



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
No. 291 – July 15, 2020

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Application Now Live for Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant Program

LANSING, MICH. The application process is now open for \$15 million in grants for Michigan farms and agricultural processors to mitigate risks of the COVID-19 virus across the state's food production industry, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) announced today. The application, along with more information and eligibility criteria, can be found at michiganbusiness.org/agsafety.

"The COVID-19 virus has especially impacted Michigan's food and agriculture sector," said Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. "This investment will provide critical resources to ensure the safety of Michigan's food production industry and its workforce. "We can further our economic recovery in Michigan by putting federal dollars through the CARES Act to work for the people and business across our state through efforts like these to help with costs incurred by farms and food processors in the fight against COVID-19."

Approved by the Michigan Strategic Fund on July 7, the [Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant Program](http://michiganbusiness.org/agsafety) will allocate \$15 million of federal CARES Act funding to provide much-needed funding to Michigan's agricultural processors and farms for their COVID-19 mitigation efforts in support of this critical industry in the state.

The Michigan Agricultural Safety Grants are divided between agricultural processors and farms:

- \$10 million in grants will be provided to processors statewide, with a minimum grant of \$10,000 and a maximum grant of \$200,000.
- \$5 million in grants will be available to farms statewide, with a minimum grant of \$10,000 and a maximum grant of \$50,000.

Applicants must apply as either a processor or a farm – but not both – and funds will provide grants of up to \$1,000 per employee to fund COVID-19 mitigation costs, including but not limited to testing costs, personal protection equipment, facility needs, increased sanitation costs, employee training, and upgraded safety procedures for farm-provided housing.

"The next few months are absolutely critical for Michigan's farming and food processing industries, so these resources couldn't come at a better time," said MDARD Director Gary McDowell. "To help ensure the health and safety of essential workers in our food supply chain, they will need testing, PPE, and housing or facility updates. We are very thankful for the work of our partners at MEDC and GreenStone for getting this process up and running so quickly."

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The program will cover costs incurred from June 1, 2020 through September 15, 2020 and eligible applicants will be able to apply for funding starting today, July 15. Grants will be awarded on a first come, first served basis until all funding has been awarded.

To qualify for grant support, applicants must be a farm or agricultural processor located in Michigan and meet the following requirements:

- A minimum of 10 employees in Michigan, with supporting documentation.
- Provide proof of good standing with the state of Michigan, as applicable (Certificate of Good Standing).
- Attest that the business is current on all state, local and real estate taxes, or is otherwise contesting them in good faith.
- Have completed registration in the State of Michigan Integrated Governmental Management Applications (SIGMA) Vendor Self-Service website prior to applying for grant funding.

Applications will be processed by East Lansing-based GreenStone Farm Credit Services, one of America's largest rural lenders, including 31 branches in Michigan. GreenStone has a 100-year track record providing financial services to the agricultural industry – including short, intermediate, and long-term loans; equipment and building leases; life insurance; crop insurance; accounting; and tax services.

GreenStone will host the application portal; complete an initial screening of all applications and supporting documentation; and recommend applications to the MEDC for final approval and disbursements of the grants awarded. GreenStone will also provide a report to the MEDC of all applications that were denied in the review process. The authorizing legislation for the program also requires reporting on October 15, 2020, on the Agricultural Safety Grant Program's results to the Legislature and State Budget Office. That report will also be available on michiganbusiness.org/agsafety.

“As a cooperative, we've appreciated the collaboration with MEDC and MDARD to help facilitate a program to support those who feed and fuel us all,” said Dave Armstrong, president and CEO of GreenStone Farm Credit Services. “Thanks to the technology we use to serve our members every day, GreenStone is uniquely positioned to accept the applications and supporting documentation in a simple and secure online platform to make the process as streamlined as possible for farmers and processors. We know the challenges they are overcoming; this grant program is an important step to support them.”

“Working in partnership with MDARD and GreenStone, we will get this critical support into the hands of our farms and agricultural processors quickly and effectively to keep our workers and our food supply safe,” said Mark A. Burton, CEO of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. “We are continuing to leverage every resource available – whether federal, state or local – to ensure our small businesses across Michigan are able to receive the support they need to address critical safety concerns around COVID-19 and be in a position to help drive economic recovery moving forward.”

Other, related resources available to support Michigan employers in obtaining needed Personal Protection Equipment includes MEDC's [Pure Michigan Business Connect COVID-19 Procurement Platform](#) – a procurement program to assist businesses in accessing non-medical grade PPE to keep their employees and customers safe as they begin resuming in-person operations.

According to MDARD, food and agriculture contributes \$104.7 billion annually to Michigan's economy, and represents 805,000 jobs statewide. Additionally, Michigan exports approximately \$1.8 billion of food and agriculture products each year.

“With new grants now available to support ongoing safety efforts in Michigan agriculture, we encourage businesses to apply for funding as soon as possible,” said Chuck Lippstreu, president of the Michigan Agri-Business Association. “This \$15 million grant program is good news for Michigan farmers and food processors, bolstering their efforts to safeguard employee health and well-being, and we appreciate leaders in Lansing for working together to provide agriculture-specific safety grant funds.”

The \$100 million [Michigan Small Business Restart Program](#) application process is also live as of today and can be found at [michiganbusiness.org/restart](#). The program will provide grants to small businesses around the state that are reopening and have experienced a loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. The funding will be distributed across 15 local or nonprofit economic development organizations (EDOs) covering all 83 counties in the state, providing a base amount of \$3.5 million per EDO for grants up to \$20,000 each to support certain small businesses that have realized a significant financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 virus. Farms and food processors with fewer than 10 employees and that meet all other eligibility requirements would be able to apply for a grant through the Michigan Small Business Restart Program.

With the approval of these two programs by the MSF Board, the MEDC has launched 17 COVID-19 relief and recovery programs supporting more than 3,400 businesses in the state and helping to retain more than 14,700 jobs across all 83 counties. To learn more about MEDC's COVID-19 response programs and the impact they are having on economic recovery efforts, visit [michiganbusiness.org/covid19response](#). Other resources for economic reopening efforts as well as businesses across Michigan struggling with economic losses as a result of the COVID-19 virus can be found online at [michiganbusiness.org/covid19](#).

The MEDC has also developed a FAQ for Michigan businesses and communities at [michiganbusiness.org/covid19-faq](#).

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](#) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](#).

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About Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is the state's marketing arm and lead advocate for business development, job awareness and community development with the focus on growing Michigan's economy. For more information on the MEDC and our initiatives, visit [www.MichiganBusiness.org](#). For Pure Michigan® tourism information, your trip begins at [www.michigan.org](#). Join the conversation on: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#).

About GreenStone Farm Credit Services

Headquartered in East Lansing, GreenStone Farm Credit Services is Michigan and northeast Wisconsin's largest agricultural lender and one of the country's largest associations in the Farm Credit System. A member-owned cooperative, GreenStone owns and manages \$10 billion in assets and serves over 25,000 members with 36 branch locations. More information on GreenStone is available at [www.greenstonefcs.com](#).

GreenStone provides financial services to the agricultural industry - including short, intermediate and long-term loans, equipment and building leases, life insurance, crop insurance, accounting and tax services. GreenStone also specializes in residential and country home loans, and provides lending products for the purchase, improvement, construction or refinance of residences along with financing future home sites and recreational land.