

**New York State Grown & Certified Research and Development Grant Program (GCRD)
Request for Applications (RFA), 2026**

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS DOCUMENT

OVERVIEW

The NYS Grown & Certified Research and Development Grant (GCRD) is specifically for entities that are already enrolled in the New York State Grown & Certified program. This grant is to help NYS Grown & Certified farmers, food processors and distributors pay for Research & Development services required to help launch new NYS Grown & Certified food products, or increase the production, distribution, or safety of existing NYS Grown & Certified food products.

The complete Request for Application (RFA) package for NYS G&C Research and Development Grant includes three documents as described below. Applicants are encouraged to read the Technical Requirements closely before developing their application.

- **Technical Requirements:** Outlines the specifics of the NYS G&C Research and Development RFA.
- **Stages of Food Product Development:** Applicants can use this to guide to determine where they are in their R&D and Product Development journey.
- **Application:** Online application form, which is required to be submitted.

All files are available at [NYS Grown and Certified Research & Development Grant Program webpage](#).

The NYS G&C Research and Development grant is a non-competitive grant. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. If the application meets all the eligibility requirements, then an award will be offered.

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to all service providers you plan to use for this project **before** filling out the application so that they can provide accurate cost estimates and create realistic and attainable goals that can be achieved within a maximum timeframe of 18 months.

All applicants are encouraged to read this RFA closely to consider how best to use this opportunity to create a competitive proposal that will assist their business in profitably bringing New York State Grown & Certified (NYS G&C) products to market.

All applications must be submitted online through NYFVI’s grant interface platform, [registration is required](#). New users will be required to create an account.

Key Dates

Activity	Date Completed
RFA open until funds depleted	June 26, 2026
Formal Question and Answer period <i>Answers will be posted online.</i>	Starting June 26, 2026
Two identical MS Teams informational Webinars. Webinar 1 Webinar 2	Tuesday, June 23, 2026 (12-1pm) Thursday, July 2, 2026 (5-6pm)

Applicant notification, no later than	6 weeks after submission
Contracts will be executed on an ongoing basis. All projects contracted, no later than	90 days after award notification
Projects completed	18 months after contract execution date.

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Questions and Answers

Questions about this RFA should be submitted in writing via email to NYSGCgrants@nyfvi.org. Answers will be posted weekly with the application and at www.nyfvi.org. Any clarifications resulting from questions asked may be incorporated into the online application.

If a potential applicant has a question specific to participation in the NYS G&C program, they should review the program website <https://certified.ny.gov/get-certified>, or email nysgrownandcertified@agriculture.ny.gov.

Informational Webinars

Two identical 60-minute informational webinars will be held. These webinars will give an overview of the grant including eligibility, the application process and technical requirements. There will be a questions and answer session at the end of each webinar and. (LINKS BELOW)

NYS G&C Certification Category	Webinar Date
Webinar 1	12:00 pm June 23, 2026
Webinar 2	5:00pm pm July 2, 2026

The webinars will be recorded and made available at www.nyfvi.org. Based on demand, additional webinars may be scheduled at later dates. Interested applicants are encouraged to regularly visit the New York Farm Viability (NYFVI) website for updates.

General NYS G&C Program Information

Program Background

Launched in 2016, the NYS G&C program assures consumers that the food they are buying is local and produced to a higher standard by requiring participating producers to adopt food safety standards and enroll in an environmental management program. Since the program began, NYS G&C has grown and evolved to cover 20 agricultural commodities and processing industries. This voluntary program is a cooperative effort among producers, processors, wholesalers, retailers, restaurants, and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to meet consumer demand for high-quality food and agricultural products. More information about NYS G&C is available on the program [website](#).

The NYS G&C Research and Development Grant Program (NYS GCRD) is funded by New York State (NYS) and administered by the New York Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI) in partnership with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM). The NYS GCRD follows the NYS G&C Infrastructure and Technology Grant Program that provided funding for innovative “capital projects.”

The NYS GCRD grant program is open to businesses that are currently enrolled in the NYS G&C program.

