



2024 Farm Fund First Step Grant Application
Deadline for submissions: January 19, 2024

The Community Food Co-op's Farm Fund is accepting applications for its First Step and Next Step grant programs. The Farm Fund offers grants and loans to strengthen the market for organic and sustainable agriculture in Whatcom County, encourage ecological and socially responsible farmland stewardship, support resilient, successful farms, and increase access to healthy food grown, raised or processed by local producers.

First Step Grant:

The 2024 Farm Fund First Step grant cycle will distribute a limited number of grants of up to approximately \$3,000 for projects that address immediate farm needs and market expansion for the 2024 season, with an emphasis on farmers who face systemic barriers. Priority may be given to farmers who have not yet received a Farm Fund grant.

Next Step Grant + Optional Loan:

The Next Step grant offers grants up to \$5,000 and aims to help qualifying farmers successfully overcome the challenges of expansion for wholesale markets. Applicants can pair the grant application with a conjoined optional 3% interest loan or other farmer investments to increase the amount, quality, and availability of local food produced and available to serve the Whatcom County wholesale market within 12 to 18 months. Grant funds are to be used as partial funding for a new project or to pay for the interest of the loan. Project proposals are evaluated for the potential to fulfill the goals described in the application.

Applicants can choose to apply for a low-interest Farm Fund loan of up to \$12,000 as part of their matching project investment. Evidence of remaining financial investment by the farm for the proposed project, or a Farm Fund loan application, must accompany the application. The grant-to-investment ratio for the proposed project is 1:4. For example, a grant of \$1,250 corresponds to a \$5,000 investment by the applicant. A grant of \$5,000, corresponds to a project investment of \$20,000. Farm Fund loans are secured by the Co-op and offered through the Industrial Credit Union (ICU). *Click [here](#) for the loan applications, terms, and details.*

Equity:

The Farm Fund Committee is committed to serving farmers who face systemic barriers. Projects that address systematic and socioeconomic barriers (projects led by or emphasize working with marginalized farmers, BIPOC, women, English as a second language, members of the LGBTQ+ community, immigrants, veterans, new beginning farmers, and new markets) will be prioritized during the application review. A First Step and Next Step grant will be held for farmers of color.

Qualifications - Applicants must:

- Share how their project demonstrates the priorities listed above.
- Skagit County applicants must supply Whatcom County or serve Whatcom County farms as part of their program.

- Be aware that using funding to pay for labor is not a disqualifier but is typically ranked low. If labor in the short term has a high impact on the success of your project for the long term, please describe it in your application.

Examples of potential grant projects: Seeds, equipment, materials, plants, bins, expansion of sales channels, market or farm expansion etc. Click [here](#) for more information about the Farm Fund and previously funded projects.

Application submission:

Applications can be completed online or emailed to farmfund@communityfood.coop. You can also mail or hand-deliver your application to Community Food Co-op, 405 E. Holly St., Bellingham, WA 98225, attn. Annabelle Rosborough. The committee does not review CD's, DVD's or videos. Information brochures or photos can be attached or sent to the Co-op.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to ask why the best fit is for your project. Contact Annabelle at farmfund@communityfood.coop or 360-734-8158, ext. 317. We look forward to your application!

Sincerely,
The Farm Fund Committee



Farm Fund First Step Grant Application

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Farm Information

Farm or Organization Name:

Contact Person(s):

Mailing Address:

Farm Address:

Phone:

Email:

Website:

Number of acres in production:

Certified organic, growing organic and not certified, transitioning to organic (For Information only, not a grant requirement)?:

Number of years in operation (including 2023):

How many years of farming experience do you have?

How does the food you grow impact your community?

The Farm Fund Committee and the Community Food Co-op recognize that people of color experience disadvantages in many ways. The Farm Fund is prioritizing projects proposed by people of color with two earmarked grants. Would you like to opt-in to the consideration if you are a farmer of color? (Y/N)?:

Financial Information

Total Farm Sales for 2022:

Total Farm Expenses for 2022:

Total Grant Income for 2022:

Total Farm Sales for 2023 (even if incomplete):

Total Farm Expenses for 2023 (even if incomplete):

Total Grant Income for 2023:

Percentage of your household income that comes from farming:

Optional additional financial information - Is there anything else you would like to tell us that would provide financial context for your business? (not required):

