

MDAR Climate Smart Agriculture Program (CSAP) Grant Application FAQ

Q: When does the grant application come out, and when is it due?

A: There are no firm dates for either, but the grant usually opens between February and May, and is due 1-2 months after it opens.

Q: Can the Massachusetts Farm Energy Program (MFEP) help with the application?

A: MFEP, since we are funded by MDAR, cannot review completed applications, draft them for applicants, or walk through them with applicants. We can answer specific questions, provide the greenhouse gas calculator, and provide general guidance (like this FAQ!).

Q: I need to calculate the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for my project.

A: This will either be in your audit, or you can use MFEP's GHG spreadsheet (available upon request). Be sure to attach the spreadsheet with your grant submission, to show your work.

Q: I am doing solar (or some other renewable project), but the grant is asking for "agricultural energy use associated with the proposed project".

A: That section is for energy efficiency projects only, you can skip it and go to the renewable energy section.

Q: I am doing an efficiency project, but the grant is asking for "annual renewable energy generation for the proposed project".

A: That section is for renewable projects only, you can skip it and go to the efficiency section.

Q: How long does a farm have to have been in business to apply?

A: The property must be in active agricultural use and managed **by the applicant** for a minimum of the previous three years to the date of the application.

Q: My farm is really small, is that ok?

A: Yes, there is no size requirement to apply. You do need to be commercially involved in agriculture, not just growing for yourself/your family.

Q: I am growing hemp, can I apply?

A: Yes, although it should be noted that MDAR will review the application to make sure that you "demonstrate compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements" and are in good standing with MDAR's Hemp Program. Marijuana growers are not eligible for this grant.

Q: I am a horse stable, but we're not breeding horses, can I apply?

A: Yes. The keeping of horses as a commercial enterprise is considered agriculture and is eligible.

Q: My farm has an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR). Can we still do energy projects and/or apply to CSAP for funding?

A: Yes, within certain parameters. You must be in compliance with all terms of your APR prior to submitting the application, and have documentation that the project has been approved by your APR rep. Additionally, any renewable energy project built on APR land must be sized to serve no more than 200% of the annual operational load of the structures on the land protected by the APR.

Q: Does new construction qualify for CSAP?

A: Occasionally, under very specific circumstances, but usually no. Consider other MDAR grants more suited to new structures, such as Farm Viability.

Q: Does my project qualify for this grant?

A: If it saves energy (any kind, including propane, oil, wood, etc.) or if it's a renewable project, probably. A list of example projects will be listed in the grant, and you can always ask MFEP if you're not sure.

Q: My business is a non-profit. Do we qualify?

A: Yes, non-profit farms may apply for CSAP, as long as they are commercially involved in agriculture.

Q: I am installing solar, and I have a shared residential and commercial meter. Does that disqualify my project?

A: No, it is not necessarily disqualified. However, MDAR will want a quantification of how much electric use is going to the residence vs. the business. You will likely need to document this with a load calculation, which can be done as part of an energy audit. You may also install a second meter to separate the usages.

Q: I am having trouble typing in the application PDF, and/or there isn't enough space there to say what I want to say.

A: You are welcome to put your answers in a Word doc or similar, and include that with your application submission. Be sure to clearly label which questions you're answering, and put a note in the application itself saying 'see attached' so the reviewers don't think it's been left blank.

Q: When will I hear back after submitting?

A: There is no firm deadline, but applicants usually receive a decision sometime in October or November.

Q: How much of the project cost does the grant cover?

A: It can change from year to year, but the most recent grants have been 80% of projects costs, up to \$50,000.

Q: I've applied for the REAP grant, but don't have an award letter yet. Should I include that on the CSAP application?

A: MDAR won't consider funding that you can't back up with documentation, so no.

Q: My project is about soil or water, and not energy. Can you help?

A: That half of the grant falls outside of what the MFEP does, as it's not energy related. Please contact MDAR/Laura Maul.

Q: When can I start my project?

A: After you hear about the status of your grant award.

Q: When does the project need to be completed by?

A: By the end of the next state fiscal year, which is June 30.

Q: I need contact info for MDAR related to the CSAP grant.

A: [Here is a link](#) to the CSAP page.

Contacts may change, but currently are:

Laura J. Maul: 857-507-5972; Laura.Maul@mass.gov

Gerry Palano: 617-571-4969; Gerald.Palano@mass.gov

MDAR CSAP Grant Audits

Q: Do I need an audit to apply for CSAP?

A: Yes. "Applicants must have received a general overall farm operation energy efficiency audit (within the last five years), or demonstrate the initiation of such, which shall be completed as part of Program fulfillment." All applicants must get an audit, of their entire farm operation, including the project in question, if applicable. Even if you're doing solar or another renewable.

Q: Can the MFEP help me get an audit?

A: Yes, we have an engineering partner we can refer you to, and MFEP can cover 75% of the audit cost, paid directly to the auditor.

Q: How much will I have to pay for the audit?

A: It depends on the scope of the audit, but most farms end up paying \$800-\$1000. You will know the cost and how much MFEP will cover before you have to commit to anything.

Q: How long is an audit good for?

A: Audits are good for 2-5 years, depending on what changes are made to the business.

Q: It's too late for me to get an audit done before the grant deadline, am I out of luck?

A: Nope! The grant allows for you to have an audit in progress and still apply. You should try to get a proposal or signed agreement to submit, however, as this will strengthen your application.

Q: Can I apply for both an MDAR grant and a REAP grant?

A: Yes, and you should if you qualify for both! MDAR is a state agency, and REAP is awarded through the federal government, so they are separate. You get more points on both grants for having secured other funding, so getting one grant will help you get the other.

Q: How do I contact the MFEP?

A: You can reach us at info@massfarmenergy.com and 413-727-3090

Submission FAQ

Q: How do I submit the grant?

A: Email, to MDARGRANTS@mass.gov

Hard Copy, sent by mail or hand delivered to:

Laura J. Maul – Program Coordinator

Department of Agricultural Resources

30 Riverside Drive, Suite 202

Lakeville, MA 0234

Q: What do I need to include with my grant submission?

A: There will be a list in the application PDF. In addition to the signed grant application itself, you should include:

- A project specific technical assessment, or energy audit with same detail for the project proposed.
- The completion of a general energy audit for the agricultural operation, or the commitment to complete such prior to proposed project completion and funding.
- Vendor or contractor quotes
- Balance of funding needed to implement the proposed project - bank credit reference letters, line of credit reference letters, demonstration of other grant funds for the project, or an executed loan.
- Proposed projects should include quantification of equivalent CO₂ greenhouse gas savings calculations in the project's respective energy audit or technical assessment.

Q: Will I get a confirmation of submission?

A: Yes, you should get an email confirming that MDAR has received your application.