Research and Development Grants Funding Available

Statewide Funding Available	\$ 1,360,000
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Awards, Funding Tracks and Project Duration

Minimum grant award*	Maximum grant award*	Project Duration
\$10,000	\$50,000	18 months from contract execution

*Grant amounts do not include matching funds

Number of Applications

Applicants may submit one application at a time. Please note - a single project may contain multiple funded activities for up to \$50,000 in total funding. If an application is selected for funding, and the Grantee finishes their contracted project, they may submit another application for another R&D. However, no more than \$100,000 will be awarded to one business per round of this grant program.

Matching Funds Requirement

The applicant is required to provide and document the use of a 10% financial match. A match can be provided as cash, loans, or other non-New York State funds. In-kind costs are not permissible. The match is not included in the minimum and maximum grant size in the table above.

The 10% match should be calculated on the total funds that would be received. For example, an applicant who requests \$50,000 would be required to budget and document costs for a project that equals \$55,000. For this example, the grant recipient's match would equal \$5,000.

Once the applicant knows their total project cost, they will be required to calculate their required 10% Match. Grant awards will not exceed \$50,000. Any costs above the grant award and 10% match are the responsibility of the Grantee. This information is required in the application.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND ELIGIBILITY

Program Scope

This program seeks to strengthen the businesses that produce, process, or distribute NYS G&C food or beverage products by providing critical funding for technical services that help applicants move their product ideas forward in a thoughtful and structured way.

While stages of product development often follow a general sequence, they are not strictly linear – some may overlap or repeat depending on the specific product or business model. Not all R&D projects end with a successful product launch. That is why the GCRD application is based on project stages and specific deliverables.

Applicants must identify where they currently are in their product development journey and define what support they need to move to the next stage. To assist with this process, NYFVI has provided the following [Guide to Product Development](#) outlining:

- The core question and sub-questions each stage is designed to answer,
- Potential deliverables for each stage, and
- Examples of technical services eligible for funding to help answer those questions and achieve those deliverables.

This approach is intended to help applicants clearly define their needs and build realistic and attainable goals and a focused, strategic use of grant resources.

All projects must be based in NYS, have a direct and timely benefit to NYS Grown & Certified participants and significance to the region.

GCRD grant recipients have 18 months to complete their project.

Statewide Priority

Projects must focus on new product development or increased production, distribution or food safety of existing NYS Grown & Certified food products.

The GCRD program is ultimately about bringing NYS G&C products to market, while strengthening the overall resilience and financial sustainability of New York State's farms and food businesses. As such, all applicants should be

able to describe the impact of their proposed project to their individual enterprise as well as any other NYS G&C businesses that are part of their procurement process and/or will be impacted by the proposed project.

Eligibility

The food system is complex, and this program seeks to support a wide range of products and businesses. Applicants should closely review the information below to determine:

- If they are NY farmers, food processors or distributors currently enrolled and in good standing in the NYS G&C program; and
- The project is aligned with the program criteria.

Note: To be considered a NYS G&C product, it must contain at least 51% NYS G&C ingredients.

Neither the applicant nor any of their businesses may have any outstanding Local, State or Federal tax liens.

For Applicants With No Prior Experience Creating Processed Food or Beverage Items:

If this is the applicant's first time creating a processed or packaged food or beverage item, they are required to have a feasibility consultation, at the applicant's expense, with the [Cornell Food Venture Center](#), the [Institute for Rural Vitality](#), or other food safety or processing centers ensure the product is viable to create and scale safely. This initial feasibility consultation is not covered by the grant, but the expense can be applied towards the required 10% match if the food or beverage item is deemed feasible in the consultation. These applicants will submit their full application, but must provide proof that they have had a consultation before the grant project can be approved.

NYS G&C Program Eligibility and Application Structure

Eligibility for this grant program is aligned with the NYS G&C program and its application structure. Dairy farms are eligible to apply if their processor or co-operative is NYS G&C.

Other eligible entities may include distributors and retailers whose business encompasses distribution activities, agricultural co-operatives and non-profits. Specific guidance for these entities can be found at the end of this section.

Applicants must be currently be enrolled and in good standing in the NYS G&C program under at least one of the NYS G&C categories.

More information and links to the respective NYS G&C certification applications are included below.

Farmers/Producers

Criteria for eligible commodities can be found on the NYS G&C program website.

