funds must be primarily related to agritourism activities.** Examples of eligible Agritourism activities include, but are not limited to:

- Pick-Your-Own
  - Christmas Trees, Pumpkins, Strawberries, and other Specialty Crops, as defined by the USDA.
- Corn Mazes/Crop Art
- Hayrides
- Agricultural Museums or Exhibits

- Brewery or Winery Tours/Tastings
- Horseback Riding
- Farm Tours
- Other agricultural activities conducted by an Agritourism business for the education and/or entertainment of participants.

## V. Available Funding

A total of \$5 million dollars (\$5,000,000) is available for funding through the NJATP. Applicants may request up to \$100,000 in grant funding and must submit documentation to substantiate all proposed grant expenses. Examples of supporting documentation include contracts, catalog pricing, e-commerce screenshots, certified quotes, or other documentation which supports the applicant's budget for the activities proposed.

**Match Requirement:** There is **no match requirement** for this grant program. However, it is recommended that applicants provide evidence of matching funds for proposed expenditures that will be partially funded by NJATP grant funding.

**Pre-Award Costs:** Please note that applicants are financially responsible for all project expenses incurred prior to the award, regardless of eligibility. However, any expenses included in your application which were incurred on or after January 1, 2026 ("Pre-Award Costs") may be approved and reimbursed, either partially or in whole, subject to the terms of the grant agreement.

**Project Timeline:** NJATP projects should not exceed twelve (12) calendar months from the proposed start and end dates.

*Earliest Start Date: April 1, 2026*

*Latest End Date: April 1, 2027*

## VI. Ineligible Activities

Project activities not eligible for funding through this program include any funds requested for expenses not directly related to eligible agritourism activities. This includes any requests for grant funding to *exclusively* support the sale of merchandise, food, or agricultural products at retail.

Applicants that do not currently offer on-farm agritourism activities, or whose projects do not propose the integration or adoption of agritourism offerings into their business through this grant program, are ineligible for NJATP funding.

**The following costs and activities are presumptively ineligible for funding:**

- General operating costs, including, but not limited to:
  - General-purpose equipment that is not essential to the execution of the grant project, such as general use motor vehicles, office furniture, office air

- conditioners, printers, and copiers or lease agreements to own (i.e., lease-to-own or rent-to-own).
  - Salaries, fringe benefits or other payments to staff that are not essential to the project.
  - Insurance, membership fees, or other monthly business expenses.
- Acquiring real property (including land purchases), or any interest therein.
- Claim expenses that have been or will be reimbursed under any Federal, State, or local government funding program.
- Any costs or activities not approved in the signed grant agreement by the grantee and grantor.

#### **Examples of Acceptable Projects:**

- A berry farm requests grant funds to hire staff to support expansion and marketing of U-Pick operation.
- An on-farm gin distillery requests grant funds to purchase event supplies for summer tour & tasting series.
- A teaching farm requests grant funds to develop curriculum for the upcoming growing season.

#### **Examples of Unacceptable Projects:**

- A roadside farm market requests grant funds to buy a new merchandising reach-in refrigerator to display their fresh-pressed cider.
- A garden center requests grant funds to support greenhouse staffing costs and purchase of bulk perennial plugs for their retail operation.

## **VII. Application Process**

To apply for the NJATP, you must complete your application using the template titled **“NJATP\_Application” (word or PDF format)** which can be found below:

New Jersey Department of Agriculture – <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/grants/>

New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism – <https://visitnj.org/new-jersey-tourism-grant-opportunities>

All interested parties should submit completed NJATP applications, and all supplemental application materials to [NJATP@ag.nj.gov](mailto:NJATP@ag.nj.gov) or before **January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026**, at 5:00 PM EST. Applications received after this deadline will be considered on a rolling basis, subject to funding availability, which will be determined following the conclusion of the initial application period.

If you do not receive email confirmation within 24 hours of submission, please reach out to [william.conners@ag.nj.gov](mailto:william.conners@ag.nj.gov).