Dairy Farms: There is not a specific NYS G&C certification for a dairy farm. If a farm sells to a [NYS G&C processor or cooperative](#) and participates in AEM, the National Dairy Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) program or are a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation, it is eligible to apply for the grant. Dairy farms may also become certified and apply to NYS G&C as beef producers.

For farmers and producers, certification is available for specific product categories or for the entire operation.

NYS G&C applications are available for:

Fruits and Vegetables

All fresh market fruit and vegetable products grown in New York State are eligible to be NYS G&C by the farm business.

1. Farms growing outdoors and using high tunnels will use the Fruits and Vegetables application.

2. Growers that use Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) to grow their edible product will use the Fruits and Vegetables application.
3. Growers that sell their products to processors should review the raw ingredient suppliers' section below.

Protein

- [Beef](#)
- [Eggs](#)
- [Poultry](#)
- [Pork](#)
- [Seafood](#)
- [Sheep and Goat](#)

Raw Ingredient Farms/Producers_ should apply as a processed product ingredient producer

1. Craft beverage ingredients_ including cider apples, wine grapes, hops, malting barley and distillers' grains
2. Other raw ingredients for processed food products, such as apples, juice grapes, small grains and legumes.

Sweeteners

- [Honey](#)
- [Maple syrup](#)

Processors

All products that combines multiple ingredients, and is marketed as NYS G&C, must use predominantly New York State Grown & Certified ingredients (i.e., at least 51%).

Processors may apply to certify specific products using the following applications:

Craft Beverages (alcohol) Application

- Beer
- Hard Cider
- Spirits
- Wine
- Mead (application will be available on the NYS G&C website by 12/31/2024)

Dairy Products Processor Application

Processed Food/Beverage Application (This includes other processed food and beverage products that are eligible under the NYS G&C program).

Other Types of Applicants

NYS G&C distributors, strategic retail/wholesale partners, not-for profit corporations and other NYS G&C non-food product producers that meet the criteria below are eligible to apply for this grant program. These entities must be working with **current** NYS G&C participants, and the funds must specifically be for the research and development of new or existing NYS G&C food and beverage products.

Applicants must answer the questions in the online application form using the NYS G&C category that corresponds with the funding request. For example, a co-operative that is processing dairy products or creating a value added product would consider its organization as a processor. Similarly, a farmer/producer that is required

to have a processing license (i.e. maple or honey with added ingredients) would apply as a food/beverage processor if they are seeking funds for processing activity.

Agricultural Cooperatives*

Agricultural Cooperatives of edible products that have at least 51% of membership residing in New York State and participating in the NYS G&C program, are eligible to apply for these grants. *It is anticipated that all Agricultural Cooperatives would be eligible to apply for NYS G&C using one of the program's certification applications outlined above.*

Distributors*

Distributors whose product lineup consists of a minimum of 51% NYS Grown & Certified products will be eligible for these grants. Such distributors will be required to sign a NYS G&C Strategic Retail Partnership agreement. Distributor applicants may be an agricultural cooperative.

New York Not-for-Profit Corporations*

New York not-for-profit corporations partnering with one or more NYS G&C producers, food processing establishments, distributors or agricultural cooperatives (as defined above) are eligible to apply for this grant. A not-for-profit that is seeking grant funds to support their efforts to directly produce and/or market product must be able to meet the NYS G&C certification criteria and should apply in the appropriate category.

Retail Outlets

Retail outlets that are providing distribution services for ten or more NYS G&C producers are eligible to apply. The applicant must be a NYS G&C Strategic Retail/Wholesale Partner*.

*Further definitions of these terms can be found in the Appendix at the end of this application.

NYS G&C non-food product producers (such as NYS G&C animal fiber or cut flower producers) who are considering creating a NYS G&C food or beverage product are eligible to apply.

Eligibility Disqualifier: If an applicant or any of their businesses has any outstanding Local, State or Federal tax liens they are not eligible to receive funds through this grant program.

Use of Funds and Eligible Costs

Use of Funds-- Threshold Criteria

The proposed use of funds must directly support the production, processing or distribution of an edible food or beverage product that is currently certified or will become NYS G&C.