## VIII. Review Criteria

NJATP awards will be determined through a competitive application and review process conducted by NJDA. Each application will be reviewed by a selected review committee comprised of NJDA staff using the following criteria and weighted scoring matrix.

*Please Note: Application's which receive a score of **1** in sections #1 or #2 are not eligible for NJATP funding.*

### **Section 1. Project Narrative and Expected Performance Measures – Measuring Project Potential to Attract Visitors and Generate Revenue (4 points possible)**

This category weighs the project's fit with the goals and guidelines set forth by the program. It focuses on proposed agritourism activities, such as the potential to draw visitors and paying customers through activities like farm tours, ranch events, winery tastings, brewery visits, or educational programs on agricultural production and processing.

- **Score 1 (Poor):** The project fails to meet basic project criteria, with no clear outline of eligible agritourism activities. The project gives minimal evidence that the proposed activities will appeal to visitors or generate additional revenues and fails to link grant activities to expected performance measures such as increased sales, consumer traffic, or agricultural production.
- **Score 2 (Adequate):** The project meets basic project criteria by outlining eligible agritourism activities like farm tours or winery tastings. Some details are provided about the operation, the proposed activities, the need for the project, and expected performance measures related to the project. The project may attract visitors and generate revenue, but the potential impact of the project is uncertain.
- **Score 3 (Above Average):** The project exceeds the basic requirements set by the program. Applicant includes specific details regarding eligible agritourism activities. The project is likely to attract visitors and generate revenue for the operation.
- **Score 4 (Excellent):** The project shows great potential for visitor growth and increased revenues. The presentation may seem equivalent to an Above-Average “3,” but it deserves a “4” because it includes a “wow factor” that leads the review panel to conclude that it has greater overall potential than other plans.

### **Section 2. Budget Summary and Narrative Justification – Measuring Anticipated Effectiveness and Feasibility (3 points possible)**

This category weighs and scores the feasibility and effectiveness of the project plan. Consider the applicant's ability to carry out their plans, and whether the applicant has provided an itemized budget of their anticipated expenses relevant to the execution of activities such as farm tours, ranch events, winery/brewery/distillery tastings and visits, or educational programs.

- **Score 1 (Poor):** The project shows low feasibility. Timelines, existing resources, or budget gives limited confidence in the outcome of the project. Necessary details are missing or incomplete.
- **Score 2 (Adequate):** The project is reasonably expected to be implemented based on the applicant's experience. It includes a budget outline with expenditures linked to general agritourism activities. It meets the requirements for funding set by the program, but would benefit from further detail, particularly in the narrative sections of the application.
- **Score 3 (Above Average-Excellent):** The project demonstrates strong effectiveness and feasibility. Project includes itemized spending towards activities which will benefit both the operation and the New Jersey agritourism industry, with clear timelines provided for those expenses. The project provides justification for expenses, with a connection to the project narrative and proposed work plan. The itemized budget, project narrative, and proposed work plan forecast continued economic viability for the project activities to continue in subsequent years after they have utilized all grant funding.

### 3. New Jersey Products – *Bonus Points* (1 Additional Point Possible)

- **Score 0:** Project does not feature agricultural products sourced from or produced in the State of New Jersey.
- **Score 1:** Project primarily promotes agricultural products sourced from or produced in the State of New Jersey.

## IX. Award Administration

- NJATP awards will be granted to eligible applicants who submit projects requesting up to \$100,000 in grant funding on a competitive basis for those who apply by **January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026**. Applicants will be awarded on a rolling basis thereafter, subject to the availability of funding.
- Grant administration, including application submission, screening, scoring and delivery of final funding decisions will be conducted by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture (NJDA).
- Award notifications will be delivered to applicants via their preferred contact method at the earliest opportunity.
- Funding will be administered to grantees through **quarterly reimbursement** for approved budget expenses. Grantees will be instructed on the reporting requirements of this grant program – performance and financial – at the signing of the grant agreement.