Eligible Costs

Projects may include the following types of costs in their budget.

- Consulting Services
- Technical service providers
- Market research
- Product Development
- Pilot runs
- Food lab testing services
- Food safety advisors
- Farm-to-Institution specialists
- Technical assistance and training for GAP, USDA and HACCP certifications
- Innovative and new pre-harvest or harvest-related services to increase yields and/or food safety
- Education specific to food product development or food safety
- Applicant/Employee labor for training related to implementation of the project

- Other services directly associated with the project’s purpose.

Non-Eligible Costs

- Costs of buying land, or building, buying, repairing or rehabilitating a building *
- Costs to purchase, rent or install fixed equipment, including processing equipment*
- Routine costs associated with day-to-day operations
- Expenses not directly related to the project
- Costs of any food ingredient
- Preparation costs of grant application
- Funding political or lobbying activities
- Costs of any goods or services provided by a person or entity who has a conflict of interest
- Any project costs incurred prior to receiving a grant award and signing a grant agreement
- Employee labor not related to food safety training

Note: While the cost of equipment rentals and physical items, such as ingredients and packaging/labeling associated with a pilot run are not eligible for reimbursement by the grant, they are eligible for inclusion in the 10% matching funds.

*Applicants looking for funding for capital purchases should explore the NYS Grown & Certified Infrastructure and Technology Grant Program.

Example 1: This grant would pay for the marketing and/or distribution strategy for a new or existing NYS G&C food or beverage product, but not the cost to advertise or build-out an e-commerce platform to promote and sell the product.

Example 2: This grant would pay for the cost of using a co-packer for a pilot run of a potential new NYS G&C food or beverage product, but not the cost of the ingredients.

Example 3: This grant would cover the cost to design packaging for a new or existing NYS G&C food or beverage product, but it will not pay for the packaging.

Example 4: This grant would cover the costs of a consultant to create a distribution strategy for new or existing NYS G&C food or beverage products, but not the cost of distribution.

Additional guidance about costs is provided in the Project Budget section of the application.

Project Selection

Application Review Process

The NYS G&C Research and Development grant is a non-competitive grant. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis. If the application meets all the technical requirements, then an award will be offered.

NYFVI staff will conduct a technical review of all applications to ensure that all grant requirements are met. NYFVI reserves the right to contact an applicant to clarify any information.

Technical Requirements

Answer Must Be ‘Yes’ To The Following Criteria
Did the applicant complete the application and provide all requested information, including attestations?
Applicant or their business does NOT have any outstanding Local, State or Federal tax liens.
Is the applicant currently enrolled and in good standing with the NYS Grown & Certified program in at least one NYS Grown & Certified category

Does the proposed project clearly support of the production, processing or distribution of existing or potential new NYS Grown & Certified products?
For applicants creating a new product with <u>No</u> prior experience creating processed food or beverage items – Have they had a feasibility consultation regarding their new product?
Were the services selected for funding clearly associated with the project?
Did the applicant identify at least one service provider for their project?
Are the proposed costs eligible according to the program guidelines?
Did the applicant identify at least one clearly achievable milestone/deliverable for this project?
Does the number of months in the workplan meet program requirements? (No more than 18 months)
Was the funding award size requested (\$10,000 - \$50,000) and required 10% match correct and eligible?

This RFA is ‘first come, first served’ and a queue is formed based on the date of application submission. Any applicant that has a tax lien, or is not currently enrolled and in good standing with NYS G&C, will be automatically denied.

If a proposal does not comply with any one of the technical requirements listed above, it will be moved to a ‘Hold’ status and NYFVI staff will contact the applicant to let them know why it was not accepted. If that applicant does not make the necessary changes to their application within two weeks, then it will be moved from ‘Hold’ to ‘Denied’ and they will lose their place in the queue. These applicants are welcome to re-apply.

Contract and Reimbursement Terms: What to Know Before Applying

A grant award is a contractual agreement. As applicants think about developing a proposal, it is important to understand that the proposal defines the contractual parameters of the project, its timeframe, and costs. Review the points below to help ensure that your proposal and the potential project can be successfully implemented if selected for funding.

- This is a reimbursement-based award. No costs will be reimbursed until a project is successfully completed and all required documentation has been received and approved. Grant recipients must be able to self-finance, or secure financing to implement their project.
- No funds will be disbursed unless the applicant has maintained enrollment in NYS G&C in a related category that corresponds with the purpose of their grant project.
- The proposal is part of the contract and all expenses for reimbursement must be clearly aligned with and specified in the application.
- No expenses that pre-date the execution date of the contract can be reimbursed.
- If a project is completed under budget, the grant award and its match will be decreased proportionally, the match will always be 10% of the total of documented costs submitted for reimbursement.
- If a project exceeds the proposed budget, the grant award will not increase.
- All projects must be able to be executed within the established timeframe.
- Grants may be taxable income, consult with your tax professional. A W-9 will be collected and a 1099 will be issued for any funds disbursed.
- In certain instances, grants may be subject to repayment. See Potential Grant Recapture Scenarios below.
- A credit history may be collected as part of the contracting process.
- NYFVI reserves the right to offer a lower dollar amount to any applicant.

Contracting Requirements

As a project is awarded, each grantee will be required to participate in an individual virtual meeting. At that meeting, the contract process, reporting and reimbursement requirements will be reviewed and the deadlines in the contract will be confirmed. Contracts will be executed on an ongoing basis. Every effort will be made to move quickly once a grantee submits the required documents.

All grantees must complete a W-9 form.

Any project that requires financing to implement their project may request to assign their grant payment to a third party.

Grantee Reporting Requirements

All reporting will be done electronically through the NYFVI online platform (where the application is submitted). The reporting requirements will vary by grant size and are detailed below. Progress reports will be structured as a form with a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended sections. If a project fails to achieve a target date established in their workplan, a virtual meeting will be scheduled. Each report will ask the grantee to confirm the final completion date.

Project Duration	Reporting Requirements/Reimbursement Schedule
Projects must be completed within 18 months from execution of contract	Quarterly reports and one final report at completion One reimbursement request, plus backup documentation, submitted with final report.

Final Reports: All final reports will require a narrative summary of the project, along with documentation (including downloads and/or images) proving completion of the project. All reporting and the documented reimbursement request must be complete and approved before any payments are made.

A final report and the reimbursement request can be submitted prior to the final deadline if the purpose of the grant funds has been achieved.

NYFVI staff will visit select projects and reserves the right to visit and photograph any project with or without advance notice.

Reimbursement Requirements

The reimbursement request must accompany the final report and include itemized documentation for all costs to be reimbursed. Invoices or receipts must include the company name and location and a date and show a zero balance. If the invoice does not show a zero balance, a cancelled check or other proof of payment must be provided. No funds will be reimbursed unless the awardee is enrolled and in good standing with the NYS G&C program.

Potential Grant Recapture Scenarios

Grant recapture refers to circumstances in which a grantee could be required to reimburse NYFVI for the funds they have received. NYFVI may require repayment of any assistance received under this program in the following events:

- If an application, including any information provided therewith or thereafter, contains any material misrepresentations or is incomplete.
- If the assistance was awarded or disbursed in error and the applicant is not entitled to assistance under these guidelines.
- If the applicant received payment and did not complete the project as approved.
- If supporting documentation is not true and complete; and,

- If the applicant ceases to participate in the NYS Grown & Certified program, leaves the state, or otherwise ceases operation within three years of final disbursement of funds.

The recapture amount is based on the time that has lapsed between when the grant funds were disbursed and when any of the above circumstances occurred. The recapture amount shall be calculated at:

- 100% of the disbursed amount if the recapture circumstance occurred in the calendar year that the disbursement was made, or in the first full calendar year after the disbursement was made;
- 50% of the disbursed amount if the recapture circumstance occurred in the second full calendar year after the disbursement was made;
- 25% of the disbursed amount if the recapture circumstance occurred in the third full calendar year after the disbursement was made.

In the event of any fraudulent misrepresentations by the applicant, in addition to the recapture of assistance, NYFVI may pursue other legal remedies and refer the matter to the appropriate governmental authorities for investigation and prosecution.

Other Considerations

NYFVI reserves the right to:

- Modify proposal submission requirements as deemed necessary with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants.
- Reject any or all proposals received in response to this RFA.
- Withdraw the RFA at any time, at NYFVI's and/or New York State Department of Agriculture and Market's discretion.
- Make an award under the requested amount in whole or part.
- Disqualify any applicant whose conduct and/or proposal fails to conform to the requirements of the RFA.
- Seek clarifications and revisions of proposals.
- Prior to the deadline for proposals, amend the RFA specifications to correct errors or oversights, or to supply additional information, as it becomes available and with appropriate written notice to all potential applicants by posting amendments on the organization's website.
- Prior to the deadline for proposals, direct applicants to submit proposal modifications addressing subsequent RFA amendments.
- Change any of the scheduled dates.
- Eliminate any mandatory, non-material specifications with which all applicants cannot comply.
- Waive any requirements that are not material.
- Require clarification at any time during the grant process and/or require correction of arithmetic or other apparent errors for the purpose of assuring a full and complete understanding of an applicant's proposal and/or to determine an applicant's compliance with the requirements of the RFA.
- Waive or modify minor irregularities in proposals received after prior notification to the applicant.
- Award more than one funding agreement to the same successful applicant resulting from this RFA.
- Negotiate with successful applicants any matter within the scope of the RFA in the best interests of the program.
- Make all final decisions with respect to the amount of funding and the timing of payments to be provided to an applicant.

HOW TO APPLY

Application Format

A pdf of the online application is available on this [webpage](#). This grant program is being administered entirely online. The first section of the online application offers technical tips for using the online platform.

The link to the interactive application form on the online platform is available [here](#). User registration is required.

This application form will collect information about the business, the potential impact of the grant funds to its operations, and its ability to bring NYS G&C product to market. The goal of the online application is to provide a consistent format to allow proposals to be evaluated in a uniform and objective manner.

Application Content

The online application includes the following sections. Some sections may have more than one part to make the application easier to navigate.

1. Business Profile and Practices (specific to type of applicant business)
2. Overall Project, Project Description, and Project Fit
3. Stages of Product Development
4. Service Requested and Deliverables
5. Project Budget
6. Applicant Information
7. Attestations

RESOURCES

Developing a competitive grant proposal may feel like an overwhelming task. There are a wide array of organizations and resources that may be able to support an applicant's efforts. NYFVI has created factsheets, available at the [NYFVI website](#) to help applicants identify the following resources:

- Organizations that may be available to help develop applications.
- Potential lenders to determine if the business is a good candidate for an implementation loan.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITION OF TERMS

Agricultural Cooperative

An “agricultural cooperative” means a cooperative, either stock or non-stock, operated for the mutual benefit of the members in which (1) no member is allowed more than one vote because of the amount of stock or membership capital he or she may own therein, and (2) the cooperative does not pay dividends on stock or membership capital in excess of twelve per centum per annum.

Distributor

A distributor is defined as a food or beverage distributor that provides direct services for agricultural producers, of edible products, such as through consolidation, storing, and delivering products, or who otherwise serves as an intermediary between producers and wholesale or retail buyers, such as restaurants, schools, grocery stores, etc.

Strategic Retail Partner

A strategic Retail Partner is defined as a designated wholesale or retail business that collaborates with New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to stock, promote, and increase the visibility of New York State Grown and Certified food products.

Not for Profit Corporation

Not-for-profit corporations are generally defined in New York Consolidated Laws, Not-For Profit Corporation Law – NPC § 102. A “Corporation” or “domestic corporation” means a corporation (1) formed under this chapter, or existing on its effective date and theretofore formed under any other general statute or by any special act of this state, exclusively for a purpose or purposes, not for pecuniary profit or financial gain, for which a corporation may be formed under this chapter, and (2) no part of the assets, income or profit of which is distributable to, or ensures to the benefit of, its members, directors or officers except to the extent permitted under this statute.

Producers and Farmers

This program uses the term producer, farmers and farms to reference NYS businesses that are growing products or ingredients for food or beverages.

Processor

This program uses the term processor to reference entities that are using agricultural ingredients to create NYS Grown & Certified eligible food or beverages. This is often referred to as a value-added process.